**RCOT regions and local group information**

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

If you are interested in setting up or being part of a local group, please read the frequently asked questions below.

**Q: What is a local group?**

A local group is a sub-group of an RCOT region. It is there to provide local support at a local level within a region, providing local networking, events, as well as sharing of best practice and information. They can span a postcode, town or county.

**Q: Who do I contact if I am interested in setting up a local group in my region?**

Please get in touch with your region’s committee to express an interest in setting up a local group in your area, and to find out whether there is a group already operating nearby to avoid duplication within your region.

**Q: How do I start a local group?**

Do you know of others who are also interested and can assist in organising both the first meeting and possibly running the local group? Once you have spoken to your region’s committee you will need to find out if there is a need for a local group in your area. The region’s committee can make an announcement on their social media/e-newsletter/e-bulletin to gauge interest and ask for volunteers. If the response is successful, the local group can register by completing the local group registration form below. The chair and treasurer of the region’s committee must also complete the form.

Once the local group is registered with the region’s committee and willing member(s) have been identified to take the lead, plan a network meeting advertising this through the region’s e-newsletters/e-bulletins and on the region’s and RCOT Events web pages and channels. This can be arranged through the Communities team, communities@rcot.co.uk.

**Q: What should local groups do at the first meeting?**

Hold an informal networking meeting to gauge interest in the local group and to plan your local networking and training needs. Arranging a speaker for this event will encourage attendance. A mix of social and CPD activities can strike a good balance. RCOT also has a range of themed materials that can be used to start a debate and learning/networking: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/cpd-rcot>.

**Q: How do local groups fund networking events?**

Once a local group has been established and registered with the region’s committee,a discussion can then take place regarding how it can be supported financially. Some region committees allocate funds per annum, while others work on an ad hoc basis or may offer a start-up grant. Local groups must identify their financial needs by 31July of each year for consideration by the region’s committee in their overall budget planning during August each year. Local groups are always encouraged to find free and local venues for their meetings and events, with easy access, parking or transport to keep costs to a minimum.

**Q: How many meetings a year should a local group hold?**

Local groups can determine how often to meet based on local needs and capacity. On average RCOT suggests 2-4 meetings a year, however, local groups can increase these as the need arises. A couple of planning meetings are also necessary.

**Q: What will be the name of the local group?**

The name of a local group will follow RCOT protocol and will include the region they are in and the geographical area they cover (for example, RCOT Wales Region - South Wales Local Group).

**Q: How do we tell members about a local groups and their activities?**

By advertising information in your region’s e-newsletter/e-bulletin, web and RCOT Events pages on the RCOT website and other region channels. This can be arranged through the Communities team, communities@rcot.co.uk.

**Q: What works well?**

Experience has shown that members are more able to attend a local group that takes place after working hours, 6-8 pm, however, each local group must decide what works best for their members. Plan the dates in advance and give plenty of notice to members of the local group, including possible topics. Ask local members to contribute ideas/suggestions to the event and identify members who are happy to speak or run a workshop. Film nights, journal article discussions, practice debates, sharing case studies can all be facilitated by members for members at no cost or very little cost. Again, there are resources on the RCOT web pages to support you in these kinds of activities. Social nights also work well; ‘picnic in the park’, Quiz nights, curry nights all attract members.

**Q: How do local group activities get reported to the region?**

RCOT is keen to make the running of a local group as simple as possible, although the region’s committee must be able to log local group activity in their annual report. Record activity details and please include details on the local group activity update form to be submitted to the region’s committee by 31 July annually. Always record who attend meetings and include these details alongside objectives for the activity.

**Q: How many members are needed to set up a local group?**

There is no formal number for setting up a local group, however, a minimum of four members with one local group Lead is considered effective and would be ideal. When planning activities a minimum of eight members enables effective networking and learning.

**Q: Does a local group need a bank account?**

No - local groups hold no monies and do not have their own bank accounts. Money is held by region’s committee in named accounts at RCOT.

**Q: Do local groups need terms of reference?**

No - there are currently no terms of reference for local groups.

**Q: Do local groups need to have an Annual Review Meeting (ARM)?**

No - each region’s committee holds an ARM to review the past year, activities and present a breakdown of the region’s finances. Feedback from local group activities will be reported at this meeting.

**Q: How does a local group plan a conference or study day?**

The local group should liaise with the region’s committee in the first instance to make sure the region’s committee is not planning an event that would conflict with the local group’s plans. Prepare a plan and budget for the conference or study day and present it to the region’s committee. Once this has been agreed, the conference or study day planning may go ahead. All conferences or study days should be costed at a break event position, therefore not generating a profit or loss. A conference or study day can be advertised via the region’s e-newsletters/e-bulletins and on the region’s and RCOT events web pages and channels. Please keep the region committee in the loop at all times.

**Q: How do local groups claim expenses?**

All expenditure should be agreed by the region committee treasurer in the first instance. All expenditure must follow the financial guidance available on the communities resources pages along with expense forms: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/rcot-branch-resources>.

All contracts for venues and services should be sent to RCOT HQ to be reviewed and signed. Please contact the Communities team for support: communities@rcot.co.uk.

**Q: Should local group events be open to non-RCOT members?**

Yes – however, there should be a charge for non-RCOT members. Non-members should be encouraged to take up RCOT membership. RCOT has resources available to encourage membership: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/join-us>.

**Q: What if a local group is struggling to stay active?**

If a local group is struggling to stay active contact the region’s committee. They may be able to offer more support and connect you to other thriving local groups in the region. Consider whether it might help to run fewer events or meetings in a year to reduce the workload. You can also get in touch with the Communities team for support: communities@rcot.co.uk.

**Q: What happens if a local group has to close?**

In the event of a local group having to close, please contact the region’s committee, outlining the reasons for the closure and other relevant details. Once the local group is closed, contact details will be removed from the RCOT lists.

All information pertaining to members involved in and with the local group will have to be destroyed or sent to RCOT HQ for disposal under GDPR.

For further information and guidance, please contact the Communities team: communities@rcot.co.uk.

**Q: What support resources and information is available for a Local Group?**

Resources, information and policies are located on the Communities Resources webpage: [https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/rcot-branch-resources.](https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/rcot-branch-resources.T) These include:

* RCOT Filming and Photography policy
* RCOT Filming Photography Consent Form
* Data Protection Policy
* Data Breach Policy
* RCOT Room Booking Form
* Course and event Booking Form
* Copyright Law
* Advertising guidelines
* Social media guidance.

All RCOT communities must adhere to GDPR whilst carrying out their activities. For more information visit:

* RCOT and GDPR <https://www.rcot.co.uk/rcot-and-gdpr>.

**RCOT region – local group registration form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| RCOT region |  |
| Area(s) covered |  |
| Name of local group | RCOT XXXX region – XXXX local group |
| Local group lead  | Name |  |
| Email (to be used for RCOT correspondence) |  |
| BT number |  |
| Budget requested(up to £200 per business year) |  |
| Current activities to date(if applicable) |  |
| Planned activity (if applicable) |  |

***All members of a local group must be RCOT members.***

I agree to be Lead of the RCOT ………………..…… region - ………….……… local group.

Signature…………..…………………………………………… Date ……………………

RCOT …………. Region Chair…….………………………………… BT No.………………...

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Signature………..……………………………………………… Date ……………………

RCOT …………. Region Treasurer…….…………………………… BT No.………………...

 (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Signature………..……………………………………………… Date ……………………

**RCOT region – local group activity ppdate**

**Date:**

**Author:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of local group | RCOT XXXX region – XXXX local group |
| RCOT |  |
| Area(s) covered |  |
| Local group lead - name |  |
| Networking meetings/ events held | Activity 1  |
| Objectives |
| Attendees |
| Costs |
| Activity 2 |
| Objectives |
| Attendees |
| Costs |
| Activity 3 |
| Objectives |
| Attendees |
| Costs |
| Finance update  |  |
| Budget requested for next business year (up to £200 per business year) |  |
| Planned activity  |  |

***To be submitted before 31 July, in order for a budget request to be considered by the region.***

***Please submit to*** ***communities@rcot.co.uk******.***