

The Trustees of CCP(UK) met last year to clarify the requirements and guidelines for group co-ordinators. As Chernobyl Children's Project (UK) is both a charity and a company, its Trustees are responsible for the activities of local groups, especially child protection and financial accountability.

Phrases in bold type indicate requirements of the trustees which you are expected to adhere to. Those in normal type are suggestions which you may find useful.

1) **It is not possible for a group co-ordinator to take on all the roles needed to run a group. At a minimum you will need a separate treasurer and someone to be responsible for, or to work with you on, Family Visiting and Child Protection.** You might like to have a separate chairperson, publicity officer or fund raising co-ordinator, but these are not essential if you have the time and energy to look after these roles yourself.

2) **It is essential to have regular meetings to which all host families and supporters are invited. These should take place at least once a month in the run up to the children's visit.** You may also wish to have a steering group or committee which meets separately from the whole group, but this is not essential.

3) **You must follow the Child Protection Policy of the charity. If for any reason you are not able to do this you MUST consult a Trustee or the National Co-ordinator. *At a minimum all families must sign the Application Form; new families must be visited at home by two people, at least one of whom should have relevant experience; references for new families must be taken up; at least one member of each family should attend two or three meetings; and all adults who will come into close contact with the children must complete a Disclosure Form for the Criminal records Bureau.***

4) **When you prepare publicity for local media always give the newspaper or radio station a copy of our leaflet or latest newsletter** You should take every opportunity to publicise the activities of the group, especially during the children's visit. so that they get the facts straight about Chernobyl and they understand that your group is part of a national charity.

5) **Make sure that the Belarussian children are not used to raise funds in a way which might cause embarrassment to them** and it is best not to introduce them as 'Children of Chernobyl'. They know that is the reason they are invited abroad but it is good for them to forget their troubles for a while when they are on holiday.

6) **It is essential that all host families and other supporters receive the newsletter and other publicity materials which are produced nationally. They should also be made aware of reports of visits to Belarus, describing our work there in greater detail, and copies of these should be given to those who ask.** Try to persuade host families and other

supporters not to spoil the children with extravagant gifts. The more they know about the work of the charity as a whole, the less they are likely to do this.

**7) When you are invited to speak to a local organisation, such as the Rotary Club, always tell them about the other activities the charity is involved in, as well as the visit of children to your local area.** Whilst your first fund raising priority is clearly to cover the cost of children coming to your town for a holiday, you will usually find that people are also willing to support purchase of medicines or helping disabled children to have a holiday in a clean part of Belarus.

**8) Your treasurer must declare all money received by the group, even if it has been given specifically for spending during the visit.** Encourage your group to think carefully about spending money during the children's visit and remind them that the primary purpose of the visit is recuperation. It is easy to get carried away whilst the children are here and spend more money on them than is really necessary. If possible, try not to spend more than the allowance you have been sent by the National Treasurer. If you are able to put some of this money back into your sub account, even better. It may be necessary for some groups to spend extra if the children are staying together for part of the visit, or they have any special needs, or you live in an area where it is hard to get free offers. Remember that money spent in Belarus goes a lot further than it does here. An outing in Britain for your group of children might cost £500. This would provide a great deal of medicine for Gomel Regional Children's Hospital or pay for a half time Children's Hospice doctor for one year. Try to keep these issues in mind, whilst still ensuring that the children have an enjoyable holiday.

9) Tell the National Co-ordinator as early as possible how many children your group would like to invite. Encourage host families to be as flexible as they can about age and sex of the children they invite. Remember that teenagers are those with the biggest health problems now (the children who were very young at the time of the accident seventeen years ago) and this is the age range which receives least invitations.

10) Put forward ideas or concerns which arise within your group to either the National Co-ordinator or one of the Trustees, so that these can be discussed at Management Meetings, Regional Gatherings or the Annual Conference. Although it is not practical for the operation of the charity to be totally democratic, we do try to be as consultative as possible and we welcome suggestions from groups about ways in which we can be more effective in the future. We can be most successful as a charity if our groups feel that we are all working together towards the same ends, and your role as a co-ordinator is vital in achieving this goal.