Policies



What are policies and procedures?

Policies are clear, simple statements of how your organisation intends to conduct its services, actions or business. They provide a set of guiding principles to help with decision-making.

Procedures describe how each policy will be put into action in your organisation. Each procedure should outline:

- Who will do what
- What steps they need to take
- Which forms or documents to use

Policies and procedures are important for large and small voluntary organisations as a way to ensure the organisation is run well and that you are following best practice. Your policies will also help you to comply with your legal responsibilities, limit risk and protect your organisation. The types of policies that you need will depend on the circumstances of your organisation. If you decide to apply for grant funding then funders are likely to require some key policies.

The types of policies and procedures that your organisation will need will vary depending on the size, nature and activities of your charity. We have set out information on the policies that your organisation is likely to need, with links to further information and examples that you can use.

Creating your policies

Writing a policy from scratch would be a difficult task so you can make use of the template policies that are available and adapt them to suit your organisation. You can find a range of templates on the Knowledge Hub and your local voluntary council will also be able to assist you.

Here are some tips to remember when creating your policies:

- Before you start – talk to the people that are going to be affected by the policy to make sure you understand the situation and what is needed

- The policy needs to reflect what actually happens in your organisation – so you will need to edit any template to take this into account
- Try to avoid creating policies that are so detailed they become inflexible. Aim instead to set out broad principles which can be applied as your organisation develops
- Once you have created your policies make sure that you tell everyone in your organisation about it. Volunteers and staff may need training on the policies and you should make copies of the policies available for people to read
- Remember to review your policies regularly to make sure that they are kept up to date and reflect the circumstances of your organisation. It's a good idea to create a list of policies and their review date which should be every two years

Your local CVC will be able to help you when using our template policies or check any versions that you have drafted.

Other sources of information

NCVO – Developing policies and procedures

Policies required by law

Certain activities can trigger the legal requirement for a policy. The main policies that are likely to be relevant to voluntary organisations are:

- Health and Safety policy – a written policy is required if you employ 5 or more people (a Health & Safety Risk assessment is required for organisations of any size). You can find more information on your legal responsibilities in our Health and Safety section.
- Safeguarding policy – this is a legal requirement if you are working with children or adults at risk but is also good practice for any organisation that has volunteers or is dealing with the public. If you are using DBS checks, you will also need a Rehabilitation of Offenders policy. Please visit our Safeguarding section for more information.
- Data protection policy and privacy statement – required if you are processing personal data. You can find more information on this in our Data Protection section.

Charity Commission suggested policies

The Charity Commission guidance on annual reporting requirements indicates that there are a number of policies that the Charity Commission would expect most charities to have. These are policies that the Charity Commission considers support the good governance of an organisation.

In addition to a Safeguarding Policy (mentioned above) the Charity Commission list the following:

- Financial controls policy and procedures

- Financial Reserves policy – our information sheet Reserves provides you with more information about what to consider when creating a reserves policy.
- Risk management policy
- Trustee expenses – this policy will clearly set out what is recoverable as an expense and what is not
- Trustee conflicts of interest policy
- Serious incident reporting policy – a charity needs to report serious incidents to the Charity Commission.

Other recommended policies

In this section we have set out some additional policies that we would recommend you put in place to ensure that you are work reflects good practice. A number of these policies relate to the way that your organisation engages with people, as it is important that your organisation treats everyone fairly and has processes in place to deal with difficult situations. We have also included in this list policies that we know some funders ask for as part of a grant application process. This is because funders treat having these policies in place as evidence that an organisation is well run.

- Equality & Diversity Policy – with regard to anti-discrimination and harassment of employees and volunteers as well as service users. The template policy we have provided is written as if your organisation has employees, but if that is not the case then you can amend it to remove those references – the responsibilities of the organisation should remain the same when talking about service users and volunteers.
- Complaints policy – so that you have fair and consistent procedures to deal with complaints
- Volunteering policy – our Volunteering section has information on the things that you will need to do when involving volunteers in your organisation and how to create your volunteering policy.
- Code of conduct – so trustees, staff and volunteers are clear about what is or is not acceptable when they are working for your organisation
- Bullying and harassment policy – to ensure that you create a supportive and safe culture for everyone in your organisation
- Gifts, Hospitality and Anti-bribery policy – to help trustees, volunteers and staff understand what to do if they are offered gifts or hospitality
- Environmental policy – sets out how you will manage and reduce the environmental impact of your activities
- Welsh Language policy – to set out your organisation's current commitment to the Welsh language.

The above is not intended to be a definitive list and you should consider what is appropriate for your organisation. There are some areas of work where guidance and best practice suggests that additional policies would be recommended. Some areas where you could work to develop policies would be:

- Fundraising – you might want a policy to set out the principles you will use for engaging with the public, or any rules for accepting large donations
- Campaigning – if your organisation is one that is trying to raise awareness or bring about a change in policy you will probably need a policy that sets out the way you will approach campaigning

- Digital and social media – if your organisation is increasing its use of digital, in terms of ways of working and communications then you will need policies to cover things like cyber security and use of social media.

Your local CVC will be able to help you in developing the range of policies appropriate for your organisation.

Policies relating to staff and HR issues

If your organisation employs staff then you will need further policies to cover situations that arise from that employment relationship. We have listed below the information leaflets and policy templates that are available on the Knowledge Hub, but you will need to get advice on appropriate policies for your organisation, depending on your size and the activities that your staff carry out.

- Disciplinary Policy and Employee conduct
- Right to request flexible working
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Maternity Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Retirement Policy
- Sickness Policy
- Producing employment written particulars
- Learning and development
- Paternity policy
- Appraisal policy and procedures
- Whistleblowing policy
- Adoption policy
- Drawing up a job specification
- Recruitment selection policy
- Grievance policy
- Disciplinary investigation
- Supervision policy and procedure

Other sources of information

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