

The UK Good Practice Guide to Working in Safety Advisory Groups Part 1

Revision 2019

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Figure 1: Ibrox: Drew Innes; Hillsborough: Bev Griffiths

Figure 3: Shutterstock

Figure 4: Emergency Planning College

Figure 5: Emergency Planning College

Figure 6: Tar Barrels: Robert Chandler, Appendix B; Lewes Bonfire: Select Security and Stewarding Ltd, Brighton

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Contents

2019 Revision	5
Foreword 2015 Edition	6
Preface 2015 Edition	7
Endorsements 2015	8
1. Aim of the guidance.....	9
2. Background to Safety Advisory Groups.....	9
3. Safety Advisory Group Constitutions	12
4. Options and limitations of the Safety Advisory Group.....	23
5. Exceptional circumstances	25
6. Conclusion.....	26
Glossary.....	28

2019 Revision

This first revision was commenced late 2017. It has been consulted on widely, hence the duration from start of review to launch in 2019. The revision has not seen any major changes, what it has done is updated links, new government information, new case studies where appropriate and offered a little more depth of information in some areas, where the guidance has been used and improved upon by those using it.

This will now be a free guide, online, with the ability to update more regularly. The next planned update is Spring 2020. Please send your comments, case studies, links to enquiries@emergencyplanningcollege.com by January 31st 2020. Please leave your contact details so we can approach you with further clarification or requests.

Thanks and Acknowledgement for the 2019 Revision

The EPC would like to thank the following organisations and people for their support in this revision.

The UK Crowd Management Association (UKCMA) & Gentian Events Ltd – Eric Stuart, for his continuing dedication and support to this guidance and the industry.

Local Authority Event Organiser Group (LAEOG), Events Industry Forum (EIF) & National Outdoor Association (NOEA) – Andrew Grove for his support and advice.

Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA); EPC; Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CO CCS); Joint Advisory Group Entertainment (JACE); Home Office (HO); National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) & Security Institute (SI) – for supporting and advising Beverley Griffiths.

And

All the survey participants for their time and energy in their support.

Foreword 2015 Edition



Cabinet Office

I welcome the publication of this guidance by the Emergency Planning College (EPC). Safety Advisory Groups are critical in assuring that public safety issues are central to the work of the events industry. They have an excellent track record and I have every confidence that the guidance contained here is a strong foundation for future practice. The fact that the Emergency Planning College has worked closely with partners in the entertainment and events industry and in government reflects its commitment to be at the heart of the public safety and resilience community, encouraging debate and reflection where it is needed, and leading the way for practitioners and policy makers in establishing and promoting good practice. I commend it to you and thank my colleagues at the Emergency Planning College for bringing it to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'McCafferty'.

Dr Campbell McCafferty

Director

Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office

Preface 2015 Edition



Sports Grounds Safety Authority

In his report into the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster, Lord Taylor recommended that local authorities should set up Safety Advisory Groups to assist them in exercising their functions under the Safety of Sports Grounds legislation. The Safety Advisory Group therefore fulfils an important role, and should be properly constituted with written terms of reference and effective procedures encompassing all matters falling within the local authority's regulatory duties. In 2009, the Sports Grounds Safety Authority published guidance on safety certification including the role, membership and management of the Safety Advisory Group.

With the increase in the number, variety and complexity of public events, from street parties to festivals, many local authorities now convene advisory groups for other types of activities that fall outside the legal framework for certificated sports grounds. This document seeks to provide guidance which could be applied to both types of advisory groups, reflecting the distinctive roles and status of each.

It is important that everyone involved in delivering spectator events understands the roles, responsibilities and liabilities. I hope you will find this guide interesting and useful, and wish you every success in the delivery of safe, secure and enjoyable events.

Ruth Shaw

Chief Executive

Sports Grounds Safety Authority

Endorsements 2015

The Health and Safety Executive

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was consulted in the production of this guidance document. While the guidance goes beyond compliance with workplace health and safety law, it provides advice on the roles and responsibilities of those involved in non-statutory Safety Advisory Groups. For guidance on compliance with workplace health and safety law, you should refer to the HSE website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/safety-advisory-groups.htm>

The College of Policing

The College of Policing is pleased to endorse the content of this, the first piece of national guidance on Safety Advisory Groups.

Clive Brooks

Head of Joint Operations - The College of Policing

Local Authority Events Organisers' Group

As Safety Advisory Groups came into existence and became adopted as good practice it was inevitable that local authorities would find their own ways to organise and operate them in their own areas. Though well-intentioned, this created inconsistencies between authorities, meaning that Safety Advisory Groups were sometimes used as an enforcement tool, thereby leaving event organisers crying out for guidance to help address the problem.

I am delighted that the Emergency Planning College has taken the lead role in doing this, carrying out comprehensive research and subsequently producing this guidance with considerable input and engagement from the industry. The guidance clearly sets out the role of the Safety Advisory Group, defining how it should be set up as well as identifying who should attend, what events should be considered by a Safety Advisory Group and what an organiser can expect when attending. The focus is now firmly back on the fact that it is an advisory group attended by competent personnel with a remit to focus on the quality assurance of event safety plans and offering sound safety advice to organisers.

I believe this excellent guidance will bring about changes that will lead to consistently positive and beneficial experiences for organisers and safer events for everybody. It has my full support.

Andy Grove

Chair - Local Authority Events Organisers' Group (LAEORG)

Association of Festival Organisers

The Association of Festival Organisers has always believed that Safety Advisory Groups are there to help festivals and events run smoothly. Throughout England there has been variation in how they operate and meet their brief.

We are delighted that the Emergency Planning College consulted widely with the industry to produce this guidance which we believe will be of benefit not only to the users but also to the wider events industry.

Steve Heap

General Secretary - Association of Festival Organisers

1. Aim of the guidance

- 1.1. This guidance was first produced in 2015 with the intention of standardising the approach to Safety Advisory Groups across the UK. Since then, significant progress has been made but new challenges have emerged in the form of a terrorism threat related to events that was far less significant four years ago. In addition, cuts to public sectors have led to many SAGs losing members more rapidly than ever before and a rotation of members, meaning a loss of experience in many areas. This new version, like its predecessor, is intended to form a single, core guidance document for Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs), their members, event organisers and others in the industry. It is also intended to act as a reference document that new or inexperienced event organisers might use in order to understand the structure, roles, responsibilities and expectations of a SAG.
- 1.2. The lack of regulation and legislation on SAGs has one distinct advantage. It means the SAG has no limitations as to what events it considers, should it so desire. It need not be restrained by venue (public or private); the arrangements (ticketed or unticketed); free or for payment; traditional or innovative; annual, monthly or exceptional; voluntary or charitable.
- 1.3. The guidance is not only a point of reference for all those with event safety roles; it has also been developed by using examples of good practice across the United Kingdom. Existing SAGs are encouraged to use it to confirm consistency with others, while those considering establishing a SAG can use it as a logical starting point.
- 1.4. It has been written from the outset as a guide and seeks to assist and support those aiming to follow good practice; it is not intended to be prescriptive.
- 1.5. An abbreviated version of the guidance will be available as a chapter within the Events Industry Forum's Purple Guide¹ and amendments to either document will be reflected in the other.
- 1.6. The purpose of a SAG, and certainly of this guidance, is to consider events in the context of their being essential to the communities of the UK. The SAG should examine the safety aspects of events so they can proceed in as safe a way as is reasonably practicable, ideally without compromising the public's enjoyment of them.

2. Background to Safety Advisory Groups

- 2.1. SAGs have been in existence for many years in relation to football events. Following the deaths of 66 people at Ibrox in 1971 (see Figure 1), Lord Wheatley reported extensively on safety matters and lessons to be learned. His report led to the Safety of Sports Ground Act (1975) which required local authorities, fire and police to consult in terms of the issue of safety certificates for football grounds.
- 2.2. Later, Lord Justice Taylor, while investigating the deaths of 96 spectators at the Hillsborough

¹ **The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Other Events.**

Entertainment Industry Forum, March 2014. This is an important document used by event-related organisers and scrutinisers of events. It supersedes HSG195 The Event Safety Guide. It is the core document for most people working within the outdoor events and music industry. It has to be noted, however, that it is only a guide and like all such documents it is not for strict adherence but relies on the expertise of those in the industry applying its principles to a given set of circumstances. Purchase of the document can only be made online after registration and payment of an annual fee of £25. It is available at: <http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk/>

disaster in April 1989 (see Figure 1), referred to Lord Wheatley's findings. He specifically highlighted paragraph 67 of the Report of the Inquiry into Crowd Safety at Sports Grounds,² which stated:

'it can come as no surprise to the football world, and in light of happenings over the years, the demand for an independent appraisal and determination of the safety of grounds becomes almost irresistible. I certainly cannot resist it'.



Figure 1: The Ibrox (left) and Hillsborough (right) stadium disasters prompted the establishment of Safety Advisory Groups

- 2.3.** In paragraph 31 of the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster Inquiry,³ published in 1990, Lord Justice Taylor recommended that,

'To assist the local authority in exercising its functions, it should set up an advisory group (if this has not already been done) consisting of appropriate members of its own staff, representatives of the police, of the fire and ambulance services and of the building authority. The advisory group should consult representatives of the club and of a recognised supporters' organisation on a regular basis. The advisory group's terms of reference should encompass all matters concerned with crowd safety and should require regular visits to the ground and attendance at matches. The advisory group should have a chair from the local authority, and effective procedures. Its resolutions should be recorded and it should be required to produce regular reports for consideration by the local authority'.

- 2.4.** In a divergence from LJ Taylor's paragraph 31 above, the 'new definition' of safety adopted by the SGSA in the sixth edition of the Green Guide, suggests that all persons present at the ground should be within the consideration of the SAG. Notwithstanding that this may

² Report of the Inquiry into Crowd Safety at Sports Grounds. Rt Hon Lord Wheatley. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1972.

³ The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster 15 April 1989. Final Report. Home Office and Rt Hon Lord Justice Taylor. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, January 1990. Available at: <http://www.EPCollege.com/EPC/media/MediaLibrary/Knowledge%20Hub%20Documents/F%20Inquiry%20Reports/Hillsborough-Taylor-Report.pdf?ext=.pdf>

sometimes conflict with enforcement of laws related to Health and Safety, the consideration of all persons is now contained in the Green Guide and it may only a matter of time before this filters down to other events.

- 2.5. The publication, followed by the regular updating, of the *Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds*⁴ (commonly referred to as the *Green Guide*; see Figure 2), and establishment of the Football Licensing Authority (FLA); now the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA), have further contributed towards safety at sports grounds and have constantly re-emphasised the importance of SAGs.

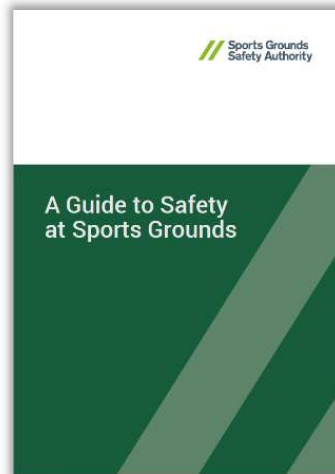


Figure 2: *The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide)*

- 2.6. In terms of musical events and others, no similar major disasters have occurred in the UK (although disasters have occurred overseas, and continue to do so). However, there have been some notable crowd-related incidents.
- 2.7. It is not widely known that crowd crushing at a David Cassidy concert in 1974 led to the death of 14-year-old Bernadette Wheelan, as well as causing hundreds of casualties.
- 2.8. In 1988 two people died, having been asphyxiated underfoot at the Monsters of Rock concert at Donington Park. This led directly to the development of the *Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Pop Concerts and Similar Events* in 1993. Subsequently this document was broadened in scope for a second edition with the title *The Event Safety Guide*, published in 1999. Now the Events Industry Forum has published what is formally known as the *Purple Guide*, although the previous documents had informally been known by that name or sometimes as *The Pop Code*.
- 2.9. In the case of the Monsters of Rock tragedy, however, there was no public inquiry, and hence no equivalent of the FLA or SGSA, and no legislation was introduced, as was the case with Ibrox and Hillsborough. This remains the situation to date, despite incidents such as the two fatalities, and 193 other casualties, subjected to 'crushing' in Trafalgar Square in 1982, and two fatalities and many injuries to others as the result of the Dreamspace incident in Chester-le-Street in 2006. The focus on event related deaths, as this document is prepared,

⁴ Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (The Green Guide). Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA) on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, sixth edition, 2018. This is the distillation of many years of research and experience of the safety management and design of sports grounds. It is available from SGSA as an e book or paper copy at: <https://sgsa.org.uk/greenguide/>

is mostly the fear from terrorism, although drug related deaths feature far more highly. The air crash at Shoreham in 2015 has led to many SAGs focusing on crowds away from the main event and inflatable structures have been prominent after the deaths of two young children in Harlow (Summer Grant) and Gorleston, Great Yarmouth (Ava-May Littleboy).

- 2.10.** It is acknowledged that the majority of events in the UK are planned and managed to high standards. However, 'near-misses' in crowd situations, and at public events, do occur but go unreported, meaning that opportunities for improvement pass unnoticed.
- 2.11.** While there have been previous attempts to try to introduce national guidance on SAGs, these have met with only partial success. Many local authorities have established successful SAGs with their own local arrangements while others have chosen not to do so. In some cases there is an apparent concern that establishing such a group could incur a responsibility and culpability upon it.
- 2.12.** Surveys regarding national SAG guidance undertaken by the Emergency Planning College (EPC) in 2011 and 2012 received strong support for such a document from local authorities, emergency services and event organisers alike. Similarly, a national 'Working in Safety Advisory Groups' course, run since 2008 by the EPC, has identified a strong desire for consistency in terms of SAG structures, terms of reference, membership, and roles and responsibilities. This desire must surely be best fulfilled in the form of national guidance. Similarly, organisers complain of a lack of consistency from SAGs and the increased use of such guidance and training of SAGs should help in achieving this.
- 2.13.** This guidance document has therefore been written with all the above in mind, though only after extensive consultation throughout the sports and event industries. It can be considered as a summary of good practice for those within the public, private and voluntary elements of these industries who constantly strive to enhance public safety at events and maintain the UK's status as one of the safest countries in which to hold large and complex public festivals and events.

3. Safety Advisory Group Constitutions

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1.** Although the formation and retention of a SAG is not a legal requirement, SAGs (also known as ESAGs, PEGs, SAGEs – see glossary for explanation) are a good practice model, as recommended in several of the key guidance documents, such as the Purple Guide.
- 3.1.2.** The SAG may be formed in relation to a specific event or venue, or with a broader remit in relation to a range of events. It will, however, be important to ensure that what we will refer to as a 'constitution' exists. This should set out clearly the roles and responsibilities attaching to it, the membership, and the policies that may underpin how it is to function.
- 3.1.3.** What should be vital is to ensure that a quality assurance process is in place in terms of the safety arrangements for events. While there may be alternative means of achieving this, such as third-party review, the option of having a SAG, comprising competent individuals and scrutinising the safety arrangements for an event, must be the preferred option. Whilst the definition of 'competent' is often discussed, a combination of knowledge, ability, training and experience are often used to describe it.

3.2. Terms of reference

3.2.1. An important element of the constitution will be the terms of reference. These should accurately reflect the key role of providing a quality assurance process for the safety-related aspects for any event(s) and venue(s) falling within this role. It is stressed that the functions of this group should be distinct from those of the planning group for such events, and indeed it should not be confused with the arrangements for the management of the event(s) (see sections 3.7–3.8).

3.2.2. Agreeing these terms of reference is a matter for local determination. However, the following examples may assist in this process. These may be either generic or specific according to the nature of the role at this local level. Generic terms of reference may include:

- To promote clarity of roles and responsibilities relevant to the event(s) within the SAG's remit. This should include the SAG members roles and may include the powers and policies of those organisations in relation to events.
- To establish clear timelines for the provision of paperwork to the SAG and agree attendance and timelines with organisers. Where events have failed or been problematic in the years since the first iteration of this document, it is often noted that timeframes previously agreed have slipped significantly or no timeframes had been set in the first place.
- To advise the local authority and/or event organiser in order to ensure high standards of health and safety
- To promote the principles of sensible risk management and good practice in safety and welfare planning. In doing so to balance all reasonable matters of safety and not permit specific members to focus on just one source of danger. The holistic view is essential to ensure all aspects of safety have been considered.
- To promote a consistent, coordinated, multi-agency approach to event planning and management.
- To advise the local authority and/or event organiser in respect of the formulation of appropriate contingency and emergency arrangements.
- To advise the local authority and/or event organiser in respect of relevant legislation and guidance.
- To encourage arrangements to be made to minimise disruption to local communities.
- To consider the implications of significant incidents and events relevant to their venue(s) and events, especially in view of the new definition of safety within the Green Guide and considerations regarding 'Zone X'.
- To consider emerging threats to events, such as terrorism methodologies, drone use and the still developing threat of cyber terrorism and deniability of service
- To consider the implications of significant incidents and events relevant to the surrounding areas and facilities
- To receive reports relevant to debriefs, visits and/or inspections of the venue or event.

3.2.3. In some cases it will be relevant to consider specific terms of reference in addition to these generic examples. These may include:

- To advise the local authority with regard to its functions in relation to safety certification
- To advise the local authority with regard to its powers under the licensing legislation.

3.2.4. In some cases it has been determined that a SAG will consider only certain categories of event, such as those on local authority land, or those planned by the authority. In other cases, it has been determined that a SAG will disregard those organised by the local authority as being 'safely planned so needing no SAG input'. Of course, the reality of both of these statements is that this could preclude consideration of events that may involve higher levels of otherwise unrecognised risk, and such approaches are therefore to be discouraged.

3.2.5. Whatever terms of reference are agreed, it is good practice to ensure that all members of the group are aware of and generally in agreement with them. One way of achieving this is to include them on the agenda for meetings. Furthermore, it is good practice to review the terms of reference on an annual basis to ensure that they are still relevant.

3.3. Membership of the Safety Advisory Group

3.3.1. In his report, Lord Justice Taylor refers to statutory, non-statutory and invited members of a SAG. For the purpose of this guidance we will refer simply to core and invited members. Core members are expected to attend all meetings and all agenda items. Invitees may expect to be present only for particular meetings, agenda items or because they have specific experience that may benefit the group in relation to issues under discussion or consideration. Section 3.8 covers the format for meetings in more detail.

3.3.2. It will be important to ensure that members have the appropriate skills, experience, and position in their organisation to be credible and competent members of the group. Inexperienced, untrained or incompetent representatives may lead not only to unsafe decisions being made but, more likely, also put an excessive demand on event organisers to make events safe almost beyond what is reasonably practicable. The survey results, available from the EPC⁵, show that there were many complaints from event organisers of unfair and unrealistic demands being placed upon them, normally by new and inexperienced SAGs or SAG members. These examples included SAG members making demands in areas far outside their own knowledge or their organisations' responsibilities. In order to ensure SAGs are not avoided by organisers, SAG members must be realistic and fair in their expectations and knowledge and experience among members is crucial.

3.3.3. Consideration must be given to the relevant organisations being involved in the group's processes in order for a suitable and sufficient review of event proposals to take place. If, for instance, a medical plan is to be reviewed, a representative from that background is required to support the quality assurance process. Equally, considering the basis for the calculation of safe capacities will require the involvement of member(s) competent in such issues. Figure 3 shows some examples of core members.

⁵ Contact EPC on enquiries@emergencyplanningcollege.com



Local authority



Event Management



Police Service



Fire & Rescue Service



Health Providers

Figure 3: Examples of core members of a Safety Advisory Group
All images © Shutterstock

3.3.4. At county, district/borough, metropolitan and/or unitary levels it could include licensing, environmental health or others as appropriate on a local basis.

3.3.5. Invited members may include, but are not limited to:

- Other local authority representatives as deemed appropriate –such as events team, emergency planning, highways, health and safety, communication/media, and legal services.
- Event organisers/promoters Venue owners/operators Health boards.
- Stewarding.
- Security.
- Traffic planners/Transport providers/British Transport Police.
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency.
- Medical.
- Supporters’ representation.
- Resident/community representation.
- Official bodies (e.g. Sports Ground Safety Authority).
- Highways Agency.
- Crowd safety managers.

3.4. Chairing of the Safety Advisory Group

3.4.1. It is most common, though not always the case, for the chair of a group to be a representative appointed by the local authority. In some cases it has been determined that this person should be an independent appointee. In some areas, authorities have local arrangements to ‘mutually swap’ SAG chairs when they consider there is a potential for a conflict of interest. Often quoted is the challenge as a local authority of being event organiser, landowner, licence issuer and highways authority. What is vital, if the group is to function effectively and efficiently, is to have someone with the appropriate skills and competencies for this potentially demanding role, which may also include managing ‘politically’ challenging issues. These are more likely to be competencies in communication, diplomacy and interpersonal skills than detailed legal or subject matter knowledge.

3.4.2. The chair should be able to absorb and evaluate the detailed arrangements for events while maintaining an objectivity of approach, taking into account the views of the group members.

3.4.3. In some cases the chair of the group may be in a position to make decisions on behalf of their authority. In such a case it is advisable that, where a devolved responsibility to the

chair has been agreed, this is fully documented. It is also advisable that checks are made to ensure that professional indemnity insurance is in place in this respect.

- 3.4.4.** It is stressed, however, that decisions taken in this way, such as in relation to licensing conditions, will be those of the authority and not the SAG, which is a purely advisory forum.
- 3.4.5.** In many cases the chair of a group will not be a decision maker, and indeed the decision maker may not be present at meetings, or even be involved in the group processes. Where this applies it will be vital to ensure that a full and accurate account of the SAG representations is given to assist the decision maker's deliberations.
- 3.4.6.** In many situations a SAG, chaired by a local authority representative, may be considering the arrangements for one of its own events. In such cases it is important to be able to demonstrate a transparency in the group's processes. It would be appropriate to avoid suggestions of bias by having the chair declare any conflict of interest if necessary, in order to avoid such allegations. Where such conflict exists, alternative chairing arrangements (preferably independent) should be made. Figure 4 shows the key responsibilities of the chair of the group.

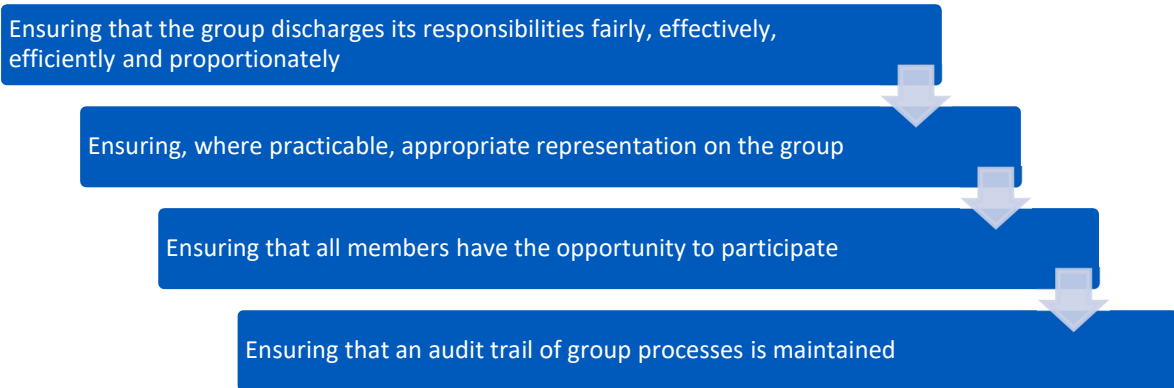


Figure 4: Responsibilities of the chair of a Safety Advisory Group
© Emergency Planning College

3.5. The roles and responsibilities of core members

- 3.5.1.** Although there will be local variations, this section looks to identify the most relevant responsibilities applicable to core members. It should also be remembered that some of these operate across significant geographic authority areas, which may result in their being involved in numerous SAGs. This clearly emphasises the need to achieve consistency within the arrangements for such groups. Alongside consistency there is also the question of competency; all SAG members should be competent in their own agency roles as well as understanding their role on a SAG. Unless there are very good reasons for not doing so, it is a responsibility of all core members to have prepared for the meeting in advance, e.g. having read documentation sent to them.

3.5.1.1. Local authority

Depending upon the nature of the local authority, it:

- Will be a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act.
- Will be responsible for some matters related to health and safety and duty of care, including those of its own staff.

- Will be an important member of the group.
- May be the venue owner and/or operator May be the event organiser.
- May be the lead authority for the issue, review, monitoring and enforcement of safety certification (for example, under the Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975).
- May be the lead authority for the issue, review, monitoring and enforcement of licenses under the Licensing Act 2003.
- May be the lead authority for environmental health matters.
- May be responsible for highways management and maintenance.
- May chair the group and/or be responsible for the appointment of the chair.

It should be remembered that some groups may involve more than one local authority, due to either geographic or organisational considerations. For example, in a two-tier arrangement, a safety certificate would be the responsibility of a county authority and a premises licence that of a district/borough authority.

3.5.1.2. Police service

The police service:

- Has statutory powers (see Appendix A).
- Is responsible for dealing with public order.
- Has intelligence-gathering and coordination capabilities.
- Will provide information and guidance relating to terrorism and threat and risk.
- Responds to incidents where and when appropriate Is responsible for crime investigation and reduction.
- Provides community policing.
- Is responsible for health and safety and duty of care in respect of its staff.
- Is an important member of the group.
- Is a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act.
- May provide policing, where applicable, for an event.

3.5.1.3. Fire and rescue service

The fire and rescue service:

- Is a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act.
- Has statutory powers and enforcement of standards (see Appendix A).
- Responds to incidents where and when appropriate.
- Is responsible for health and safety and duty of care in respect of its staff.
- Is an important member of the group.
- May be the provider of fire safety resource.

3.5.1.4. Ambulance service

The ambulance service:

- Is a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act.
- Responds to incidents and emergencies.
- Is responsible for health and safety and duty of care in respect of its staff.
- Is an important member of the group.
- May provide medical and first aid advice/assessment.

- May be a medical provider.
- May be responsible for the liaison between the event and NHS.
- In the event of an incident at or involving the event, the Emergency Services will adhere to the JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme).

3.5.1.5. Venue owner/operator

Even where the owner of the land or premises has no direct involvement with an event, other than providing the location, the venue owner or operator *may* still:

- Ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in place.
- Ensure that only *bona fide* or authorised equipment is allowed on site.
- Be responsible for establishing the extent of licensing requirements.
- Fulfil general duties under health and safety legislation.
- Obtain a fire safety risk assessment.
- Ensure land and/or premises are in such a condition as not to cause danger to visitors, users and/or trespassers (see Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 and 1984 in Appendix A).
- Be an important member of the group.

Whilst the above may be seen to be core members of a SAG, one of the key invitees will be the event organiser. However, if an event organiser does not engage with the SAG, this does not prevent the core members discussing the event and considering its safety. Additionally, it may be that where the core members have concerns about the safety of an event, they will need to meet and consider any preparations they need to make in case an incident does occur at the event.

3.5.1.6. Event organisers

An event organiser's responsibilities will include all health and safety-related matters, as the two can be closely aligned. Health and safety responsibilities may include:

- Responsibilities towards employees and others affected.
- Safe systems of work.
- Risk and threat assessment and management.
- Health and safety policy.
- Method statement(s).
- Health and safety advice.
- Monitoring.
- Audit/record keeping.
- Fire safety risk assessment.

3.5.1.7. Event safety

Event safety responsibilities may include:

- Event 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.
- Committing to agreeing a statement of intent.
- Communication arrangements.
- Welfare arrangements for the event.
- Licensing, safety certification and other statutory requirements.
- Ensuring appropriate insurance cover is in place.
- Participation and cooperation with the SAG, including providing timely submission of appropriate event documentation.

3.6. Policy to underpin Safety Advisory Group procedures

- 3.6.1.** There is often a fine line between what might be deemed to be part of the terms of reference and what could perhaps be better regarded as an underpinning policy. If we consider the terms of reference to be focused on *what* a SAG does, the policy may be deemed to be more about *how* this is done. Such a policy may include some of the following:
- 3.6.2.** It is the policy of the SAG to offer advice in order to ensure the highest possible standards of public safety at events and to encourage the wellbeing of those who could be affected by such events. In this context the ‘public’ includes not only those attending the event, but also those in the surrounding areas who may be affected by it.
- 3.6.3.** The SAG is not responsible for reviewing safe systems of work of the **event organisation or crew**. However, it will be relevant to consider the consequences of work-related incidents during periods of public access. Additionally the sixth edition of the Green Guide amends the definition of safety from safety of spectators to ‘all people present at the ground’, therefore it is necessary to consider how work systems will impact upon crew as well as the public.
- 3.6.4.** The SAG 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.
- 3.6.5.** One decision-making authority is typically the local authority, which may be the chair of the SAG. Where agencies may exercise their own statutory decision-making authority it is stressed that this is the determination of that authority and not of the SAG.
- 3.6.6.** The overall responsibility for the safety of persons at an event will lie with the event organiser, venue owner or operator and management team.
- 3.6.7.** Members of the SAG must declare any material conflict of interest in relation to any matters put before the group before any discussion on that matter. Should this conflict of interest be considered prejudicial, that person should consider withdrawing, to be replaced by an appropriate party agreed with the group.
- 3.6.8.** The SAG will have arrangements to ensure that appropriate records of procedures and meetings are maintained.
- 3.6.9.** The lessons learned via the SAG’s processes and procedures will be applied for the benefit of all events within its area of responsibility.
- 3.6.10.** Members of the SAG are also responsible for ensuring that other departments or members of their own agency are aware and conversant of the SAG, its constitution and roles and responsibilities. This is particularly so with legal departments who are often unaware of the

existence of the SAG.

3.7. When should a Safety Advisory Group consider an event?

3.7.1. This has been an area where there have been high levels of inconsistency between SAGs, as previously stated (see also section 3.2). For example, some will consider only events on local authority land, while others will have a broader perspective and use wider criteria. Many will consider events where the anticipated number of attendees exceeds a trigger figure. While this approach has some merit, **the levels of risk associated with an event may be greater with events that may not reach this trigger (the type of audience, for example, is equally important).**

3.7.2. It is important to develop a protocol that will assist in this process and safeguard those making these decisions in terms of their liabilities. Of course, referring an event to a SAG does not necessarily imply lengthy discussions at meetings as there are 'smarter' ways of discharging the responsibilities; these are covered in section

3.8. Deciding whether to refer an event to a SAG requires a consistent methodology.

3.8.1. This should always follow a risk-based approach and should be determined by considering a combination of the factors shown in Figure 5.

3.8.2. It is also necessary for SAGs to ensure that when giving advice they balance the risks associated with an event. Some risks, such as terrorism, may have severe consequences attached, but the likelihood of them happening may be very unlikely. Whereas the same event may have risks, with less severe consequences, but with a greater likelihood of them happening. These risks must be considered in a balanced and objective way to ensure that events can continue to take place without overly onerous measures being put in place.



Figure 5: Factors to consider when deciding whether to refer an event to a Safety Advisory Group - © Emergency Planning College

3.8.3. Many SAGs have developed protocols to assist in this process, some of which are identified in Appendix C. It will be important to identify who is to determine whether an event is referred to a SAG and to ensure that they are competent and confident to do so.

- 3.8.4.** A SAG can consider only events of which it is aware. Many events will fall outside of the regulatory arrangements, such as licensing, and consequently will not necessitate formal notification. Members of a SAG should, however, ensure that there is a focal point at which details of events can be collated as soon as they are aware of them.
- 3.8.5.** It should then be possible for an event organiser to be contacted in order to obtain further details on which to base the decision regarding referral to the SAG. This is quite easy to do and can be managed via core agencies' websites and online e-form facilities. Although the form may require only basic event and organiser details, it will inform the decision whether more detailed information is required.
- 3.8.6.** SAGs will often have long-established relationships with event organisers and venues where degrees of trust and historical evidence have developed. There should, however, be no complacency in such cases, and indeed there should be a culture of seeking continual improvement. Where a SAG deals with unfamiliar events, organisers and venues, it will be particularly relevant for the SAG processes to be applied. Of course, a healthy measure of common sense and pragmatism must be involved but a protocol will provide the degree of consistency that is necessary in this process.
- 3.8.7.** References to examples of e-forms and protocols are included in Appendix C.
- 3.8.8.** It should be remembered that, while a single event may seem relatively insignificant in isolation, it may be one of several events occurring simultaneously, the combined effects of which would warrant SAG quality assurance processes. In order to achieve this, many SAGs collate dates of events or produce a calendar of events so that the cumulative impact of these events can be identified, and options considered.
- 3.8.9.** SAGs may seek to apply a minimum period for notification of events, and some SAGs may apply a policy whereby they will not consider events falling outside of this period. While this is understandable, there is a risk that events falling below the appropriate standards of safety will not be subject to the necessary scrutiny. It will almost certainly be the case that such restrictions would not be supported in law when taken by a body with no statutory basis.
- 3.8.10.** It must be remembered that for certain cases, such as 'tribute events', organisers will also be working within extremely tight deadlines. It will, however, be important to encourage cooperation from event organisers to ensure timely notifications and availability of relevant documentation. It is therefore important to seek to establish a culture whereby it is recognised that working with a SAG is positive and beneficial.

3.9. Safety Advisory Group processes and meetings

- 3.9.1.** A robust SAG process, particularly where an event organiser is co-operating may provide reassurance to those agencies involved in the licensing process, and may reduce or avoid the need for licensing hearings to take place and consider licensing conditions. This is compatible with current government processes and thinking to support and encourage events to be organised within the UK as part of the 'big society' principles.
- 3.9.2.** While historically SAGs have tended to review event arrangements at meetings, this can be time-consuming and involve significant travel and cost.
- 3.9.3.** Many have therefore identified 'smarter' ways of working that can be more efficient and effective. Meetings will still have a part to play, however, and can have the added

advantage of fostering relationships for future benefit.

- 3.9.4.** There are now many technical options for the circulation of event documentation such as file transfer protocol (FTP) sites, where their use does not breach local protocols. It is therefore good practice to use such options to circulate documentation to SAG members.
- 3.9.5.** The onus must then be on SAG members to review the documentation and to raise any issues of concern, advice and so forth. If no such concerns are raised it will not normally be necessary to discuss the matter at a meeting. Indeed, even where concerns have been raised, it may be possible to resolve them without the need for a meeting. This approach relies on SAG members taking their own responsibilities seriously during the review process.
- 3.9.6.** Many members would need to travel considerable distances to attend a meeting.
- 3.9.7.** Event organisers, and others, may be dealing with extremely high volumes of events, restricting their ability to attend all meetings. Consideration should therefore be given to the appropriate use of telephone or videoconferencing as an alternative. These options would enable members to participate remotely.
- 3.9.8.** Forming subgroups can work well, especially for large-scale or complex events. This can sometimes be a more effective and efficient means of fulfilling the processes. It will be necessary to ensure that there is overarching coordination of the subgroups.
- 3.9.9.** As SAG members will have many other responsibilities, it is important to ensure that meetings are held only as necessary, and that best use is made of people's time.
- 3.9.10.** When and where to hold meetings will depend on the nature of the SAG. Where it is venue-specific there will almost certainly be advantages to holding meetings at that venue. The same may also apply to an event-specific SAG. The situation with a 'general-purpose' SAG is less clear; however, because it may deal with specific venues among its range of events, it is important for members to be familiar with those venues.
- 3.9.11.** Meetings may be held on three bases: periodically; at specific points in the development of events; and/or as necessary owing to specific concerns and issues. An obvious example would be the relevance of a SAG for a football stadium meeting when the fixtures for the forthcoming season are announced.
- 3.9.12.** Some SAG chairs have made arrangements to plan monthly meetings on, for example, a 'first Thursday' or 'last Tuesday' basis, as this enables core members to diarise them months or even years in advance. This can be done only when all members agree and where other regular meetings do not clash.
- 3.9.13.** A general-purpose SAG may schedule meetings so that the various event organisers are allocated times when their own event is to be discussed. It should therefore not be necessary for all invitees to sit through discussions that are not relevant to them. There may also be issues of a commercially sensitive nature that would make it appropriate to restrict access.
- 3.9.14.** The chair of the group should ensure that the meeting runs efficiently, and attendees should ensure they are well prepared for the meeting.

3.10. Administration of Safety Advisory Groups

- 3.10.1.** Member organisations are currently experiencing considerable pressure on both finances

and resources, so there will be inevitable implications for the administration arrangements of SAGs. This will be eased by event organisers and members each playing their part. It is normal for administrative responsibilities to be undertaken by the same organisation as the chair (typically the local authority), although this is not always the case.

- 3.10.2.** Responsibilities will include being a conduit for information; communication; and coordination/distribution of documentation. Experience suggests that these requirements should not be underestimated. It is also vital to ensure that an audit trail is maintained reflecting the SAG processes.
- 3.10.3.** Administrative work will include the preparation and circulation of agendas in advance of meetings, the referral processes of event proposals to SAGs, and the recording and circulation of resolutions and minutes of meetings. Given the importance of the chair's role, it will not be appropriate for them to record the minutes, so another member will need to be responsible for this. Ideally secretarial support will be provided by a person who is not a participating active SAG member.
- 3.10.4.** The audit trail of a SAG will most certainly be the subject of public record, potential freedom of information application and any subsequent court proceedings, criminal or civil.
- 3.10.5.** The SAG must have a process to avoid the unnecessary sharing of information outside the SAG that is commercially sensitive to the companies who own it. Some protection in this regard is provided by S43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which states: 'Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it'. As such, any emails, plans or other similar documentation provided to the SAG and held by its members that is marked appropriately by the authors or requested to be treated as commercially sensitive should be withheld even if subject to requests under the Act.
- 3.10.6.** Additionally SAGs must consider their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018. In order to carry out their role, SAGs will hold information about people and therefore must have a privacy policy with regard to the holding, storage, retention and disposal of information.

4. Options and limitations of the Safety Advisory Group

- 4.1.** As stated in section 3.6.1, SAGs as an entity have no bespoke powers although some have tended to resort to the powers of their individual members if legislative or enforcement action is necessary. It is important to stress again that the SAG is not an enforcement body. Whether or not an individual agency determines to resort to use of its own powers must be a decision for that agency and not the SAG. In reality, almost all SAG matters are resolved informally through negotiated processes.
- 4.2.** The SAG would be likely to discuss the powers of its members when faced with an event that caused it concern for public safety. However, the members should not put pressure on others to use powers they would not otherwise implement. SAG members may find it useful to meet and discuss each member's powers separate to an ordinary SAG meeting, to ensure that all members are aware of each agencies options and limitations. This type of

meeting could also be an opportunity for the annual review of terms of reference and other documents.

- 4.3.** As the SAG has no legislative power, the number of options available to it are limited. That said, any advice offered by a SAG that comprises competent members would most likely be highly influential in most cases and would certainly have an influence on any legal process.
- 4.4.** While a SAG may advise in relation to the introduction and/or variation of conditions relating to safety certification and/or licensing, it is stressed that it should not be seen as a 'lobbying forum' in these respects. It is becoming more common for licensing conditions to now include attendance at a SAG and couched in the terms of achieving public safety, is not an unreasonable requirement.
- 4.5.** While there may be no apparent legal duty to do so, some authorities and SAG members might consider there is a moral and ethical duty to inform a landowner of significant safety concerns that they deem to pose a threat to public safety and the likely implications of these for the owner of the land. Under the Occupiers' Liability Act(s) a land owner is likely to retain some duty of care with regard to their land being used by an event organiser. Frequently land owners are not aware of this, and / or are not aware of the safety matters relating to an event.
- 4.6.** Such a decision should not be taken lightly; it will be subject to close scrutiny at the time and potentially even more so at a later date, possibly in court if actions are taken by organisers who incur financial losses. While such a decision may have been subject to discussion and advice within the SAG, it is again stressed that this decision would have been taken by that member or organisation and not the SAG itself.
- 4.7.** Cases such as these can result in public and media interest, particularly in relation to a historic, traditional or community event. This can sometimes be reported as a SAG 'banning' an event, but the SAG itself has no legal basis on which to do so. It is more often a case of land use permissions being withdrawn after the landowner has been made aware of the safety implications.
- 4.8.** A SAG may sometimes wish to examine the insurance arrangements for an event. However, there is no legal requirement for these to be provided, nor is there a legal requirement for an event organiser to obtain public liability insurance.
- 4.9.** However, where a local authority is in control of the land on which an event is to take place, it will certainly be prudent for it to check its insurance policies and to confirm that the activities being undertaken are covered.
- 4.10.** A major challenge for a SAG is where an event organiser refuses to engage with it. Where a SAG becomes aware of an event which by its nature would normally be subject to the SAG process, the SAG should persevere in its attempts to establish contact with the organiser and details of all such attempts should be documented. This may involve contacting landowners and checking websites for organisers' details, ticket sale points, etc. First contact should seek to explain that the role of the SAG is as a supportive body and does not intend to prevent or curtail activity.
- 4.11.** If the organiser refuses to engage with a SAG process, in whatever format, the SAG should consider why this is and whether there may be mitigating circumstances, such as travelling distances or involvement in other events. Early notice and the opportunity to dial in or

conference call SAGs may alleviate some of these issues.

- 4.12.** The government has recognised the valuable contribution that events make to the UK and has encouraged them to be supported and allowed to take place subject to appropriate levels of safety. Where an event organiser declines to engage in safety processes, this will be challenging, but should not prevent the SAG taking reasonable steps to review the safety arrangements of the event.
- 4.13.** A SAG process does not need to be lengthy or adversarial. Face-to-face meetings can be replaced by telephone calls, videoconferences or email, especially when organisers are attempting to arrange events in many locations at the same time.
- 4.14.** A resolution may sometimes be better obtained away from large meetings and where a less formal approach is taken.

5. Exceptional circumstances

- 5.1.** In the absence of specific written guidance on establishing, running and maintaining SAGs, many local authorities (and in some cases police or fire and rescue services) have established groups to consider the safety aspects of events within their area. While this is not to be recommended, some have gone further and formed joint groups that plan events, or contribute towards their planning. In some cases these groups have been necessitated by circumstances related to specific events, normally of a historic nature, where responsibility for organisation is unclear and therefore detailed planning and safety aspects have been, at best, questionable.
- 5.2.** In such cases authorities have been left with little choice other than to face a threat to public safety if they do not take some action to assist in planning the event. Nonetheless, event organisers and communities should be encouraged to begin to undertake the planning functions and permit the local authority and SAG to undertake their roles to examine the safety aspects.
- 5.3.** While the concept of joint groups leading on planning events is not desirable, it can be understandable in extreme circumstances. Notting Hill Carnival has a history of instances of considerable disorder and as such, has required high levels of policing towards the end of each day. As well as avoiding such public disorder, police involvement in planning aims to help organisers plan safer events in the future. Other agencies, such as local authorities, ambulance service, fire and rescue service and the Greater London Authority (as a principal funder) would also benefit from having input in planning certain aspects of the event, as they would have suffered the consequences of any disorder.
- 5.4.** Some historical events also require, and in some cases are given, more assistance than might appear 'normal' in the modern concept where organisers are completely responsible for the public safety aspects of their event.
- 5.5.** Figure 6 shows some examples of traditional or historic events that form part of the UK's culture. Most people agree such events should be supported, although not at the expense of public safety.



Figure 6: Safety is paramount at traditional and historic events such as Tar Barrels (left) and Lewes Bonfire (right)

Tar Barrels © Robert Chandler, Appendix B; Lewes Bonfire © Select Security and Stewarding Ltd, Brighton

- 5.6. There are, however, distinct differences between those events where participants of their own volition endanger themselves through an activity (for example, cheese rolling), and those where public spectators may be endangered through the activities of the participants (for example, Lewes Bonfire, where strong winds and close proximity to burning torches, along with thrown fireworks, led to a number of eye injuries in 2011).
- 5.7. Appropriate arrangements should therefore be in place to minimise the risk to participants, to ensure they are aware of such risk, and to ensure that appropriate responses are in place. For many events, such as soccer, boxing and cycle racing, official bodies will provide the arrangements for participants. Other organisers, such as the Scout Association and the British Council of Shopping Centres, have overseeing bodies that control the general activities of their members. In other cases, however, an external organiser may be responsible for the safety arrangements for both spectators and participants.
- 5.8. While we should expect arrangements for general public safety to be scrutinised, it is also crucial that the arrangements for participants are subject to similar examination. This is particularly so where participants may be unaware of the levels of risk they might be exposed to and assume that organisers have undertaken adequate preparation. These arrangements may be the responsibility of others, such as sporting bodies, but it will be vital to ensure that they are also considered by those involved in planning the event.
- 5.9. One example of inadequate safety arrangements was a sea swimming event at Southwold, Suffolk in 2013. This resulted in a potential threat to life when scores of participants got into difficulties owing to a delayed start and turning tide. Another, the 'Hope and Glory' event in Liverpool in 2017, is a valuable lesson in ensuring planning timelines are met and assurances are followed up. The useful report into the cancellation, midway through the 2-day event can be found at <https://liverpool.gov.uk/media/1356433/tess-hope-and-glory-report-final-october-5-2017.pdf>

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This guide ends, as it began, with a summary of some of the fundamental principles of the SAG process:
 - Events are an important part of the lives of UK residents and should be

encouraged.

- The UK government supports and encourages events, especially those organised by the community for the community.
- SAGs are a good means to examine the safety aspects of events and should be encouraged to do so.
- SAGs should be seen by organisers as supportive of their endeavours. There is no legal basis for SAGs to exist, although aspects of the Civil Contingencies Act may be deemed to make them so (see Appendix A).
- SAG members themselves may have legislative and enforcement powers.
- SAG membership should consist of experienced, competent practitioners.
- SAGs are advisory and have no power either to 'authorise' or 'ban' events.

Glossary

Category 1 responder

An agency such as a fire, police and ambulance service, with responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act.

Dreamspace

An art structure built in a park at Chester-Le-Street in 2006 that was lifted by winds and led to the deaths of two people and injury to many others.

EPC

The Cabinet Office Emergency Planning College where courses are run on 'Public Safety' and 'Working in Safety Advisory Groups' as well as on contingency planning and disaster management.

FLA

The Football Licensing Authority, predecessor of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority.

FTP

File transfer protocols – a means of sharing data and large files via secure online storage systems.

Green Guide

The informal title for the *Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds*.⁴ This publication was first developed after the Ibrox disaster and is maintained by the SGSA. It is used primarily at sports grounds, although it does give some help in relation to crowd flows and densities for event planners.

JAG

Joint Agencies Group which may be another name for a Safety Advisory Group, or can be a planning group.

JESIP

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme. A programme introduced by government to improve the planning and response to major incidents across the UK.

LOPSG

Licensing, Operational and Safety Planning Group commonly used in the London area.

Method statement

A document that explains safe systems of work and applies primarily to the construction industry, although it is becoming more common elsewhere.

Monsters of Rock

A music concert held annually at Donington Park where two fatalities occurred in 1988.

Policy

An underpinning, guiding principle (or principles) on which terms of reference can be based.

Pop Code

In this context, the forerunner to the *Purple Guide*; not to be confused with HSE guidance on noise at festivals.

Purple Guide

*The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Other Events*¹ is the well-known guide to health, safety and welfare at events. This was originally an HSE document (*HSG195 The Event Safety Guide*); the new version was written by professionals within the industry.

SAG

Safety Advisory Group. Sometimes known as ESAG (Event Safety Advisory Group), PSAG (Public Safety Advisory Group) PESAG (Public Event Safety Advisory Group), LSAG (Licensing Safety Advisory Group), PEG (Public Event Group), SAGE (Safety Advisory Group for Events) or it could be prefixed by the name of a county or town.

SGSA

Sports Ground Safety Authority, formally known as the Football Licensing Authority (FLA).

Temporary demountable structures

Items designed to be built and rebuilt on a regular basis and for relatively short periods of time at event and festival sites. These will include stages, marquees, seating areas, platforms and floodlights.

Terms of reference

An agreed list of what the SAG is intended to achieve and what it will (or will not) do.

Third-party review

Any process by which an individual or group not involved in the process undertakes an examination of the processes or documentation. Peer review and external review would be included in this process.

Tribute events

These are arranged (often at short notice) to commemorate significant incidents, often deaths of significant personalities or to raise the public profile of some form of major campaign (for example, Children in Need).

Triggers

A list of risk-based factors upon which the SAG may decide whether to meet and/or consider the safety aspects of certain events.

