



**South Somerset Safety Advisory Group  
(SAG)**

**Constitution  
&  
Terms of Reference**

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# 1. Introduction

Safety Advisory Groups have been in existence for many years in relation to football events. The tragedies that unfolded at the football stadiums Ibrox 1971, Heysel 1985 and Hillsborough 1989, each led to extensive scrutiny and reporting on safety matters and lessons to be learnt. A clear recommendation by Lord Justice Taylor in his Final Report following Hillsborough was a call for an Advisory Group, consisting of appropriate regulatory services, to consult regularly with Football Club's on all matters concerning crowd safety.

Whilst there have been no similar major disasters at musical and similar events within the UK, there have been many notable crowd-related incidents. Over time these incidents led directly to the development of the 'Pop Code', now updated and referred to as the 'Event Safety Guide' or more commonly known as 'The Purple Guide'. However, as no public enquiries have followed up on a major incident at an event, there has been no similar legislative developments, as was the case with Ibrox and Hillsborough.

'Near misses' in crowd situations, and at public events, are not uncommon but often go unreported meaning that opportunities for improvement go unnoticed. In recognising this, coupled with a growing number of events establishing themselves throughout the district each year, it is clear there is a need for the establishment of a local Safety Advisory Group (SAG) able to offer a single point of reference on event safety to both event organisers and regulatory services alike. Forming and retaining a SAG is not a legal requirement, however, it should stand as a good practice model ensuring a quality assurance process is in place in terms of the safety arrangements for local events. Neither is there an expectation an event organiser must accept an offer to attend a SAG meeting; unless conditioned through the licensing regime. Whilst there may be alternative means of achieving oversight of an event, the option of having a SAG, comprising competent individuals scrutinising and advising on an event's safety arrangements, must be the preferred option.

The intention of this document is to act as a constitution to promote consistency in terms of structure, terms of reference, membership, roles, responsibilities, and policies. The broad aim being to assist and guide the development of a forum through which event holders can engage to seek good practice when striving to enhance public safety at their event. In developing the content, regard and consideration has been given to the guidance found within The UK Good Practice Guide to Working in Safety Advisory Groups.

## **2. Terms of Reference**

The following terms of reference are an important element of the constitution, promoting the key role of the SAG in the provision of a quality assurance process for those safety related aspects of any event(s) and/or venue(s) falling within this role. It should be stressed that the functions of the group will be distinct from, and not confused with, any planning or management group drawn together to support the delivery of an event.

- To advise an event organiser in order to ensure high standards of health, safety, welfare and crime prevention.
- To promote good practice in health, safety, welfare and crime prevention planning.
- To promote a consistent and coordinated, multi-agency, approach to event planning and management.
- To advise an event organiser in respect of the formulation of appropriate contingency and emergency arrangements.
- To advise the event organiser in respect of relevant legislation and guidance.
- To encourage arrangements to minimise disruption to local communities.
- To consider the implications of significant incidents and outcomes relevant to the venue and/or event.
- To consider the implications of significant incidents and outcomes relevant to the surrounding areas and facilities.
- To receive relevant reports of visits, inspections and debriefs carried out by SAG member(s) in respect of a venue and/or event.
- To promote clarity of roles and responsibilities amongst the SAG membership for the benefit and understanding of event organisers.
- Enable effective planning to facilitate less intensive monitoring and inspection.
- Promote safer events as contributing to safer and stronger communities.

## **3. Categories of event**

The SAG is primarily aimed at the range of public and community 'large scale' events that usually require a premise licence to provide activities such as alcohol sales and/or regulated entertainment. Smaller events, typically notified via a Temporary Event Notice, may also

benefit from SAG support – see note below. The type of community events that may benefit from SAG input include:

- Outdoor festivals – generally 'large scale' events
- County shows
- Specialist shows such as horse trials, gymkhanas and dog shows
- Sporting events
- Carnivals
- Processions
- Travelling fairs
- Food shows
- Firework displays

In general, 'large scale events' will be defined as being an event where more than 1,000 people are expected to attend. This figure shall be a rule of thumb guide for where risks may be considered to increase to an extent that an event could be viewed as relevant for seeking the support of SAG. Smaller events, such as those requiring a Temporary Event Notice (limited to 499 people) will not normally require SAG involvement. If, however, the circumstances of an event are unusual and require multi-agency discussion, it will be for the Chair to consider whether it will be appropriate to offer an invitation to the event organiser to attend a meeting of the SAG. Matters considered may include type of event, expected numbers, audience profile, event location, evidence of management planning, organisers experience and past history.

Public and community events may be 'one off' and may take place in venues or sites not normally designated for that function, such as local parks and streets. These will therefore provide additional risks because of the nature and environment in which they are taking place. It is in these circumstances that the benefits of working in collaboration across services will provide a more effective and consistent advisory and management response to public health and safety risk.

There may on occasion be times where the Local Authority will wish to develop a community event of its own, such as in response to a public celebration. Such circumstances may provide a perceived risk of conflict where the Authority may be both an event organiser as well as holding a senior position on the SAG, i.e. Chair. Under such circumstances, it will be appropriate for the Chair of SAG to seek an independent and competent person of sufficient

seniority to temporarily assume the position of Chair to oversee engagement with the event organiser.

#### **4. Membership of the Safety Advisory Group**

Guidance suggests a SAG should be made up of core and invited members. It should be the case that a core member be expected to attend all meetings and consider all agenda items. An invitee may only expect to be present for particular meetings, agenda items or because they have specific experience which may benefit the group in relation to issues under discussion or consideration.

It will be important that member organisations attend with staff that have appropriate skills, experience and position in their organisation to be a credible and competent member of the group. Inexperienced, untrained or incompetent representation may lead not only to unsafe decisions and advice but more likely an excessive demand on event organisers to make events safe almost beyond what is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure organisers do not avoid an offer of attending a SAG, members must be realistic and fair in their expectations, as such, knowledge and experience among members will be crucial.

The South Somerset SAG will include the following core members:

- South Somerset District Council
  - Environmental Health – Environmental Protection, Food Safety, Health & Safety
  - Licensing
  - Building Control
- Avon & Somerset Police
- Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- Somerset County Council Highways
- Devon & Somerset Trading Standards

Invited members may include:

- South Somerset District Council
  - Civil contingencies

- Communications/media
- Legal services
- Somerset County Council Public Health
- Public Health England
- Health and Safety Executive
- National Highways Agency
- British Transport Police

Event organisers taking up an offer to attend a SAG may choose to bring additional event committee members or third party support who may be assisting with their plans. This may include:

- Venue owner/operator
- Stewarding
- Security
- Traffic/Transport
- Medical/voluntary first aid services
- License holder/Designated Premises Supervisor

N.B. these are not intended to be exhaustive lists

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities of Core Members**

The following intends to identify the most relevant responsibilities applicable to core members. It should be remembered that some member organisations operate across significant geographic authority areas which result in them being involved in numerous SAGs. The need for consistency across borders must be emphasised.

### **a) South Somerset District Council**

- Will be the lead authority for the issue, renewal, monitoring and enforcement of licences issued under the Licensing Act 2003
- Will be the lead authority for environmental health matters
- Will be responsible for some health and safety and duty of care related matters

- Will provide technical advice and appraisal of published documents relating to public safety and wellbeing
- Will provide technical support to the SAG in relation to aspects of legislation within their service as they relate to public events
- Will act in a co-ordinating role to the SAG
- A Category One responder under the Civil Contingencies Act

**b) Avon & Somerset Police**

- May provide policing, where applicable, for an event
- Will be responsible for dealing with public disorder and demonstrations
- Intelligence gathering and co-ordination capabilities
- Incident response where and when appropriate
- Crime investigation and reduction
- Community policing
- Will provide technical advice and appraisal of published documents relating to public safety and wellbeing
- Will provide technical support to the SAG in relation to aspects of legislation within their service as they relate to public events
- A Category One responder under the Civil Contingencies Act

**c) Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service**

- The provision of fire safety resource
- Incident response where and when appropriate
- Will provide technical advice and appraisal of published documents relating to public safety and wellbeing
- Will provide technical support to the SAG in relation to aspects of legislation within their service as they relate to public events
- A Category One responder under the Civil Contingencies Act

**d) South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust**

- May provide medical and first aid advice/assessment
- May be a medical provider
- Incident/emergency response where and when appropriate
- Will provide technical advice and appraisal of published documents relating to public safety and wellbeing

- Will provide technical support to the SAG in relation to aspects of legislation within their service as they relate to public events
- A Category One responder under the Civil Contingencies Act

**e) Somerset County Council (Highways, Trading Standards, Public Health)**

- Will provide technical advice where the highway is affected
- Arrange for the maintenance of clear and safe routes for emergency vehicles, traffic and pedestrians
- Will provide appraisal of any road closure or other temporary traffic management measures which may be necessary
- Will provide technical and legal advice to the SAG, organisers, traders, businesses and consumers in relation to aspects of legislation within their service as they relate to public events
- Will provide advice and direction to the SAG in regards public health matters as they relate to public events

**f) Event Organiser**

- Responsibilities towards employees
- Safe systems of work
- Arrangements to protect other persons
- Risk assessment
- H&S Policy
- Method statement(s)
- H&S advice
- Monitoring
- Audit/record keeping
- Fires safety risk assessment
- Traffic/transport planning and management
- Crowd safety planning and management
- Security planning and management
- Emergency and contingency planning and management
- Medical/first aid planning and management
- Stewarding planning and management
- Communication arrangements
- Welfare arrangements, including child safety arrangements
- Licensing, safety certification and other statutory requirements

- Ensuring appropriate insurance cover is in place
- Participation and cooperation with SAG

**g) Venue owner/operator**

Even where a land/premises owner has no direct involvement with an event, other than the provision of the 'location' they may still have responsibilities for:

- Ensuring the existence of appropriate insurance cover
- Ensuring only bona fide/authorised equipment is allowed on site
- Establishing the extent of licensing conditions
- General duties under health and safety legislation
- Fire risk assessment
- Requirement to ensure the land/premises are in such condition so as not to cause danger to users/visitors

## **6. Administration of the Safety Advisory Group**

**a) Role of the Chair**

The Chair of the SAG shall be an appointed representative of South Somerset District Council who will have appropriate skills and competencies to ensure the group functions effectively and efficiently. The role will require focus upon communication and diplomacy, whilst maintaining an objectivity of approach in taking account the views of the group members.

Key responsibilities for the Chair of the SAG will include:

- Ensuring the group discharges its responsibilities fairly, effectively, efficiently and proportionately
- Ensuring, where practicable, appropriate representation on the group
- Ensuring that all members have the opportunity to participate
- Ensuring an audit trail of group processes is maintained

**b) Policy and procedures**

- It will be the policy of the SAG to, so far as reasonably practicable, offer advice in order to ensure the highest possible standards of public safety at

events to encourage the wellbeing of the public, operatives, neighbouring communities and others affected by the impact of it.

- The group does not make any decisions on behalf of the local authority or other agencies as its role is advisory and as such it has no authority to either approve or ban events.
- On the rare occasion where there is disagreement between the SAG and event organiser, and there remains a genuine risk to the public and/or event employees and contractors, the most appropriate member agency on the SAG should act under its own regulatory framework to resolve the issue. Decisions on the use of statutory powers will be a matter for the relevant authority to consider, not the SAG, and should be discharged separately.
- The overall responsibility for the safety of persons at an event will lie with the event organiser, venue owner/operator and management team.
- Members of the SAG must declare any material conflict in relation to any matters put before the group, prior to any discussion on that matter. Should this interest be considered prejudicial, then the Chair will request that person withdraws from inputting to the matter and be replaced by an appropriate party agreed within the group.
- The SAG will have arrangements to ensure that appropriate records of procedures and meetings are maintained.
- Outcomes and actions determined during meetings of the SAG will be held by South Somerset District Council as a public record and be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the General Data Protection Regulations.
- The lessons learned via the SAGs processes and procedures will be applied for the benefit of all events within its area of responsibility.

### **c) Frequency of meetings**

The number of SAG meetings will be flexible, determined by local circumstances and will be event specific. With members fulfilling many other responsibilities in addition to SAG, it is important to ensure that meetings are held only as necessary and that best use is made of time. Determining whether to invite an event to a SAG will not require a consistent methodology. This will be done on a risk-based approach by considering a combination of:

- Events of an unusual nature
- Levels of risk presented by the event
- Numbers attending (at any one time)

An event requesting attendance or accepting an invite to SAG will be expected to provide advance notification of its draft Event Management Plan (EMP) and associated documentation, e.g. risk assessments, site layout plans, traffic management plans etc. Draft documentation should be issued to the SAG Chair or representative as early as possible, and at the latest four weeks prior to the meeting. Documents received by the SAG Chair or representative will be forwarded on to SAG member organisations at the earliest opportunity. The preferred method for receiving and sending event documentation will be through electronic means.

The onus will be on SAG member organisations to review EMP documentation and raise with the event organiser any issues or concerns prior to the meeting. If no such concerns are raised it will normally not be necessary to raise the matter at the meeting.

Face to face meetings will generally be held at the South Somerset District Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil, with alternative locations sought and notified whenever necessary. The use of virtual meeting platforms such as MS Teams, Zoom, Skype etc. can also provide appropriate means for convening meetings, particularly when event organisers are based at distance from Yeovil. Additionally it may be useful to hold a meeting on site at the event venue. In general each event organiser will be offered a meeting duration of one hour, with flexibility where necessary. Meeting arrangements will be discussed in advance with each event organiser prior to finalising date, time and venue details. It will be for the Chair of the group to ensure the meeting runs efficiently and to time.

The Chair will reserve the right to cancel a meeting in advance if it becomes clear core member representation at that meeting is reduced to such a level that the benefits to an event holder attending are similarly reduced.

#### **d) Meeting notes and actions**

Each meeting of the SAG will be prearranged to an agenda distributed to all parties in advance of the meeting. Outcomes and actions from a meeting shall be captured and circulated to SAG member organisations, the event organiser and other such parties as may be determined relevant by the Chair. Should a meeting be held using a virtual platform the Chair will ask all parties prior to commencement whether there is universal agreement for the meeting to be recorded. Any electronic recordings made will be held securely by the local authority and handled in accordance with data protection requirements and the Council's privacy statement. Meeting minutes will be held by the local authority as a public record and be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 7. Conclusion

This constitution ends with a reminder of some of the fundamental principles of the SAG process:

1. Events are an important part of the lives of UK residents and should be encouraged.
2. Event organisers are under no obligation to attend a SAG meeting.
3. SAG members will encourage and support events, especially those by the community for the community.
4. SAG is a good means to examine the safety aspects of events and should be encouraged to do so.
5. SAG should be seen by organisers as supportive of their endeavours.
6. There is no legal basis for SAG to exist although aspects of the Civil Contingencies Act may be deemed to make them so.
7. SAG should advise the event organiser about public safety matters that they think need further consideration and explain their reasons.
8. SAG members themselves will often have legislative and enforcement powers that they should consider utilising wherever disagreements cannot be resolved.
9. SAG membership should consist of experienced practitioners.
10. SAG has no power to 'authorise' or ban events.