

Youth Club Young Volunteer Handbook

Task Training



Being a Members' Group

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Youth Club Young Volunteers Task Training -Being a Members' Group

Training Plan

Aim: To familiarise the participants with different ways of running a members' group at a youth centre

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the session the participants will:

- understand the roles and remit of a members' group
- understand the different types of members' groups there are and be able to choose an appropriate one for their unit.

Time: 1 hour

Group size: 6 – 12

Venue: Medium sized room with chairs

Materials:

- Flip chart stand, paper and pens
- Paper and pens
- Prepared flip charts (see below)
- Different types of groups handouts
- Role and Remit handout

TIME	WHAT	WITH
10 mins	Explain aim of session and set basic ground rules including respect for each other, listen to who is speaking and only one person speaking at a time. Then input: What exactly is a members' committee? What are the pitfalls? (Do not give out handout).	Prepared flip chart.
5 mins	What can groups do?: Split the group into threes and give them 5 minutes to come up with all the things they can think of – encourage them to be creative! Use some prompts from below. Remind them that it is not just decision making. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write rules for the club • make decisions around opening times • equipment purchase • fund raise • staff appointments • decoration & furnishing of club • set sub prices • apply for funding • run the coffee bar • design club programme • organise discos • arrange trips and activities • represent individual members • represent the club at external events • feedback to youth workers • propose project work. 	Pens and paper
5 mins	Get feedback from group – shouted out brainstorm style! After this give the handout.	R&R handout
10 mins	Exercise: Split the group into pairs and each pair to look at one of the types of group and ask them to list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What they like about it • What they do not like about it • How they would minimise the negative • How well it would work • Is it a fair way of involving young people in decision making 	Different types of groups handout
15 mins	Feedback from groups	Flipchart & pens.
5 mins	Closing exercise – my preferred type of group is...	

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The role & remit of members' groups

The remit of the Members' Group can be as big or small as is appropriate for the club, and the young people involved. It is important that all members have a say in the running of their club if they chose to, therefore when choosing, nominating or volunteering for Groups you need to be clear about being able to represent your peers' thoughts, feelings and ideas as well as your own, even when they may conflict.

There are many different ways of working together as a group to obtain a voice within your club. See handout *Different Types of Groups*. You need to decide what it is you want to do or change, but do not try to '*change the world too quickly too soon*'.

Some of the things you could get involved in as part of a Members' Group are:

- Running the coffee bar
- Organising fundraising events
- Undertaking surveys or research on what people want
- Suggest and devise rules for the club
- Enthuse other young people to be involved
- Discourage destructive behaviour
- Organise special events and activities
- Encourage and promote consultation with regards to major decision making
- Liaise with the local community to improve the profile of the centre and the young people
- Helping to publicise your club.

Pitfalls to be aware of:

When you are in the position of being able to influence decisions which affect the club, when you have climbed to a position of having a say and being heard, remember how good it feels and don't *pull up the ladder* behind you and stop other members joining in, getting involved and having a say.

When a group is successful it can get cosy. Don't let that block out other people – *when this happens it means the group has failed*.

To avoid this:

- Always keep other members informed of what you are doing (even when you are not sure how interested they are!) by chatting to them, through meetings or by leaflet.
- Always keep the door open for new members – this means going out of your way to be friendly and to offer encouragement.

Try to keep your groups as representative as possible, with a good cross section of the membership. Remember that you will be acting on behalf of the other club members, not just yourselves.

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Different types of members' groups

Various methods have been used to help give youth club members a say in the way the club is run. Different approaches suit different clubs, or even different groups of young people. Six different ways are described here. Once a group of members has been formed, they can look at the six methods and decide which is best for them. It could be that one method is chosen for the time being and another is an aim for the near future, or a combination of the ideas could be the answer.

Council

This is perhaps the most usual method in youth clubs with Members' Council. Meetings of the Members' Council are held regularly to discuss matters. These meetings would usually be open to any members who are interested (if you have too many coming it may not be appropriate). This group elects a number of representatives to the club (adult) management committee.

<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings are held regularly • Clear way on to the adult Management Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils can ignore others and only be interested in their own views • Can be formal and boring

Share Out

This is a way of ensuring that member participation takes place on the club adult management committee itself, by reserving a number of places on the management committee for members. This arrangement can be made in addition to one of the other ways of working. It does require a commitment from members, because they will be relied upon to attend regularly.

<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This puts pressure on the youth worker or committee to make sure that the agenda is interesting to the members • It puts young people in a strong position to influence decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formality of such meetings put off a lot of young people • Some adults / professionals do not like this system (they think they cannot work so well)

Parliament

This has the advantage that it involves everyone who is around at the time – even though that includes those who do not want to be involved! What happens is that someone calls a stop to **all** activity in the club and a discussion is started where matters concerning the club can be raised. This discussion goes on for fixed time and then the meeting breaks up. The meeting also elects an 'executive group' from amongst the members, which can make more detailed decisions and which meets regularly.

<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This system has been seen to work in a number of clubs and it does make everyone aware that they have a chance to change anything they're not happy with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It puts a lot of responsibility on whoever has to 'blow the whistle' for everything to stop and on whoever has to run the big discussion. This usually put everything back in the hands of the youth worker!

Line Up

'Line Up' is really just a way of trying to form a group that can be said to represent the interests of **all** the members in the club. It is a way of trying to get away from the members' council which tends to be made up of a single group of friends to the exclusion of everyone else.

It involves persuading someone from each 'friendship' group or 'interest' group to meet to discuss matters concerning the club. Obviously a lot of work has to be done on building up the group to make it stick together.

<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This avoids the pattern of 'in group' and 'out group' which is common in member councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some people might at first need a lot of persuasion before joining in.

One Off

Young people can influence and even control their own activities in the club without forming a group that has regular meetings.

This can be done through the activity itself. For example, if a group of members want to go ice skating, or make an appearance on local radio for example, instead of letting the youth worker organise everything, the members involved can discuss how the event will be organised. This still means that decisions have to be made – about sharing out the work for example.

<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This does not need any long term commitment and the group can happily break up after its done its job (or it could be a starting point for a group that moves on to other things)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It does not actually give members any influence over the way the club is run in general

Open Up

A nice problem to have is the one where so many members want to be involved that it becomes impossible to work as a group. In this case it becomes necessary for the members group to hold **open** meetings every now and then so that members who are not on the group can ask questions, be given information, make requests, raise matters of concern etc. The group would meet more regularly than the open meeting and the members of the group would have to be voted for in club elections.

<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The group has to answer to the rest of the members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As things get more complicated members who are 'new to the game' are sometimes put off.