



*THE NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF 18 PLUS GROUPS*

# ***National Federation of 18 Plus Groups***

## **Proposal for Restructuring**

### **AREA LEAD OPTION**

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**Church Street Chambers, 8-10 Church Street, Newent, Gloucestershire. GL18 1PU**

# National Federation of 18 Plus Groups **RESTRUCTURING DOCUMENT**

## **AREA LEAD OPTION**

### **Background**

Over the last few years, the membership numbers of 18 Plus has declined substantially. As membership has dropped, so has the Federation's income. The structure and costs of the Federation have not changed to match the current situation.

The reason that our financial losses are so high is not that our income is too low for the membership numbers, but that our costs are far too high. The overwhelming bulk of our costs are from the Office and from the staff. Under this structure, the Federation will be financially viable within the first year.

This option aims to demonstrate that an organisation with around 600 members does not need an Office or salaried staff to operate effectively.

### **Overview**

#### General

- Keep the National > Area > Group hierarchy.
- Keep the age range unchanged.
- Devolve power and responsibilities to the Areas.
- Reduce operating costs of the Federation to the bare minimum.
- All monies to remain in their current accounts at all levels.
- Increase use of the internet for administration, organisation and publicity.

#### National Tier

- Reduced powers, responsibilities and costs.
- No maximum terms of office, except for the Treasurer.
- Only Area Representatives to have a vote.
- No Annual National Conference.

#### Area Tier

- Increased power and responsibilities.
- No maximum terms of office, except for the Treasurer.
- Keeps membership records and issues membership cards.

#### Group Tier

- No levies or affiliation costs.
- Terms of office of one year.
- No maximum terms of office, except for the Treasurer.

#### Office

- Closed.
- Staff given redundancy or retirement.

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**The National Tier**

**Posts**

The National Tier shall consist of the following Groupings:

- The **Non-Executive Committee**, which consists of:
  - National Chairman
  - National Administrator
  - National Treasurer
- The **Executive Committee**, which consists of:
  - One Representative from each Area
- The **National Officers**, which are:
  - National Publicity Officer
  - National Training Officer
  - National Web Master
  - National Magazine Editor
- Zero or more **Vice Presidents**

**Job descriptions**

National Chairman

- Chair the National Meetings
- Signatory on the National accounts
- Casting vote
- Approach potential Vice Presidents

National Administrator

- Collate agendas for National meetings
- Keep minutes of National meetings
- Signatory on the National accounts
- Book National Meeting venue
- Obtain stationary and blank membership cards and distribute them to the Areas
- Collate the National directory from information collected by Areas
- Keep the National diary
- Forward nominations for National posts to the Areas

National Treasurer

- Manage the National accounts
- Signatory on the National accounts
- Ensure National insurance policy is maintained
- Produce budgets on National accounts

Area Representatives

- Vote on motions as their Areas mandate
- Take motions presented at National meetings back to their Area for debate
- Elect Non-Executive Committee members and National Officers
- Must have read the Minutes of the previous meeting, and be fully conversant with Issues raised therein

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### National Publicity Officer

- To conduct National publicity campaigns
- To act as a National contact for telephone inquiries

### National Training Officer

- Ensure Area Officers are trained in their roles
- Co-ordinate Area training

### National Web Master

- To work closely with Areas, Groups and National Officers to ensure the Web Page is kept up to date and maintained
- To arrange web hosting
- To take responsibility for and manage all aspects of official electronic communication and administration

### National Magazine Editor

- Produce a regular magazine, published exclusively on the web page

### Vice Presidents

- Purely advisory role

All posts are to have a term of office of one year. There is no limit to the number of terms an officer may serve, except for the Treasurer, who may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms.

### **National Tier Responsibilities**

The National tier shall be responsible for the following:

- Area development and closure
- To arrange insurance for the Federation as a whole
- To manage the National bank accounts
- To set the membership fee
- To set the Area levy
- To train the Areas
- To maintain the National diary
- To conduct nationwide publicity campaigns
- To maintain the National web page
- To publish a regular online magazine

The National tier shall not be responsible for the following:

- Issuing memberships or maintaining membership records
- Running events
- Group development or closure

### **Funding**

The National tier is to be funded solely by a flat rate fee from each Area. This fee is to be decided at the February National meeting (see below) and payable in four equal installments over the course of the year. The National tier will not levy Groups or Members in any form.

National Officers should be able to make requests for funds beyond that of their fixed budgets. These funds should be used for specific projects and come from National reserves and/or additional Area funding. Such requests should be in the form of a motion to be voted on by the National Executive Committee.

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### **Meetings**

National meetings should be run according to ABC of Chairmanship (Citrine).

National meetings to be held quarterly in February, May, August and November, These meetings should be held in a reasonably central location at a hired venue. A meeting should be scheduled to last no more than a day, and overnight accommodation should only be used where absolutely necessary.

Meetings are to be attended by the following:

- Non Executive Committee (*funded from National accounts*)
- Executive Committee (*funded from respective Area accounts*)
- Invited members (*funded by the inviter*). This includes all National Officers.
- Observers. All members may attend as an observer, providing that they inform the National Administrator in advance, and meet their own expenses.

No motion should be voted on until it has been first voted on by each Area. If a motion is introduced at a National meeting, the Area Representatives should take the motion back to their Area, to be voted on at their next Area meeting.

Motions are to be voted on only by the Area Representatives. Area Representatives should vote according to the wishes of their Area. In exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the National tier, where an immediate decision is required, Area Representatives should have the ability to make a decision without recourse to their Areas. All motions require a simple majority to pass.

The Non Executive Committee and National Officers have no vote at National meetings.

The Executive Committee will also hear proposals for National Scale Events, and should have the ability to take a vote without consultation with their Area.

All attendees should have the ability to speak at meetings. Sessions should not be held *in camera* except where absolutely necessary. Minutes should be made available to all members via the web page following each meeting.

### **Elections and Appointments**

All National elections and appointments are to be held at the February meeting. Vice President Candidates should be appointed by the Executive Committee and the Non-Executive Committee. All other posts on the Non Executive Committee and National Officers should be by election. Any Area member should be able to put him or herself forward for these positions provided they are proposed by a Group, and they are under the age of 36 years on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Nominations should be made in writing to the National Administrator at latest, the first January Area meeting, and ideally, at the November National meeting.

The National Administrator should forward all nominations (plus supporting supplied documentation) to the Areas.

If no nominations for a post are received by the National Administrator prior to the first January Area meeting, nominations shall be accepted up to the election of that post. In this case, Area Representatives should be free to use their own judgment.

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Members over the age of 35 years on January 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the February meeting are eligible to stand for any National positions if no member 35 years or under has been nominated by the first January Area meeting.

### **The Area Tier**

Under the Area Lead Option, Areas are essentially unchanged from their present structure. However, in addition, they will require to manage their own memberships. Groups will pay their members' membership fee to their Area, not National, and the Area will keep membership records and issue membership cards.

### **Posts**

An Area committee consists of the following (minimum) posts:

- Chairman
- Administrator
- Treasurer

In addition, as many as possible of the following posts should be filled:

- Membership Officer
- Activities Officer
- Development Officer
- Publicity Officer
- Training Officer
- One or more General Committee members

### **Job descriptions**

#### Area Chairman

- All responsibilities as present, without the requirement to act as their Area's representative at National meetings
- Ensure that Area membership records are kept up to date

#### Area Administrator

- All responsibilities as present
- To supply the Area directory to Groups in their Area, other Area Administrators and the National Administrator
- To receive risk assessment forms and forward them to the National insurance company
- To keep an Area accident log

#### Area Treasurer

- All responsibilities as present
- If no Membership Officer is elected, these responsibilities fall to the Treasurer

#### Membership Officer

- To keep an accurate record of that Area's membership
- To issue membership cards for that Area
- To receive payment for membership for that Area

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### Activities Officer

- All responsibilities as present

### Development Officer

- All responsibilities as present
- Ensure a Group viability study is passed and Issuing of Group Opening certificate
- Group Closure

### Publicity Officer

- All responsibilities as present

### Training Officer

- All responsibilities as present

### General Members

- All responsibilities as present

All posts are to have a term of office of one year. There is no limit to the number of terms an officer may serve, except for the Treasurer, who may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms.

## **Funding**

Areas will be funded by the membership fee, plus any surplus made on Events. Areas should not levy individual Groups.

Areas will pay a levy to the National tier as described under National funding.

## **Meetings**

Area meetings should be run according to ABC of Chairmanship (Citrine).

Area meetings have a greater importance than at present. Each meeting is the Groups' opportunity to discuss and set Area policy on National issues.

Area meetings to be held quarterly in January, April, July and October, these meetings should be held in a reasonably central location at a hired venue. A meeting should be scheduled to last no more than an afternoon. As far as possible Area meetings should be held midpoint between National meetings.

Area meetings should be attended by all Area Officers and up to two delegates from each Group. Any member of the National Federation should be able to attend as an Observer. All Observers should have the right to speak.

At each meeting, reports should be presented by the Chairman, Treasurer, Representative (to the previous National meeting) and Membership Officer. All members present will have the right to ask questions of all Area Officers. If an Officer is not present, that Officer will make a written reply available.

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All Groups should present a report, the content of which should be determined by Area policy. All members present shall have the right to question the Group delegates on their report.

All non *in-camera* issues raised at the previous National meeting should be up for discussion. For each motion, delegates should direct their Representative how to vote at the following National meeting: For, Against, or to allow the Representative to make their own decision.

Groups and the Area Committee may introduce motions. Group motions must be seconded by another Group in attendance. Motions should be declared as being as Area or National in scope.

Area motions should be voted on to determine Area policy. National scope motions should be voted on to forward the motion to the next National meeting. At the next National meeting, the Area Representative will introduce the motion. Other Area Representatives will take the motion back to their Areas, and vote on it at their next Area meeting. The motion will then be voted on at the following National meeting, and if it passes, becomes National policy, applicable to all Areas.

Areas will be free to set their own policy on who should be their Representative to attend the next National meeting. That Representative should ensure that he or she has read the Minutes of the previous National meeting, and is fully conversant with all issues raised at that meeting.

### **Elections**

All Area posts are to be determined by election at the January meeting. Any member of that Area may stand for any Area post, as long as they are nominated by a Group of that Area, and are 35 or under on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Nominations should be accepted by the Area Administrator up to the start of the January meeting.

Members over the age of 35 years on January 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the February meeting are eligible to stand for any Area positions as long as a member aged 35 years or under has not been nominated.

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## **AREA LEAD OPTION**

### **The Group Tier**

The Group tier is very little changed from the present structure. All posts and responsibilities remain unchanged. All posts are to have a term of office of one year. There is no limit to the number of terms an officer may serve, except the Treasurer, who may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms. Groups should hold an Annual General Meeting to elect posts; these should be run in the same way as existing Bi-AGMs. The AGM should take place between the January Area meeting and the February National meeting.

All members of a Group aged 35 years or under on January 1<sup>st</sup> may stand for a Group post. Members aged over 35 years may stand if there are no eligible candidates for a post.

### **Funding**

Groups may charge members 'subs' for attending a Group night, plus any surplus from Events.

Groups will not pay any levy to either their Area or to the National tier.

### **Membership**

New members must be aged between 18 and under 36 years. Existing members who are 36 years or older may renew their membership provided they do so within six months of their membership expiring. All members who renew within six months of their membership expiring shall have their membership backdated to the expiry date.

Memberships will be payable to the Group, and the Group will forward a cheque for the membership amount to the Area Treasurer.

A person's membership number will be fixed for the duration that that person is a member of 18 Plus, starting with their first renewal after the February 2006 National meeting.

### **Direct Members**

Under the Area Lead Option, there will be no direct members. All members should be a member of a Group, even if that member cannot physically attend Group nights. The standard membership fee would therefore apply, but it would be the responsibility of the member to keep them informed.

### **Quest**

Quest Groups shall continue to exist for members of the age of 36 years and over. Quest Groups shall operate in exactly the same manner as Groups, with the following exceptions:

- There shall be no upper age limit on joining a Quest Group.
- Members of Quest Groups may attend Area meetings only as Observers
- Members of Quest Groups may not stand for any Area or National committee post
- Members of Quest Groups may attend lower tier Events by invitation only

Membership of a Quest Group shall be 75% of the full membership price. There is no requirement for a Quest Group to be affiliated to a lower tier Group, but it must be part of a lower tier Area.

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### **Events**

There shall be three classes of event: Group, Area and National Scale. Group and Area Events are unchanged from present.

All Health & Safety risks will be taken into account and appropriate measures, such as a risk assessment, will be taken. Where a risk assessment is completed, it shall be forwarded to the Area Administrator before the Event takes place.

### **National Scale Events**

The National Tier will not be responsible for the organising or running of Events. All National Scale Events shall be the responsibility of an Area, who shall appoint an Organising Committee.

The following criteria must be fulfilled for an Event to be declared as National Scale:

- The Executive Committee must accept the Event as National Scale
- The Event must be expected to attract members from more than one Area

National Scale Events shall be placed in the National Diary, kept by the National Administrator. Two National Scale Events should not clash.

The National Tier will not add a levy to National Scale Events.

If an Area is not able to fund an Event by itself:

- The Event shall have its own bank account. Signatories to include the Area Chairman, Area Treasurer and the Organising Committee Chairman, plus any others deemed necessary.
- The Event will be budgeted to produce a surplus.
- The Area will not ask the National Tier for funds. The Area will sell shares in the Event to other Areas. Shareholders from other Areas shall be the first creditors in line, unless the event has been underwritten. (*Exception – see 'Easter Holiday'*)
- Areas may ask the National Tier to underwrite the Event. The National Tier may choose to do so. If so, the National Tier may charge an underwriting fee of 10% of any surplus generated by the Event. All Shareholder payouts will be calculated after the underwriting fee has been paid out. No underwriting fee shall be payable if the Event does not make a surplus.

### **Easter Holiday**

If a National Scale Easter Holiday is run, it shall be organised by an Area, just like other National Scale Events. However, the National Tier shall also be allowed to purchase shares. Areas will have priority over National.

The decision to purchase shares should be made at a National meeting. No consultation with the Areas is required.

### **Annual National Conference**

The Annual National Conference will not be run. All policy debates and votes take place at Area and National meetings.

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**Communication**

With no Office or bulk mailings, it is essential that members, Groups, Areas and National Officers take a more proactive role in communicating amongst themselves.

Communication between the National and Area tiers will be via the Area Representatives at National and Area meetings. Communication between an Area and a Group will be via the Area meetings. This is the formal communication route. Where written communication is required, email should be considered an acceptable format.

Information may be disseminated by the National website (including the National magazine). This is to replace the current bulk postings. Groups should ensure that those members with access to the website should keep those members without access informed. Groups should also work with the National Web Master to ensure that their details and news are published on, or linked from the National website.

Members are also encouraged to use all methods of communication available to them. This includes visiting other Groups, attending other Group or Area Events, the telephone, mail, email, mailing lists, web forums and instant messaging.

Publicity for Events will be the responsibility of the organiser.

Each Area Administrator must keep a directory of that Area. A copy of that directory must be supplied to all other Areas.

Each Area Membership Officer will maintain an Area membership listing. The contents of that listing shall be kept confidential, other than to answer reasonable requests for confirmation of membership.

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**Budgets**

The membership fee will initially be £25. At this level, the National tier should be run at break even point, and each Area should make a surplus to build up reserves. Thereafter, the Executive Committee will set the membership fee at the November National meeting, to take effect from January 1<sup>st</sup>. Areas should use the previous Area meeting to canvass opinions from the Groups over the fee.

All monies at all levels will stay in their respective accounts.

**National**

The budget for the National tier should be as small as possible for the National tier to function effectively. The National tier shall be funded almost exclusively by the payment of a flat fee levy from each Area. (The only other funding for National would be from any surplus from underwriting events, and interest from accounts.)

Breakdown of costs and budgets:

Meeting hire: 4 x £100 = £400

This is for the hire of the meeting room for the National meetings.

Chair: £200

Admin: £200

Treasurer: £200

Webmaster: £100

Training: £100

Publicity: £100

Total: £900

These budgets are to cover travel costs and food in association with National business. This money is not intended for the National Officers to perform their duties.

(This money should not be seen a ring-fenced funding for each Officer. Rather, it is an estimation of what funding each Officer might require in the execution of their duties. )

Insurance: £1000

Web hosting: £200

Invites to meetings: £300

Sundries (including, but not limited to: blank stationary, postage, contact telephone number): £200

Total: £1700

Grand total: £3000

Auditing fees will be more than covered by interest on the account.

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**Area**

Areas currently range from 70 to 168 members (approximately). Areas income will come mainly from the membership fee, plus any surpluses generated by events and account interest.

Income: 70 x £25 = £1750, minimum, to 168 x £25 = £4200 maximum

There are currently 6 Areas. Thus each Area will pay a levy of £500.

Outgoings:

National Levy: £500

Existing costs: £700

These are the costs that an Area currently has to spend.

Additional costs: £100

These are the extra costs that an Area will incur from having to administer its own memberships.

Total costs: £1300

Areas should be making a surplus of between £450 and £2900 depending on their size. No account is made of Area events, as these should be budgeted to be cost neutral.

**Group**

A Group's expenditure to the National tier or its Area under the Area Lead Option is zero. Any money it raises is purely for its own use.

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**Time Scales**

**Apr 2005**

- ANC presentations and vote;
- Area Lead Option carries;
- Work starts on new constitution.

**May 2005**

- Area meetings and elections.
- Elect new committee including Membership Officer, all posts to run to April 2006.

**Jul 2005**

- Order new stationary (membership cards)
- National and Area meetings continue to old schedule.

**Sep 2005**

- National Training for all Areas. This training will include the operations required to run Area Lead Option.
- New cards will be previewed.

**Nov 2005**

- NEC meeting; Final preview version of constitution.
- Membership records to be distributed to Areas.
- New blank cards to be distributed.
- Merchandise distribution to Areas initiated.
- Final Area meetings under old structure.

**Early Feb 2006**

- Final NEC meeting under old structure.
- National reports presented for acceptance by Executive Committee.
- Final constitution accepted.
- New Executive Council, Non-Executive Council and National Posts elected.
- Audits of all accounts presented.
- Merchandise distribution completed.
- Back up hard drives to tape, tape to Archives office.
- Ensure all required information from hard drives is disseminated as required to parties requiring it.
- Wipe hard drives. Dispose of equipment.
- Office closes. All legal and required payments to employees met in full.
- Area Lead Option fully implemented.