



SIG Handbook





Contents

Thank-you for volunteering for your CIBSE special interest group (SIG).

This handbook is designed to tell you all you need to know about how to run a group and deliver activity for your members.

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Contact groups@cibse.org for support at any time.



The CIBSE Special Interest Groups

The CIBSE special interest groups share and disseminate knowledge relevant to the discipline to the wider industry.

A group's members are those who have signed up, via their MyCIBSE account, to join the group. Group members are not required to be CIBSE members, but they are encouraged to join CIBSE.

CIBSE has 18 special interest groups:

- [ASHRAE](#)
- [Building Simulation](#)
- [Data Centres](#)
- [Daylight](#)
- [Education Buildings](#)
- [Electrical Services](#)
- [Energy Performance](#)
- [Facilities Management](#)
- [Healthcare](#)
- [Heat Networks](#)
- [Heritage and Retrofit](#)
- [Homes for the Future](#)
- [HVAC Systems](#)
- [IT & Controls](#)
- [Intelligent Buildings](#)
- [Natural Ventilation](#)
- [Resilient Cities](#)
- [Sustainability](#)

“CIBSE volunteering has played a significant role in my career development. The connections and opportunities that arose through my CIBSE volunteering had a huge influence in how I ended up in my current role, and have led me to meet many brilliant people in our industry. I'd recommend it to anyone!”



Katie Clemence - Jackson
Chair, CIBSE Sustainability Group



Governance

Our governance sets out how a group is created, who its members are, how it should be run, who should be on its committee and how they should be elected.

All special interest groups should operate in line with our governance.

Download a copy of our [governance](#) from the [Volunteer Resource Hub](#). This handbook provides a concise summary of key governance elements for easy reference.

The special interest group committee

Each group is led by a dedicated committee of volunteers whose role is to organise and deliver activity to engage their group's members. They are elected from the group's membership by the group's membership.

The committee is made up of four officers (a Chair, Vice Chair, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer) and a suggested four to eight elected members.



Volunteering with the IBG Special Interest Group has deepened my understanding of innovation in the built environment, particularly how intelligent systems, data, and technology can transform building performance. In my role as Secretary, I've supported initiatives that explore these advancements while developing my ability to coordinate and contribute to forward-thinking, industry-led discussions.

Gita Maruthayanar

Honorary Secretary, CIBSE Intelligent Buildings Group



The Committee - Officers

Chair

The Chair provides leadership, representation and direction for the group and its committee.

Their main responsibilities are to:

- Chair group committee meetings.
- Oversee the activities of the committee.
- Represent the views of the group's members and committee.
- Represent the group at the CIBSE GLC and Council meetings.
- Keep the committee and members of the group informed about relevant CIBSE updates and activities.
- Generate enthusiastic support for the group and CIBSE.

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair provides support for the Chair in carrying out their role and can deputise for the Chair.

As part of succession planning, Chairs should ensure that their Vice Chair gets exposure to the duties of the Chair so that they are familiar with the role when they succeed them.

The Chair is invited to the Groups Liaison Committee (GLC) and CIBSE Council meetings, held three times a year.

GLC is made up of all the CIBSE group Chairs and is chaired by the CIBSE President. It is a forum for the networks to discuss ideas, initiatives and issues and receive updates from CIBSE. The **Council** is CIBSE's consultative and representative body and works with the Board to add value to the governance of the Institution. All group chairs are members of Council.

Honorary Treasurer

The Honorary Treasurer is responsible for managing the finances of the group.

Their main responsibilities are to:

- Monitor the expenditure of the group and keep adequate records.
- Work with the Chair to prepare the group's annual funding request.
- Keep the committee informed of the financial condition of the group.

Honorary Secretary

The Honorary Secretary provides the committee with administrative support and ensures that it is operating in line with its governance.

Their main responsibilities are to:

- Work with the Chair to prepare agendas for committee meetings and circulating the invitations, papers and minutes for them.
- Take minutes for committee meetings.
- Advise the Chair on governance.
- Keep committee records.
- Keep track of all the property of the group (for example: marketing collateral, pop-up banners).
- Coordinate the AGM and nomination process for the committee.

Succession planning

The nominations process is a good way to bring in new committee members, but it's also important to think ahead. Officers should look for potential successors for their roles and offer support, training and the opportunity to gain experience. This contributes to the long-term health and sustainability of the committee. It ensures that roles and responsibilities are continually filled by capable individuals who understand the aims and purpose of the group.

Volunteering at CIBSE

Following their election, new committee members will be invited to an annual induction by CIBSE. Committee members are encouraged to support newcomers to their committees by inducting them at a committee level, helping to ensure committee knowledge is also passed on.

Committee members will also be given a copy of the [Volunteer Handbook](#), which sets out what volunteers can expect from CIBSE and what CIBSE asks for in return and contains helpful resources for volunteers.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

We believe that an inclusive culture fosters resilience, creativity, and innovation – qualities that deliver both better buildings and a stronger building service engineering community.

Our [Inclusivity Guidance](#) contains tips for ensuring that groups and their committees are as inclusive and welcoming as possible. CIBSE's [EDI Panels](#) are also available for guidance and collaboration.



The Committee - Elected and Standing Members

The elected members on a committee deliver activity for the group. They can choose to focus on specific areas, such as organising events or authoring technical guidance, or they may choose to get involved in all the activities of the committee.

Elected members must be a member of the group. They are elected for one-year terms and can serve as an elected member for a maximum of 12 consecutive years. Elected members who take a break from service as an elected member can become eligible to serve again – this can be by serving as an officer. There should be four to eight elected members on a committee.

Elected members can get involved in activities such as:

- Organising technical events
- Authoring technical guidance
- Contributing to research
- Coordinating policy consultations
- Coordinating a group's social media
- Speaking at CIBSE conferences

Some committees prefer to assign elected members dedicated roles to focus the committee's activities for example:

- Social media secretary
- Events secretary
- Regional representatives
- Policy and Advocacy Lead

Others prefer for elected members to get involved across a range of activities. It is up to each committee and elected member to choose what works best for them.

Standing members also sit on the committee to support the members and activity of another group.

These members do not need to be elected in a group's AGM, as they will be elected through their own committees and organisations.

Standing members are appointed to a group committee to represent another committee or network. This helps strengthen collaboration across groups. They may come from another CIBSE network or a relevant external organisation.



Committee Structures

To help coordinate the activity of the group, group committees can create subcommittees, panels and working groups to focus on key areas.

They should be chaired by an elected member of the committee, but the other participants are not required to be committee members. They should have a clear purpose, membership and length of operation – for subcommittees, these will need to be expressed in their Terms of Reference.

Subcommittees

- Focus on a general area that supports the main committee's goal.
- Ongoing, but members are reaffirmed at regular intervals (i.e. annually).
- Meet at regular intervals to carry out tasks set by the main committee.
- Most suitable for annual or ongoing activity, such as updating a CIBSE Knowledge publication.

Panels

- Provide expert advice to the main committee to inform decisions.
- Ongoing, members can join or leave as required.
- Meet on an ad-hoc basis, generally to advise on relevant issues or specific topics.
- Suitable for providing technical knowledge, such as input into a conference agenda.

Working groups

- Focus on a specific task.
- Time-bound from creation until completion of task.
- Meet at regular intervals to ensure the timely completion of the task.
- Most suitable for one off activities, such as a policy consultation response.



“Volunteering with CIBSE has allowed me to give back to the industry, especially through sharing my knowledge with younger engineers. I have also had the opportunity to make new friends and learn things that I would not have done had I not volunteered.”

Leon Markwell,
Chair, CIBSE Electrical Services Group



Electing the Committee

A group committee is elected at their Annual General Meeting (AGM). This must be held between 1 March and the date of the CIBSE AGM in June each year.

Committees must follow the following process for organising their AGM:

**12
weeks
before**

The committee set the date, time and venue for their AGM. They confirm which roles are open for nominations and who they are nominating for the roles. This information is sent to groups@cibse.org.

**8
weeks
before**

CIBSE sends the calling notice to all members of the group. This tells them the details of the AGM and the available roles. Members have 14 days to nominate themselves for the available roles.

**5
weeks
before**

The committee have 7 days to review the nominations and raise any concerns.

**4
weeks
before**

If required, CIBSE will organise an election for roles with more than one nomination.

**Day
of
AGM**

The group holds their AGM, where the Chair must inform the group who will be on the committee for the year ahead.

AGMs can be held in person, online, or as a hybrid meeting. Groups can choose add a technical presentation to the agenda, or any other activity they wish to add to their AGM – this can encourage higher attendance from the membership.

Find a template AGM agenda on the [Volunteer Resource Hub](#).



Committee Meetings

Regular committee meetings are a vital part of keeping the momentum and connection of a committee alive.

Holding effective meetings

Effective committee meetings:

- Are regular - we recommend meeting at least quarterly.
- Have a clear agenda - everyone should know why the meeting is happening and what to expect.
- Include the right people - think about who really needs to be there. If someone isn't expected to contribute, it's okay to leave them out. If someone's input is important, make sure they're invited.
- Encourage everyone to take part - create a welcoming space where all voices are heard and avoid letting just a few people dominate the conversation.
- Stick to time - everyone's time is valuable, especially for volunteers.
- Focus on outcomes - meetings should have a purpose and generate ideas and actions that are completed between meetings.
- Have clear notes - make sure minutes include key points, actions, who's responsible, and deadlines.

Writing effective minutes

All committee meetings should be minuted, with these shared with the full committee (whether they attended or not) and stored within the network (i.e. sharepoint, teams).

Effective minutes are:

- Clear.
- Concise.
- A summary of a discussion, not a transcript.
- Focus on action points, owners and deadlines.



Funding

Groups are encouraged to plan activities that connect with and involve their members. They receive funding from CIBSE and can also raise additional income through sponsorships and event ticket sales.

Activity planning and funding process

Each year, groups plan their activities, set a budget, and request funding from CIBSE through the activity planning and funding process, which runs from July to September.

The Networks and Engagement Team will send a planning and funding form to the committee. It's important that committee officers lead the completion of the form, working closely with the rest of the elected members to ensure everyone's input is included.

CIBSE will contribute funding towards technical and membership development activity. The funding is intended to be a contribution towards the cost of a SIGs activity - it may not cover all the costs and groups are encouraged to find ways to generate further income to support activity.

Groups will be informed of the funding they will have available for the next year in December. The funding will be held centrally and administered by the CIBSE Networks and Engagement team, working with groups' honorary treasurers.

Income

There are a variety of ways that groups can generate additional income to fund activities. These are:

- Charging attendance fees for events.
- Seeking sponsorship from commercial organisations.
- Seeking sponsorship from the CIBSE Patrons.

The CIBSE Patrons are a group of businesses who collaborate to give financial and technical backing to a wide range of initiatives led by the Institution. The CIBSE Networks and Engagement Team can support committees in requesting sponsorship from them.

Expenditure

Group committees may choose to reimburse volunteers and speakers for expenses they incur while supporting the group. These reimbursements should be for reasonable and necessary costs that are clearly out-of-pocket (not already covered by another source). It's up to each committee to decide the appropriate level of reimbursement. The group's approach to expenses should be clearly communicated to all new committee members at the start of each year. Expense claims can be submitted through the form found on the [Volunteer Resource Hub](#).

Costs incurred by group chairs when attending official CIBSE meetings, such as the Groups Liaison Committee (GLC) and Council, will be reimbursed directly by CIBSE via the expense claim form.

Many employers are supportive of CIBSE's work and are often willing to cover volunteering-related expenses. Committee members are encouraged to check with their employer and seek support where possible.



Activity

When planning activity, groups should consider their purpose and the interests of their members.

What activity should a group be doing?

Common activities for a group are:

- Technical seminars and conferences
- Responding to policy consultations
- Publishing knowledge and guidance
- Undertaking research
- Mentoring
- STEM outreach
- Awards recognising professional excellence

The [Volunteer Resource Hub](#) contains guidance on delivering many types of activities, including organising events, participating in STEM outreach and mentoring. You can also find more info here: [Contribute to your SIG](#).

Policy consultations

Contributing to CIBSE policy consultations gives members the chance to have their voices heard while improving standards across the industry. It may be helpful to assign the role of **Special Interest Group Policy and Advocacy Lead** to an elected member who would be responsible for:

- Monitoring policy and legislation
- Drafting consultation responses
- Engaging with members and gathering their input
- Collaborating with CIBSE's Head of Government Affairs

Contact groups@cibse.org to get involved.

Publishing knowledge and guidance

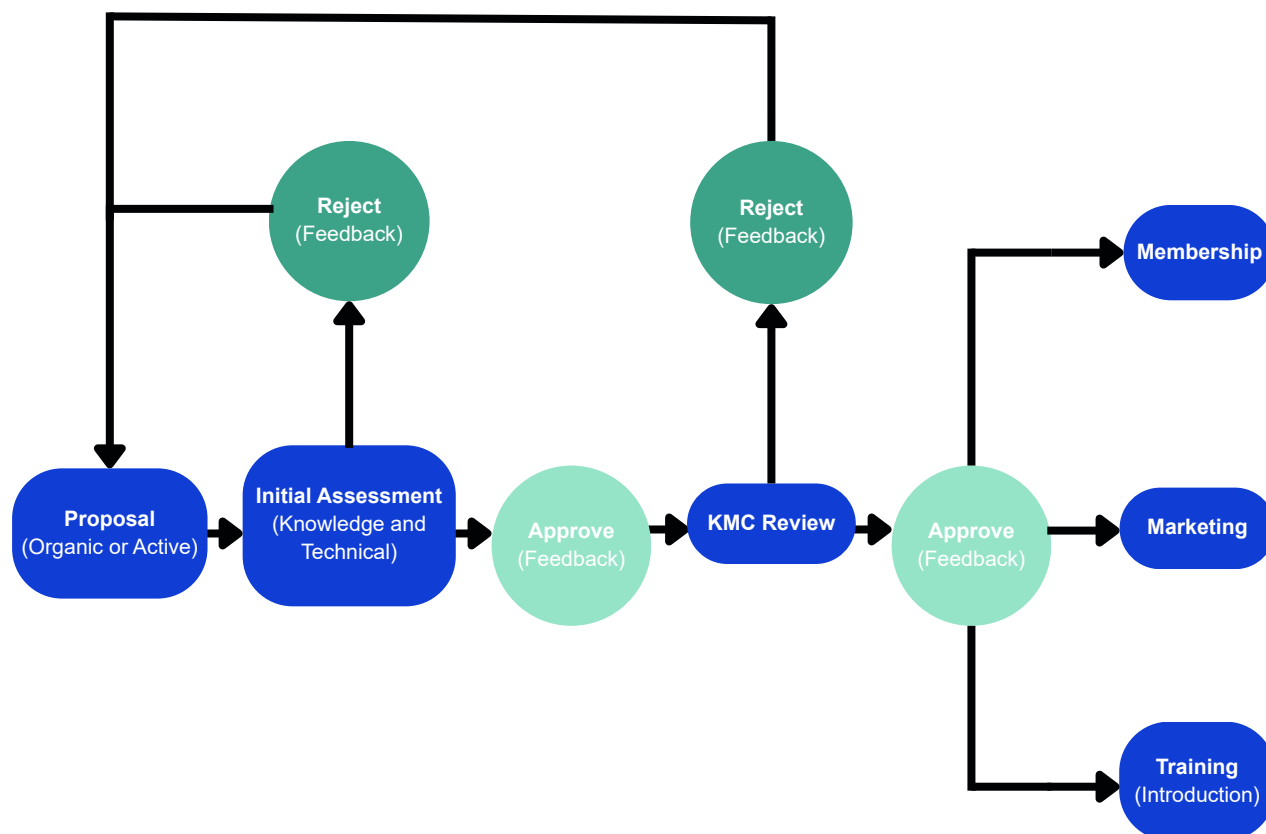
Producing and sharing knowledge is a vital function of the SIGs. This can be done through contributing to revisions of already published work, responding to requests via a proposal from CIBSE or putting forth a proactive proposal that could prevent future issues in the building services profession.



Activity

Below you can find expectations for each type of proposal and the approval process:

New SIG-led proposals	New CIBSE-led proposals	Revision/Updates
• Provisional timelines set for reviews, drafting and editing • Project leads encouraged to be clear on authoring group capacity to meet deadlines • Production cycle = 12-18 months	• Funding/renumeration equates to delivery guarantees • Clear budget breakdowns and delivery parameters to be set • Production cycle = 12 months	• Revision cycles every 5 years as standard • Legislative/regulatory gap analysis every 2-3 years as standard • Production cycle = 12 months



Contact knowledge@cibse.org to get involved.

Research

Groups can also get involved with current research or propose research projects to CIBSE. Find out about current research and how to propose a new project [here](#).



Engagement

A group's members are those who have signed up to hear about their activity via their MyCIBSE accounts.

A group's members can include both CIBSE members and non-CIBSE members of all grades. CIBSE cannot share members' contact information with group committees due to the requirements of GDPR, but we can share certain demographic information to help committees understand the make-up of their groups.

This can include a combination of:

- Overall numbers
- Membership grades
- Town/city locations
- Gender

Engaging with members

There are several ways group committees can engage with their members:

- Email accounts - all groups are provided with a Microsoft Outlook email account which can be used to communicate with members.
- CIBSE website - all groups are provided with dedicated webpages on the CIBSE website which committee members may edit and update to promote their group, advertise upcoming events and profile committee members.
- Social media - groups are encouraged to build social media profiles to engage with their membership.
- CIBSE Journal - groups can request that their event be featured in the CIBSE journal.
- Email bulletins and newsletters - CIBSE can send email bulletins and newsletters to the group memberships promoting upcoming events (3 weeks' notice of an event is required).
- Surveys and polls - CIBSE can send a survey to the membership to help group committees understand their members' wants and needs.
- Feedback and metrics - checking-in event attendees and using feedback forms can provide insights into what activities are popular with members and what they would like to see in the future.

The [Volunteer Resource Hub](#) contains guidance on using social media, promoting activities and more to engage members.



Starting and closing a SIG

A new group is started by CIBSE s with a shared interest in an area of engineering not yet covered by an existing SIG.

The process to start a group is usually:

1. Four corporate members of CIBSE write to groups@cibse.org to express their interest in forming a group along with a statement of its proposed purpose and scope. This should be suitable for publication in the CIBSE Journal.
2. The proposal is reviewed by the CIBSE Technical Director and submitted to the Technical Committee, which considers how it aligns with CIBSE's overall aims and objectives. Feedback is then provided to the proposers.
3. If the Technical Committee supports the proposal, it is circulated to the Chairs of existing groups (via the groups' chairs) for comment. This helps ensure that the proposed group's activities do not conflict with or significantly overlap those of existing Groups.
4. The Networks and Engagement Team will then publish the proposal in the CIBSE Journal and invite expressions of support from the membership.
5. 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 CIBSE.

Once the CIBSE Board approves the formation of a group, an inaugural meeting is arranged. All members who have expressed an interest in the group are invited, and notice of the meeting is also published in the CIBSE Journal. The meeting is chaired by a Corporate Member nominated by the CIBSE Board.

The purpose of the inaugural meeting is to elect the group's officers and committee, who will be responsible for managing the group's activities.

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

Closing a group

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



Resources and Support

The CIBSE Networks and Engagement Team is always here to support regional committees and volunteers.

The [Volunteer Handbook](#) contains information on volunteering with CIBSE, helpful resources for volunteers and where to find them, and sets out what volunteers can expect from CIBSE and what CIBSE asks for in return.

The [Volunteer Resource Hub](#) contains helpful guidance, policies and procedures related to running a group and volunteering with CIBSE.

Annual inductions are organised to support volunteers in their roles, which new and current volunteers are encouraged to attend. Past recordings can be found on the [Volunteer Resource Hub](#).

Each group is supplied with a Microsoft 365 account, providing them with an email address, Sharepoint and Teams. The Networks and Engagement Team can provide login details.

The CIBSE Networks and Engagement Team is always available if volunteers have any questions or need any support. Contact them at groups@cibse.org.

Key dates for the CIBSE groups

- GLC and Council take place three times a year (circa February, June and October).
- The President's Awards Dinner is on the second Friday in October.
- The group's AGM must take place between 1 March and the CIBSE AGM.
- The activity planning and funding process takes place between July and September.



Resources and Guides

You can find helpful resources and guides on how to get involved in all these activities and more on the [Volunteer Resource Hub](#)

Can't find a resource? Contact groups@cibse.org for help and advice.



Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you quickly check if your group has everything in place to run effectively.

Committee

- ☐ Are all officer positions filled?
- ☐ Are there a sufficient number of elected members?
- ☐ Are all committee members aware of their roles and responsibilities?
- ☐ Have all committee members attended inductions and received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook?
- ☐ Are the committee holding regular and effective meetings?
- ☐ Has the committee established an effective method of communicating with each other outside of meetings?
- ☐ Is there a succession plan in place for the officer roles?

Finance

- ☐ Do the committee have an annual budget?
- ☐ Is the Honorary Treasurer tracking the group's progress against its budget, and are all committee members aware of their roles to play in meeting it?

Activity and engagement

- ☐ Does the committee have an annual activity plan with regular activity scheduled?
- ☐ Are all committee members aware of the activity plan and their roles in contributing to it?
- ☐ Are all activities uploaded onto Eventbrite and promoted to members?
- ☐ Is the committee regularly communicating with its members?

Resources

- ☐ Are committee members aware of the Volunteer Resource Hub?
- ☐ Do the committee have access to their Microsoft Account, including their Outlook email account?
- ☐ Do the committee know how to edit their webpages?
- ☐ Do the committee have access to Eventbrite, and know how to use it?



Get in touch with us at

groups@cibse.org

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