



PD 16

Organisational Overview

Contents:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Summary of roles and responsibilities**
- 3. Becoming a Board Trustee or Management Advisory Committee Member**
- 4. Additional Notes**
 - a. Membership - need not be onerous**
 - b. Sub-Committees or Working Parties**
 - c. Board Trustee role – fuller description/essential reading from the Charity Commission**
 - d. President and Vice President**

1. Introduction

Formed in 1947, initially as the Industrial Group Advisory Board to RoSPA and then through various name changes until 2005 when the organisation was renamed Safety Groups UK. The organisation is now a registered charity governed by our Constitution and associated documentation. It is well regarded and supported by the HSE and several other organisations. The objectives of SGUK are:

To promote health and safety by providing support to a national network of health and safety Groups within the UK. In particular we seek to: a) Help maintain and grow a national network of active, engaged health and safety Groups who participate in raising health and safety issues within their communities and for the public benefit b) Help to maintain and establish accessible safety groups in all parts of the UK as well as the IoM and Channel Isles c) Help and encourage most safety groups to be active and engaged at the level of the best d) Try to ensure SGUK is recognised as the hub of the safety groups movement e) Act as an authoritative and respected participant in the health and safety system f) Attempt to have local groups recognised by SME's as a friendly source of help and advice on a wide range of health and safety issues

The Constitution describes how SGUK is to be run and the provisions made for various roles:

- **Board of Trustees** (including Officers) - *directing*
- **Management Advisory Committee** (MAC) - *advising*
- **Secretariat** - *assisting*
- **Working Parties or Sub-committees** – *for specific issues*

2. Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

- a) **Board of Trustees** (Board) are the people who lead the organisation, decide how it is run and are responsible for making sure it is doing what it was set up to do. Duties include: following the law, preparing reports and accounts for the Charity Commission, finances, operating in accordance with the Constitution, managing risk, and ensuring SGUK spends its money wisely and in line with its objectives

They carry out the vital role of advising the MAC on what the organisation can and should do to achieve its 'objectives', move forward and stay relevant to its members, partners, supporters, sponsors and others. It reviews various measures and makes suggestions for improvement. It also contributes to maintaining and growing the membership of local groups and extending the reach and influence of the organisation. Since the 'objectives' are general in nature and broad in scope there is considerable opportunity for new ideas and innovation for all Board trustees to contribute from individual background, experience, contacts etc. We aim to make Board meetings enjoyable, value-adding but not too serious

- b) **Management Advisory Committee** (including trustees) is the advisory body that in conjunction with the secretariat manages the business of the organisation and helps put the agreed recommendations into practice. It relies on input from Board, particularly with regards to achieving the objectives
- c) **Secretariat** This is currently supplied by RoSPA in a supportive role, helping to circulate relevant information and providing minute takers for MAC and possibly board meetings
- d) **Working Parties or Sub-Committees** (WP/SC) are used where particular needs arise or where ongoing input or oversight of an issue is required. All MAC and Board members can participate. WP/SC also help with succession planning by providing overlap and continuity and the sharing and development of skills and experience, not only health and safety

Please note: Everyone including WP/SC members are expected to promote the organisation to ensure that the activities and events are well supported by circulating information to their contacts including those in their supply chain(s)

3. Becoming a Board Trustee or Management Advisory Committee member including the benefits

- a) All Board roles are filled by volunteers being nominated and elected at an AGM as a representative from their local groups or a supporting organisation or from an independent source who are the trustees. For nomination, election etc details see our governing documentation (index appended)
- b) MAC members are invited from supporter organisations following our AGM. There is also provision for co-option
- c) The starting point is usually as a Board Trustee, perhaps, after two years or more, moving to an Officer role
- d) Both Board and MAC meetings (usually three a year) are held in a relaxed, friendly, and non-threatening atmosphere where everyone has opportunity to both learn and contribute
- e) Members often gain key contacts from various backgrounds and usually find that their own knowledge, skills, and experience – continuing professional development – is enhanced
- f) Employers also benefit by being recognised as contributing to the wider good, possibly as part of a corporate social responsibility agenda

4. Additional notes:

a. Membership of Board or Management Advisory Committee need not be onerous

- Although in the past some members may have overstretched themselves the roles are not in themselves particularly onerous. Several members are still in employment and of course the needs of their employer come first. Retired members are a bonus in this regard
- There are usually three Board/MAC meetings each year and it is hoped that members attend at least two meetings or contribute in some way e.g. via email
- The AGM usually in May/June is an ideal meeting to attend since it includes important updates and presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts

b. Working Parties or Sub-Committees

The main role is to maintain oversight of a particular topic(s) and its relevance to the organisation. It is not expected that working parties or sub-committees meet on a frequent basis unless important challenges/issues have been identified and agreed. Neither is it expected that meetings must be attended in person since full use should be made of e-mail etc.

The use of working parties or sub-committees is a means of making SGUK more effective and more efficient, making best use of limited resources and giving everyone greater opportunity to be involved and make a difference

It also helps with succession planning by providing overlap and continuity and the sharing and development of skills and experience

The role of a sub-committee is typically to:

- i. Maintain oversight of a particular topic and its relevance to the organisation
- ii. Look out for developments, initiatives etc elsewhere that could benefit SGUK and its objectives
- iii. Consider improvement opportunities – and threats
- iv. Address specific issues agreed at Board and/or Management meeting(s)
- v. Be involved with actions/action plans depending on resource needs and availability
- vi. Report to Board and/or MAC as and when appropriate

WP/SC will typically comprise three or four people plus possibly the Chairman or Secretariat to provide direct input, assistance and co-ordination. From time-to-time honorary officers may also wish to be involved with a sub-committee

Although WP/SC will usually comprise Board/MAC members, other external bodies may be co-opted where a particular interest, knowledge or experience is identified

It is possible that some WP/SC members will be almost entirely 'corresponding members' due to travel distance to get to meetings or work commitments

c. Trustee role – fuller description/essential reading from the Charity Commission

[The Essential Trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do \(CC3 – updated 2015\)](#)

The updated 'Essential trustee' breaks down the trustee's role into six clear duties:

- 1) ensure SGUK is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- 2) comply with our governing documents and the law
- 3) act in our best interests
- 4) manage our resources responsibly
- 5) act with reasonable care, skill and diligence
- 6) ensure the organisation is accountable

(Under each heading, the commission explains the legal requirements that trustees must meet, and the good practice they need to follow, to operate effectively and comply with their duties. From there, you can go to more detailed guidance if you need an in-depth understanding. For example, there are links to guidance on fundraising, making better decisions and reducing the risk of liability. The commission also provides a [summary guide](#) if you want the headlines at a glance. Very often, the commission finds that serious concerns about a charity have their root causes in weak governance. It manifests itself as failure in at least one of the trustees' 6 key duties.

All too often trustees have failed to comply with their governing document, deal with conflicts of interest, or implement sufficient procedures and controls. It creates opportunities for serious wrongdoing such as fraud or abuse of beneficiaries. The new guidance highlights and gives practical examples of how to avoid some common pitfalls, for example by ensuring you understand your governing document, asking questions and ensuring you understand your charity's finances. So, you can feel confident that you're running your charity in a legal, accountable, and effective way)

Decision Making

As a trustee, you can take advice about the law, finance, property etc. but the decisions you make in the end are down to you and your fellow trustees. When you make decisions, you must:

- act within your powers
- act in good faith, and only in the interests of SGUK
- make sure you are sufficiently informed, taking any advice, you need
- take account of all relevant factors
- manage conflicts of interest

Risk Management

Risk management is the trustees' responsibility. Trustees should research the potential risks carefully before deciding, especially before the organisation enters into any contracts or borrows money

Some of the risks SGUK could face are:

- damage to our reputation
- receiving less funding
- losing money through inappropriate investments

Financial investment

The purpose of financial investment is to yield the best financial return within the level of risk considered to be acceptable

Trustee's duties mean that they must:

- exercise care and skill when making investment decisions
- select investments that are right for SGUK e.g. regarding suitability and need to diversify
- take advice from someone experienced in investment matters unless good reason not to
- follow legal requirements if they are going to use someone to manage investments on their behalf
- review investments from time to time
- explain any investment policy in the trustees' annual report

d. Presidents' Role

As this is held by a person of standing within the community they are purely a figurehead to help facilitate use of prestigious venues and generally promote the organisation at appropriate opportunities

e. Vice Presidents' Role

Main features of the role are:

- **Contributor** - to help achieve the SGUK 'objectives' as stated in the Constitution
- **Ambassador** - to represent the organisation as, when, and where appropriate
- **Catalyst** - to promote discussion, research, and development – improvement
- **Overseer** - to provide oversight of the operation, it's products and services, and its place within the wider community
- **Facilitator** - to propose and where feasible help facilitate partnership and collaborative working opportunities

Notes

1. This is not intended as a role specification and can be amended at any time and/or simply allowed to evolve.
2. There is no legal responsibility attached to the role of President, or Vice President, that remains with the Trustees
3. Regarding attendance at meetings, there is no stipulation. However, attending at least two MAC meetings per year should be the aim
4. At the AGM, each year the Vice President may wish to say a few words or to have a short article in the Annual Report
5. Copies of meeting minutes and the use of e-mail can also help to keep in touch
6. Where appropriate, travel expenses can be paid following PD 06A Guidelines and via an Expenses claim form (PD 06B)

Safety Groups UK

