

What Policies Do You Need to Develop?

The need for policy development needs to be kept under constant review. Organisations need to consider both internal and external policies required by the organisation.

Policy development falls into two distinct categories:

1. External policy influence

This involves development of policy positions in relation to external issues or developments which are pertinent to the organisation's concerns. Engagement in the wider policy environment is often important to protect service users, beneficiaries, to demonstrate value to supporters or funders or to protect the future of the organisation itself.

For example:

- an overseas development charity may need to adopt a policy position on the government's response to a particular aid crisis
- a community group may need to adopt a policy position on the Council's plans to redevelop a local play area for commercial purposes
- a voluntary organisation may wish to adopt a policy position in relation to proposed legislation which impacts on their legal responsibilities or future funding potential

To be effective in external policy development, an organisation must ensure it uses available opportunities to keep informed regarding external developments which are relevant to the organisation. Organisations engaging in raising issues at a political level need to ensure they are aware of the Electoral Commission's [Regulations on Non-Party Campaigning](#), and the Charity Commission NI guidance on [Charities and Politics](#).

2. Internal policy development

This involves development of policies, practices, and procedures to govern the organisation's operations. These help to ensure that the organisation:

- complies with its legal responsibilities
- can demonstrate effective management and accountability
- provides clear guidelines for those involved in running activities
- establishes clearly its beliefs, positions, or values, helping to ensure that these are supported through its activities

For example:

- financial management policies
- volunteer policy
- complaints policy
- confidentiality policy
- recruitment policies
- equal opportunities policy

Even when there are no staff and the Management Committee carry out the day-to-day work, there is still a need for written policies to govern the organisation's operations.

Remember, every policy decision made by the Management Committee should be designed to help the organisation realise its mission (core purpose) and help it to operate more effectively.