

# National Oral Health Promotion Group Policies, Procedures & Protocols

## Introduction

The policies, procedures and protocols that are documented within this handbook are to assist the committee with the efficient running of the Group's business. By setting policies, procedures and protocols, the Committee can perform its duties in a fair and responsible manner.

All Committee and co-opted members will be expected to carry out their duties in accordance with the agreed policies, procedures and protocols. New Committee/co-opted members will be provided with a copy of this handbook as part of their induction process.

It is recommended that a review takes place of all policies, procedures and protocols every two years. Any amendments or additions will be agreed by Committee by ordinary resolution and then notified to the members at the next Annual General Meeting.

Amended March 2004  
Recommended to be reviewed by March 2004

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## Committee Code of Practice

The following is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which the Committee and individual committee members will operate.

### General

1. The central concern of all Committee members is the welfare of the Group.
2. The Committee has a responsibility for monitoring and keeping under review the purpose, plans & procedures within which the group operates
3. All Committee members have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times
4. The Committee should undertake to operate in a fair and transparent manner in all their transactions

### Commitment

5. Being a member of the Committee involves the commitment of significant amounts of personal time & energy. Careful regard should be given to this when agreeing to serve, or continuing to serve as a Committee member.
6. All Committee members should involve themselves actively in the work of the Committee and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including service on working groups and representing the group at external functions. The Committee should ensure that all Committee members share responsibilities.
7. Regular attendance at committee meetings is essential. Permission for absence will only be granted if the Committee agree absence is avoidable and they can continue to function without the member.
8. All committee members should participate in the formulation of a Development Plan for the Group.

### Relationships

9. The Committee should strive to operate as a team in a constructive working relationship. Each member of the Committee is expected to work to actively promote this.
10. The Committee should develop mechanisms to build a good working relationship with members and other agencies.

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### **Confidentiality**

11. Committee members have the responsibility to act in a confidential and accountable manner in all transactions
12. All issues reviewed at a Committee forum, unless otherwise agreed, are deemed to be confidential.
13. Committee members should exercise caution when discussing potentially contentious issues outside of the committee forum.

### **Conduct**

14. Committee members are expected to express their views openly within the meeting but accept collective decisions.
15. All Committee members will carry out the Group's activities within the agreed guidelines set out in the Policies, Procedures & Protocols – Committee Handbook
16. All Committee and Co-opted Committee members will be given induction in the Group's procedures, protocol and policies
17. Committee members should follow agreed procedures when wishing to make critical comments of any aspects of the Group's activities or members.
18. In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the Group the Committee members should follow procedures established by the Committee
19. The Committee members have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Group; their actions in meetings and within the oral health environment should reflect this.

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### Committee Meeting Procedure

To enable the committee to fulfil the Group's business the following procedure outlines how committee meetings will function.

1. Notice of Agenda, venue and time and minutes of the previous meeting will be sent out to all committee members at least 7 days before the meeting.
2. Items for the Agenda should normally be in the hands of the Hon Secretary at least 14 days before the date of the meeting
3. Minutes of the previous meeting are to be circulated prior to the next meeting. At the next full committee meeting the minutes will be confirmed or amended upon agreement
4. Any items for the AOB slot must be recorded with the chair, at least, 24 hours prior to the Committee meeting, unless the proposer had good reason. This will be decided at the start of the meeting by a majority vote.
5. Members of the Committee are expected to attend 75% of committee meetings in any year. Committee members who are unable to attend are normally required to give written apologies with stated reason, to the Hon. Secretary prior to the meeting.
6. The Committee has a duty to review the commitment given by any member sending apologies. Consent to absence will be taken as an agenda item at each committee meeting and permission for absence will be recorded in the Group's minutes. The Committee is entitled to refuse permission to absence. In the event that permission to absence is not granted, the committee will inform the member in writing within a 28 day period following the meeting.
7. The Chair will preside at Committee meetings and will see that the purposes of the group are carried out. In the absence of the Chair the Vice Chair will be empowered to take on this role.
8. The Hon. Secretary shall attend to the organisation of the group's activities including being responsible for the correspondence and the keeping of the minutes unless otherwise directed.
9. The Hon Treasurer shall keep the accounts of the group. The Hon Treasurer will advise the Committee with regard to the Group's financial standing. The Hon. Treasurer shall prepare and present a financial report and audited accounts at the Annual General Meeting.
10. Committee voting shall be by a show of hands. The Chair's ruling will be accepted on all questions of order and the Chair shall have the deciding vote.
11. All Committee members have equal status. Open debate is to be encouraged. Once a decision has been made all members are expected to stand by the decision.
12. Committee members are required to give an update of their work at each meeting as necessary

## **Procedure for dealing with Criticisms, Concerns and Complaints**

### **Introduction**

The Committee has the responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the group. It is important that any criticisms, concerns or complaints received should be handled in a fair manner and in accordance with the principles of natural justice. It is the duty of the standing committee to ensure the membership is aware of this procedure

### **Dealing with issues within the Committee Stages of procedure**

1. All criticisms, concerns and complaints arising within the committee will be documented in the minutes.
2. When criticisms, concerns or complaints arise it is expected that the individual involved will work together to resolve the problem.
3. In the event of an unsuccessful conclusion the members are expected to raise their concerns with the Chair or Vice Chair.
4. The Chair or Vice Chair will work with the parties involved to resolve the issue.
5. In the event that this stage does not receive a satisfactory conclusion any member involved will give notice to the full Committee to receive the complaint at the next Committee meeting.
6. The Committee will be expected to deal with the complaint and to develop an action plan to resolve the issue
7. In the event that the issue cannot be resolved, the Committee will be expected to call a 'review panel'. The panel will be composed of expert advisers or mentors, who have no personal or working relationship with the individuals. This may be one individual as long as all parties involved are satisfied with the nominated person. All parties will be involved in the selection process of the review panel.
8. The review panel will deal with the complaint and work to resolve the problem. The decision of the review panel will be regarded as final.

**Dealing with issues from outside of the Committee  
Stages of procedure**

1. When criticisms, concerns or complains arise, it is expected that the Committee will work to resolve the problem in a fair and open manner.
2. In the first instance, the Chair or Vice Chair will work to resolve the issue in the early stages.
3. In the event that the issues cannot be resolved, the Chair or Vice Chair will request that the issue be received in writing at a full Committee meeting.
4. All criticisms, concerns and complaints received by the Committee will be documented in the minutes.
5. All criticisms, concerns or complaints will be dealt with as an agenda item under correspondence at a Committee meeting
6. All decisions and actions taken by the Committee will be given in writing to the complaint within 28 days of the decision.
7. If the complaint is not satisfied by the decision or action of the committee, they will be informed of the further stages of the procedure as outlined in 'Dealing with issues within the committee' (refer to points 7/8).

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**Equal Opportunities Policy – Statement of Intent**

The NOHPG acknowledges the right of all people to equality. It is the policy of the NOHPG to ensure that no members of its group, individuals of speakers, attending conferences and meetings are discriminated against or made to feel unwelcome or uncomfortable on the grounds of their race, religion, sex, creed, colour, ethnic origin, marital status, disability, age or sexual orientation. The NOHPG will endeavour to support an equal opportunities policy at all times.

1. This policy will be an integral part of all NOHPG proceedings.
2. In the case of a complaint, concerning a breach of this policy acknowledgement will be made and the matter dealt with in accordance with the criticisms, concerns and complaints procedure.
3. This policy will be integrated into membership information material.
4. The policy will be integrated into speakers' information packs.
5. The committee will monitor this policy and if necessary feedback will be given to members via the annual review of the Policies, Procedures and Protocols.
6. At conference and meetings of the NOHPG expects members' behaviour to reflect this statement of intent.

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### Mailing List Policy

The National Oral Health Promotion Group is registered under the Data Protection Act and agrees to store and use all information in accordance with the Act. Details of all our professional members are kept on record to enable communication. The Committee of the NOHPG has drawn up this policy to ensure appropriate use of member's personal details. The Mailing List is used to pass on relevant information to the membership from the core Committee. The Kist can also be passed onto any organisation or agency providing that a) it is in the NOHPG or members' interest and b) that it has been agreed beforehand by the Committee.

1. The National Oral Health Promotion Group Committee will adhere to the mailing list policy
2. The NOHPG mailing list is not available for personal use either by core committee or individual members.

Any external request for a NOHPG membership list will be required in writing with clearly defined reasons for the request and will be raised at the next Committee meeting. The outcome of this decision will be recorded in the minutes of the **meeting**. The outcome of this decision will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and a written consent with conditions of use will be sent to the applicant. Refusal of a request will also be given in writing with reasons stated.

3. Requests for a mailing list will be granted approval at the discretion of the Committee to those individuals and organisations, who the Committee feels will promote the purpose of the NOHPG as laid out in the Constitution:-

#### **The purpose of the National Oral Health Promotion Group is to:**

- (a) Promote the exchange of ideas and interventions among those involved in oral health education and promotion
  - (b) Encourage the introduction and assessment/evaluation of oral health promotion
  - (c) Provide information on current research in oral health
  - (d) Encourage members to undertake professional development and continuing education in oral health and related areas
  - (e) Promote communication between agencies active in the field of oral health promotion
  - (f) Promote the establishment of a career structure and salary scale for those involved in oral health promotion
  - (g) Collaborate with related professional groups to promote better oral health
4. Commercial organisations requesting mailing lists will be charged a fee of £500. The condition of use will be that acknowledgment of the NOHPG is given and that the information is not reproduced or stored for future use, or transferred on for financial gain.

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5. All members will be given the opportunity on the membership application/renewal form to have their details withdrawn from external mailings.
6. Members who do not renew their membership after a two year period will have their details removed from the mailing list.

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### Committee Claims Policy

As the NOHPG is a small professional group with limited financial resources it is unable to afford corporate style expenses. Whilst no Committee member should be out of pocket for carrying out the Group's work it is important to ensure that the Group can sustain the Committee's expenses. To provide clear guidelines the following policy has been drawn up and adopted by the Committee.

1. Committee members are expected to travel to meetings and conferences using the cheapest travelling option, using budget fare tickets where available. Claims will only be paid for the cheapest method off travel unless the Committee gives prior approval.
2. In the event of a query arising from a claim, the matter will be brought before the committee for a final decision.
3. No claims for expenses will be considered unless accompanied by a recognised claim form and receipt.
4. All claim forms should state:
  - (a) Claimant's details, name, address, postcode and telephone number
  - (b) Date and nature of business, i.e. meeting, conference etc.
  - (c) Particulars of journey, i.e. travelling from home to venue
  - (d) Travel details with receipts attached
  - (e) Taxi fares details with receipts attached
  - (f) Any car mileage stated in miles and amount claimed
  - (g) If claiming for passengers, the names of passengers must be included on the claim form.
  - (h) Car parking fees with receipts attached
  - (i) Postage and stationery fees with details and receipts attached
5. Claims for Committee expenses should be submitted to the Treasurer as soon as possible and within a maximum of two months unless prior agreement has been obtained from the Committee
6. When car journeys are necessary they should be shared if possible and also approved by the Committee. The mileage allowance is 25p per mile.
7. Taxi fares will be paid if there is no other reasonable means of reaching the final destination from the nearest train station. Otherwise the approval from the committee must be sought.
8. A subsistence allowance for committee meetings is set at a maximum of £5.00 per committee member. It is the responsibility of the Committee to keep costs to a minimum. The committee can sanction additional subsistence costs, when staying overnight involves extra cost to the member i.e. when an evening meal has to be bought away from home.
9. Overnight accommodation may be claimed by Committee members to attend meetings and conferences but this must be by [prior approval of the committee.

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10. When claiming expenses for a visit to choose a conference venue, regional representation should be sought from a Committee member living closest to the venue to avoid overnight accommodation being necessary. Travel expenses will be paid in accordance with the agreed policy. One visit only will be allowed unless previously approved by the Committee.
11. Any other expenses will require the prior approval of the committee.

### **Speakers' Remuneration Policy**

As the NOHPG is a small professional group with limited financial resources, it is unable to afford corporate style expenses. Whilst no guest speaker will be expected to finance their own attendance at conferences and meetings, the NOHPG will expect speakers to consider the financial status of the group when organising attendance and accommodation. To ensure prompt payment of expenses, speakers must be aware of and adhere to the following guidelines.

**The following expenses will be paid. Please note that receipts are required to accompany *all* travel costs.**

1. An honorarium of £50 if deemed appropriate
2. Travelling expenses to the venue:
  - i) The standard or saver/budget return fare rate
  - ii) Taxi fares to and from the railway station
  - iii) Car mileage at 25p per mile
  - iv) Car parking expenses
  - v) If an alternative travel class or method of transport is used, the NOHPG will only pay the standard or saver/budget fare against the claim.
3. The NOHPG will provide and organise speakers with overnight accommodation, if required.
4. Any miscellaneous expenditure will need prior approval by the committee
5. The Hon. Treasurer will deal with all queries.

### **The Journal & Conference News**

The NOHPG Journal is a biannual publication produced to inform members about issues that are relevant to their work and continual professional development. Acknowledged experts with an interest in promoting oral health and related issues, or members who wish to share good practice, are invited to submit articles for the Journal. Guidelines concerning the necessary criteria for producing an article have been produced to assist writers. As an added benefit particularly to members who are unable to attend conference, the Committee also produces Conference News which summarises the proceedings of the NOHPG conferences.

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As far as possible, the Journal is self-funded with no more than 50% of the contents containing advertising of promotional features. The cost of producing the Conference News is also kept to minimum by the use of desktop publishing software followed by the photocopying and distribution via second class postage of the completed document within two months of conference.

### **Guidelines for submitting articles for Journal publication**

Submissions for publication require to be of a certain standard to ensure that the Journal always produces articles that are interesting, have solid scientific base, if appropriate, and are of high quality.

The articles should be accompanied by details of the author:

- Full contact details including NOHPG membership number (if appropriate)
- Title of the article (not necessarily the title of the project)

**The following is required for research-based programmes:**

- Target group
- Needs assessment (statistics are usually necessary here).
- Aim(s) & Objectives (N.B. the latter need to be specific, measurable & evidence-based)
- Funding source
- Piloting details of the resource or the initiative
- Problems or barriers encountered
- Evaluation: quantitative and/or qualitative – (N.B this should withstand scientific scrutiny)
- References and Bibliography

### **Protocol for NOHPG Newsgroup**

The aim of the **NOHPG Newsgroup** is to stimulate discussion between members on oral health topics via the medium of e-mail. It is an exchange of ideas, concerns and good working practices, more in the style of an informal chat rather than a formal presentation. The contributions are used to create the news sheet entitled **NOHPG EXCHANGE**. This will be circulated to all members approximately every two months and where possible will be included with other mail shots to reduce costs. Topics, which generate a lot of interest, may be covered in more depth in the NOHPG bi-annual journal publication.

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### Protocols

Members registering with NOHPG NEWSGROUP must sign a registration form and agree to adhere to the following protocols:

1. Run current anti-virus software
2. Contributions should be submitted only via the Key Communicator (KC). Any e-mail communications which by-pass the KC will not be treated as '**NOHPG NEWSGROUP**' material and will not automatically be passed on to the '**NOHPG EXCHANGE**' new sheet.
3. Contributions should be identified by the **title 'NOHPG NEWSGROUP'** in the subject line.
4. Attachments should not be included. This is for several reasons; the main one is to prevent the spread of viruses, but also some PCs cannot cope with some attachments either due to the format or their systems being inadequate.
5. Contributions should be concise and brief.
6. Information submitted to be acknowledged as 'open for all to see'.
7. Use of the e-mail system indicated permission for e-mail addresses to be available on the mailing list
8. Not to be used for advertising products but may be used for informing others about conferences, courses and relevant issues. Products may be named if the information is requested by, and /or deemed useful for members.
9. Not to be used for advertising products but may be used for informing others about conferences, courses and relevant issues. Products may be named if the information is requested by, and/or deemed useful for members.
10. The Key Communicator reserves the right not to forward contributions, which do not conform to the above protocol

### Disclaimers by the Key Communicator:

1. In the event of a virus, the KC will not accept responsibility for any contamination.
2. Concerns expressed and topics discussed do not necessarily reflect the Key Communicator's personal view or that of the NOHPG

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**Postal Ballot Protocol**

**Introduction**

Elections for Officers and Committee members must be conducted by secret postal ballot according to the Constitution. The following procedure outlines how to conduct the elections.

1. Call for nominations. Nominations must be received not less than 30 days before the day appointed for the AGM/EGM. The nominees consent having first been obtained.
2. All nominees must be paid up members of the NOHPG and have some current, practical or professional involvement in oral health promotion. All nominees must be proposed and seconded, in writing, by paid up members. In the event of the correct number of candidates or less standing for available places, no postal ballot will take place and the nominated and seconded candidates will be duly elected to serve as Committee members.
3. The postal ballot form should be sent out to members normally not less than 14 days prior to the AGM/EGM.
4. Ballot return forms may be mailed or faxed. They will only be accepted if the form has been signed by the voting member and includes the member's current membership number.
5. A member may vote for any number of nominees on the ballot form but will only be entitled to one ballot form.
6. A member may vote for any number of nominees on the ballot form but will only be entitled to one ballot form.
7. Announcement of the results of the ballot will be made at the AGM and published in a NOHOG publication.
8. If a vacancy occurs on the committee prior to the AGM which is usually held at the Spring Conference, then the Committee is empowered to fill the vacancy in the interim. This can occur if any Committee member retired at the autumn conference. The above protocol will still apply substituting the AGM with the date of the autumn conference.
9. In order to maintain the secrecy of the voting procedure, a third party (not a member of NOHPG) will be appointed by the Committee to count the votes and inform the Committee in writing of the results. The members will be informed of the procedure at the AGM/EGM.

## **Advertisements & Reviewing Policy**

To protect the NOHPG and its members all aspects of the groups business will be carried out in line with the agreed policy. The policy covers all aspects of the NOHPG business in relation to accepting money or goods in kind from organisations either through advertisement or promotion of products, sponsorship or trade exhibitors.

### **The Committee will adhere to the following:**

1. Income generated from advertising, sponsorship or trade exhibitors will only be accepted from those organisations that share the NOHPG purposes as defined in the NOHPG constitution (April 2000)
2. The Committee member responsible for trade will hold a list of companies who have been agreed by the Committee to be acceptable to the NOHPG. Any new companies will need to be agreed by a quorum Committee decision.
3. Any advertisements carried in the NOHPG publications will be from those companies who appear on the Trade Organisers list or the decision will go to committee before acceptance.
4. The Committee will take due care to ensure that companies do not use the NOHPG to promote products or services that may have a hidden agenda or whose ethos and practices are at odds with the principles of the NOHPG.
5. Any request to promote OHP resources either within Newsgroup, Exchange or the Journal will be decided by wither the Editorial Board of the Committee.

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### **Honorary Membership**

In exceptional circumstances, the NOHPG may wish to acknowledge an individual for their work involved with, actively nurturing the promotion of and championing the cause of oral health promotion.

For example, the individual could have exhibited a long-term commitment and support to the purposes and practices of the NOHPG.

#### **Criteria**

**The criteria could include one or all of the following and will appear on the certificate**

- Long term commitment and support to the ethos and values of the NOHPG
- Valued mentorship offered to the NOHPG
- Vigorous promotion of the work of the NOHPG
- Actively advancing the status and practice of oral health promotion

#### **Benefits**

1. The recipients will receive full membership benefits, but will not be required to pay an annual retention fee
2. Honorary Memberships should only be given to recipients with full agreement of the committee
3. The committee reserve the right to withdraw the status of Honorary Member from any recipient who ceases to fulfil the award criteria.

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### **NOHPG Website**

The main purpose of the website is to raise awareness about the NOHPG, encourage membership and promote attendance at the spring and autumn conferences.

It could have additional benefit of highlighting other oral health promotion related websites.

#### **Criteria**

The website should:

- Comply with the NOHPG corporate identity
- Be free from commercial advertising
- It should be updated when necessary with appropriate, relevant information
- It should be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis (at least every two years).

Website address [www.nohpg.org](http://www.nohpg.org)