



**The Chartered Institution of  
Building Services Engineers**

# **Special Interest Groups Manual**

**Approved by CIBSE Board 14 September 2017**

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## 1. Introduction

CIBSE Special Interest Groups are formed to develop and promote a discipline of building services engineering, for networking with non-members and other disciplines and to share and disseminate knowledge relevant to the discipline.

CIBSE Groups run a range of events and activities and offer participation in person or online through the worldwide web and social media.

CIBSE Groups are open to CIBSE members and to non-members. Groups' activities are overseen by CIBSE Technology Committee and governed by the CIBSE Charter<sup>1</sup> and must therefore be for the 'public benefit'.

## 2. Membership

Anyone who has an interest in the discipline covered by the Group, whether a CIBSE member or not, may apply to join. Groups exist to share knowledge, so it is expected that members will wish to join in and contribute to the networking and knowledge-sharing activities of the Group.

Anyone may apply to join a CIBSE Special Interest Group by registering on the CIBSE website, or, if already registered, by amending their personal account to indicate that they wish to join the group. Registration by non-members requires them to provide their full name, job title, email address, work telephone number and location, and a provision of consent for CIBSE to process this data.

CIBSE holds a database of Group members centrally. Due to the requirements of data protection law, this list is held and managed by staff, who will also manage bulk email communications with the Group on behalf of its Committee.

## 3. Governance

### 3.1 Committee

Each Group should have an elected Committee of at least 6 including 4 Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary). The Group Chair and Group Treasurer must be corporate members of the Institution whereas the Group Secretary can be a member of the Institution in any grade, and the Vice-Chair and other members of the Committee do not have to be members of the Institution. The Committee may have up to 12 voting members.

The Committee shall have the power to co-opt additional committee members, who need not be members of the Institution, to assist in special duties. Co-opted members shall not have a vote. There is a presumption that willing volunteers who offer to serve on a Group Committee will be co-opted.

Wherever possible the Committee should seek to work by consensus. Where a vote is required it shall be an open vote.

The Chair of the Group shall have a second or casting vote in cases of equality of votes on any question at any meeting of the Group or of the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> CIBSE Groups are Sections of the Institution as defined in Paragraph 76 of the Byelaws.

### **3.2 Committee Meetings**

The Group Committee is responsible for maintaining a record of their committee meetings and for circulating a notice of the meeting and the main items of discussion in advance of the meeting. (This would typically be at least 7 days prior to the meeting.)

Four members, two of whom shall be Officers of the Group, shall constitute a quorum for meetings of the Committee, and unless this number is present within half an hour of the time for which a meeting is called, no formal business shall be transacted.

### **3.3 Annual General Meeting**

The Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) not later than 7th May each year, and such Ordinary Meetings as the Group Committee shall decide.

Officers and the Committee are elected at the AGM from registered members of the Group by those Group members who are CIBSE members (excluding full time students). Any vacancy arising during the year may be filled by the Committee by co-option until the next AGM, at which the post will be open for election.

The Chair should not normally hold office for more than three consecutive years. The Committee is responsible for considering succession planning.

The Group Secretary is responsible for providing the Groups Manager with a calling notice giving the date and venue for the AGM and a list of officers and voting committee members proposed by the Committee. This should be provided at least eight weeks before the proposed meeting date to enable the full membership to be notified.

The notice of the meeting and the list of nominations will invite others wishing to stand to submit their nomination by a stated date, which shall be at least four weeks before the date of the AGM.

If there are more nominations than vacancies, then a further email to members will give the full list of names and invite any registered member of the Group wishing to vote to apply by email for a ballot form. Where there are more nominations for voting committee members than vacancies, those not elected should be invited to join the Committee as co-opted members.

### **3.4 Annual Reports**

The Group Secretary shall complete and submit the annual report (using the standard template) by 1st December each year. These help to provide material for the CIBSE Annual Report, for use in publicity and PR and promotion of the Group and Institution, and also for internal reporting.

## **4. Representation on CIBSE Council**

The Group has a seat on the CIBSE Council, which meets three times a year. This is usually taken by the Group chair, but when they cannot attend, another officer of the Group may deputise. The Council is an advisory body, which serves to inform and advise the CIBSE Board of Trustees, and provides a network opportunity for the chairs of the Groups, Societies, CIBSE Regions, YEN and the CIBSE Board.

Group Chairs are also invited to meet together to share experience and discuss potential areas of joint interest or activity. This may be undertaken in conjunction with the Council meetings.

## 5. Staff Support

The primary CIBSE staff contact with the Groups is the Groups Manager. For communications, the Group is supported by the CIBSE marketing and communications team, who will provide support with bulk email, website and social media activity. Staff will undertake all communications with the whole Group membership, including any ballots. Staff will also assist with arrangements for meetings at the CIBSE Building Services Centre by booking rooms and refreshments.

## 6. Financial Support

Groups are part of CIBSE, which is a registered charity, governed by the CIBSE Board of Trustees. They must operate within the financial procedures set out by the Board, in line with Charity and Company Law. The CIBSE financial year is the same as the calendar year.

All financial transactions, including issue or payment of invoices and receipt of payments must be handled by the CIBSE finance team. This protects both the Group members and the Institution. Requests for payment of invoices, which should be addressed to CIBSE, should be made to the Groups Manager. Payments should always relate to agreed budgeted items. Where a group wishes to incur expenditure that is not within the budget, this must be agreed by the Groups Manager in advance. Expenditure in excess of £1,000 must also be approved by a CIBSE Director, usually the Technical Director. Requests for payments from Group budgets should be approved by two Group officers.

Where venues are required and associated costs are to be incurred for Group technical events or committee meetings, then these should be agreed with the Groups manager before any commitments are made, to ensure that the Group budget has the funds to cover the event and that the costs are appropriate to be met from charitable funds. Any contracts requested should be made between CIBSE and the venue. Social activities must be funded independently from CIBSE and its charitable and professional activities.

### 6.1 Budgeting

The Group should make an annual budget request and submit it to CIBSE by 31st July for the following calendar year.

The Group Committee should monitor expenditure (and income) and is responsible for keeping it within the agreed budget. Additional resources may be available towards the end of the year, but must be negotiated with the Groups Manager before any commitments are entered into.

### 6.2 Members Travel and Subsistence Expenses

The Institution benefits considerably from the substantial time and expense freely absorbed by members and their employers in support of the Institution's charitable objectives. Many members consider it an honour to serve CIBSE and cushioning expenses is a cost - effective means for industry to support the work of the Institution. However, we appreciate that, especially for members travelling regularly from some distance and those no longer in employment, it is not always possible to expect employers to cover expenses incurred. In these circumstances the Institution will reimburse reasonable expense claims from CIBSE members that satisfy the following criteria. The claims form is [available online](#).

#### Claim Criteria:

1. Claims must be made within 3 months of the expense being incurred and on or before 15 December of the year in which it was incurred. Claims submitted after 15 December will not be met.
2. Receipts for all major components of expenditure should accompany the claim.
3. Members are requested to book travel well in advance in order to obtain lower priced fares. In order to contain train and air costs, the Institution will take the risk of meeting cancellation or deferment.
4. Claims for air fares for internal flights will not normally be met. Where a member wishes to fly then this should be discussed with the relevant CIBSE staff before any bookings are made or costs incurred.
5. Travel costs should not exceed the cost of a normal 2<sup>nd</sup> class rail fare, or 4 5 p per mile for a personal vehicle (not company car). Where there is reasonable choice the Institution would prefer train travel over car, to minimise carbon emissions.
6. Use of personal motor cycle for company business is reclaimable at 24p per mile.
7. If any individual trip or claim is likely to exceed £200, members should obtain specific written permission from the relevant CIBSE staff in advance of the travel date. This is to ensure that there are sufficient funds to meet this level of expense.
8. For meetings external to CIBSE (i.e. where a member is representing the Institution) member should obtain specific written permission from the relevant CIBSE staff in advance of the travel date.
9. Claims for hotel and meal expenses, which exceed CIBSE negotiated rates, will not be met. (Please contact CIBSE for advice on hotel accommodation in London, when required).

Any questions about members' expenses should be addressed to the relevant department before commitments are made. The claim form gives more detailed rules on eligible expenditure etc. Non-members' expenses may be reimbursed at the discretion of the Chair and Treasurer, in consultation with the relevant CIBSE staff. This may also provide an opportunity to promote the full benefits of CIBSE membership to Non-members.

## 7. Technical Activities

Groups are encouraged to undertake technical activities to promote the Group and to develop, share and exchange knowledge in pursuit of its agreed objectives. These may include holding seminars, conferences, joint meetings, producing newsletters, presenting papers at third party events, assisting in producing CIBSE guidance and codes, developing CPD courses and supporting regional activities.

### 7.1 Group Technical Events

Group committees are encouraged to organise technical events and visits. To minimise clashes of dates Group Secretaries are asked to check the events calendar on the [CIBSE website](#).

Any activities having budgetary impact or requiring CIBSE resources should be agreed with the Groups Manager before any commitments are made, including bookings for the CIBSE Building Services Centre.

Groups are welcome to make initial enquiries to ascertain availability and prices of outside venues. However, please note that only the Groups Manager or other authorised CIBSE staff are permitted to enter into any contract where there may be financial consequences – e.g. hire or cancellation fees. Firm chargeable arrangements with venues outside CIBSE need to be confirmed once the full costs are agreed and approved by the Committee and staff.

### **7.3 Collaborative Activity**

Groups are encouraged to collaborate with the CIBSE Regions and to work with Regional Committees.

If Groups are invited to collaborate with other organisations, then the request should be discussed in the first instance with the Groups Manager or Technical Director.

### **7.4 Involving CIBSE Officers in Group Activities**

Institution Officers are always keen to support the endeavour of active Groups or members. Groups are well advised to take every opportunity to invite the President or other Officers to attend meetings and functions.

## **8. Knowledge Sharing**

### **8.1 Contribution to CIBSE Knowledge**

Groups are encouraged to contribute to the development of CIBSE knowledge. The Knowledge Management Committee (KMC), the standing committee responsible for CIBSE publications, encourages ideas for the development and updating of CIBSE knowledge from the Groups. KMC also seeks specialist input to knowledge from relevant Groups.

CIBSE published knowledge undergoes a formal refereeing process to protect the standing and reputation of the Institution, and for CIBSE knowledge to continue to be recognised by governments. For further details or to discuss specific ideas, Groups are encouraged to contact KMC via the Technical Co-ordinator, [technical@cibse.org](mailto:technical@cibse.org).

### **8.2 Presented Papers**

Groups are encouraged to prepare technical papers for publication (subject to peer review) by *Building Services Engineering Research and Technology* or *Lighting Research & Technology* – the CIBSE supported Journals. In other cases the CIBSE Journal may wish to cover the paper. The respective Editors will welcome approaches.

### **8.3 Contribution to CIBSE Policy Activity**

The Technology Committee is the standing committee responsible to the CIBSE Board for the Institution's input to government consultations and related enquiries. The committee welcomes input from the Groups to the development of responses to government consultations. Current consultations are normally advertised on the CIBSE website. However, specialist consultations may come to the attention of a Group before the technical team is aware of them. Where a Group believes that CIBSE should respond to a consultation, the Group Secretary is encouraged to contact the Technical Department.

Group Chairs may be asked to contribute to a statement or accompanying press release or article and this will help to promote the Group as well as CIBSE.

## 9. Establishing a new Special Interest Group

A Group is normally established in the following way:

- i) Four corporate members of the Institution indicate to the Groups Manager, in writing, their wish to form a Group along with a statement of its proposed scope suitable for publication in the CIBSE Journal.
- ii) The proposal is submitted through the CIBSE Technical Director to the CIBSE Technology Committee to see how it fits in with the wider aims and objectives of CIBSE. Feedback is given to the proposers.
- iii) If approved by the Technology Committee, the proposal is then circulated to the existing Groups for feedback (via the Groups' Chairs). This is to ensure that the scope of the proposed Group does not conflict with or unduly overlap the scope of existing Groups.
- iv) The Groups Manager will then publish the proposal in the CIBSE Journal and seek support from the membership.
- iv) If at least 20 more Corporate members give their support individually, the proposed terms of reference will be placed before the CIBSE Board for formal agreement.

In exceptional cases, the CIBSE Board may directly decide to establish a Group on a topic that is considered to be particularly important to the work of the Institution.

The CIBSE Board having approved the formation of a Group, an inaugural meeting shall be convened by sending notices of the meeting to all members of the Institution who have indicated an interest in the formation of the Group, and by notice in the CIBSE Journal. This first meeting shall be chaired by a corporate member nominated by the CIBSE Board.

The business of the first meeting shall be to elect Officers and Committee from the members to manage the affairs of the Group.

Note: The CIBSE Board has delegated responsibility for the management of CIBSE Groups to the Technology Committee.

## 10. Closing a Group

The CIBSE Board may close a Group at any time, normally acting on a recommendation from the Technology Committee.