

# The Branch Treasurer

With over 60% of the NCT's income and expenditure coming from branches, the role of the branch treasurer in managing branch finances is crucial to our success.

Responsibility for branch funds is a very important role. The whole existence of the NCT depends on funds - they are the backbone of our charity. Managing funds properly and efficiently is vital to the smooth running of a branch and the role needs someone with dedication, persistence and good organisational skills.

All branches must report to the Council of Trustees, whose job it is to make sure that proper accounting records are kept, clearly showing the charity's financial position. These could be required at any time and so must be kept up to date so that they comply with the Companies Act and the Charities Act. The Trustees need to make sure that all NCT assets are safeguarded, and that they have taken all reasonable steps to discover and stop any fraud or irregularities which might occur.

One of the key qualities of a branch treasurer is to be 'good with money', reliable and well organised, and someone with the time and ability to keep the branch records up to date. This person does not need to be a qualified accountant, but must certainly be good with figures and not afraid to ask for help.

A treasurer should be:

- able to plan ahead
- good at organising
- good at keeping records
- good with money
- efficient
- reliable
- have attention to detail
- not afraid to ask for help when in trouble
- in regular contact with antenatal teachers to plan cost effective classes If you have any problems or need advice, your regional treasurer and UK Office Finance team are always there to turn to.

## Don't Be Afraid To Seek Help

Don't ever be afraid to seek help if you need it. It is important to remember that getting help at an early stage can prevent problems becoming bigger and save the branch committee a lot of worry later on. Do not let the branch bank account become overdrawn - if this happens, contact your regional co-ordinator immediately.

Branches can always contact their regional treasurer or the Finance team at UK Office for help and advice.

## Running The Accounts

One of the key tasks involved in being a branch treasurer is to run a bank account for your branch. As all funds ultimately belong to the NCT, UK Office has set down guidelines to make the job easier for both your branch and UK NCT. These guidelines help to ensure that all branches are working to the same formula and that every treasurer is following the same procedure when paying in, or taking money from, the branch bank account. The guidelines are very important and it is essential that they are followed carefully:

Lloyds TSB is the NCT's bank, and therefore all branch accounts must be held there.

Whenever a branch opens a new account this needs to be approved by the Finance Director at UK Office. This helps UK Office to keep track of all branch accounts held, and avoids the possibility of an

account being 'forgotten' when a new committee is appointed. The bank account should carry the name of the National Childbirth Trust and the name of your branch.

Some branches do find it useful to have more than one account - if a MAVA volunteer agent sells a lot of bras then it may be useful to have an account solely for this purpose, for example. A separate antenatal teaching account can also be helpful if there are a number of teachers within one branch. To make life easier a vice or assistant treasurer could help out by running these separate accounts, whilst they still remain under the control of the main branch treasurer. If your branch has more than one account and one of these ends up with a cash flow problem, then money should be transferred to it from another account.

## **Who Can Sign Cheques?**

Signing cheques is a key responsibility, as each designated person must account for all monies spent. Cheque signatories are not to be decided upon lightly. Branches are advised to have four people responsible for signing cheques, with two signatures required for each cheque. This safeguards both the NCT branch and those nominated as signatories. It takes some of the burden off individuals whilst at the same time making sure that every cheque written is done with the approval of more than one person. Never sign a blank cheque.

Normally the treasurer is one of the signatories. The branch chair is another and the third and fourth are chosen members of the committee.

## **What Happens When The Committee Changes?**

As NCT committees often change after an AGM, a procedure has been set up to deal with this. The treasurer must firstly ring / write to the RCC Administrator at UK Office, to ask for a 'variation to the mandate' form and an 'authority for encashment' form. Once these forms have been completed and signed at the AGM, they must be sent to the Finance team at UK office, who will in turn send them to Lloyds TSB, making way for the new signatories.

## **Withdrawals**

If cash needs to be withdrawn from the branch bank account, the treasurer must complete an 'encashment form', and then send it to UK Office to be countersigned. UK Office will then send this on to Lloyds TSB - please note that this procedure can take up to a week. Therefore, if you need to take out a large sum of cash (for a nearly new sale, for example), please allow enough time for this.

## **What If I Need A New Chequebook?**

Usually, any new chequebooks are sent out automatically by the bank and the timing of this is determined by the number of cheques already written. If you think you are going to use a lot of cheques for a special event, such as a nearly new sale, it is advisable to think ahead and order a new chequebook. To do this, telephone the Lloyds TSB head office one month in advance - as it can take at least two weeks for the bank to issue chequebooks.

The treasurer is a vital member of the branch committee and with the chair and branch secretary can help with motivating the committee and running a successful branch.