

RadHR

# Decision-making Policy & Process

May 2023 | Updated July 2025

## Outline

This policy aims to outline the process for [the RadHR Core Team](#) to make decisions about operations and strategic direction within RadHR, as an organisation. It is based on a small team of part-time workers and directors and aims to reflect the desire to work together based on consensus decision-making principles, as well as the limits on everyone's time. While not all workers will choose to also be directors, workers will have an equal say with directors in decision-making.

We want to make space for differences, to allow for relative autonomy, and to find constructive compromise when we are not in immediate agreement with one another. We recognise that different decisions come with different levels of organisational risk and are more or less reversible if they go wrong; we want this document to reflect this range. This policy doesn't pretend it will have answers to every potential scenario, but does aim to outline the principles and approaches that we all aim to uphold together.

This policy is currently based on the assumption that all decisions related to RadHR will land with the RadHR Core Team, but that this will not always be the case. Over time, as the RadHR Community becomes more reflective of the groups and organisations that are at the frontlines of countless struggles for justice, we imagine that a range of decisions will gradually begin to happen with the wider RadHR Community, via RadHR organisational structures that are not yet established.

## Review

We will review this decision-making process **annually** to assess if it is still appropriate to the size, involvement and demographics of the wider RadHR Community.

## Principles

Our decision-making should always primarily reflect the [values of RadHR](#).

Additionally, we feel that our decision-making should:

- Always aim to be built on full consensus amongst the RadHR Core Team;
- Actively work to recognise and address any systemic or relational power differences amongst the RadHR Core Team that might make it harder for some of us to fully engage with decision-making (see below: [Making involvement in decisions more possible](#));

- Try our best to actively listen to our differences with one another in good faith, when working towards consensus;
- Aim to involve or consult wider parts of the RadHR community in a growing share of organisational decisions, as appropriate;
- Take into account current capacities and existing commitments.

## Process & structure

We recognise that there are many different types of decision-making. Our decision-making tends to fall into three categories ([via the Hum](#)):

### 1. Mandate

*Groups/Roles can make decisions within their remit without input.*

A faster option, with clear responsibilities, based on trust. It can miss out on collective intelligence, and undermine trust if done without transparency. It works best in areas of low risk, where there is more expertise, or where less group buy-in is needed.

### 2. Consent

*No one has actively objected to a decision within a stated timeline*

A middle ground when there isn't clear mandate for someone/a smaller group to make a decision, but the impacts of that decision are unlikely to be significant.

### 3. Consensus

*Everyone is satisfied with the decision.*

The most collaborative option: often leads to better decisions and is more anti-oppressive. But it takes more time, is harder with more people, and is only anti-oppressive if the wider culture is supportive.

## Mandate or consensus?

In a small team, with limited time, we aim to make most day-to-day decisions by **Mandate**, individually, or by [Work Areas](#), or when necessary, amongst the [Core Team](#) members who are present at the time. Additional input from others is always encouraged, but isn't necessary for most decisions.

That said, we recognise that some decisions should always aim for **Consensus** amongst the Core Team and should be recorded. These should include (but not limited to):

- Organisational strategy decisions;
- Increases to any particular budget line over £500, or which are part of restricted organisational funding (and thus will need to be reported to a particular funder);
- Decisions to apply for particular sources of funding or take on particular pieces of consultancy work, if there are any reasons to believe that the work is not aligned with RadHR's values, or if it is a commitment of more than 3 days of staff time;

- Decisions which are likely to create reputational or legal risks for RadHR, its workers, directors or members;
- Issues which members of the Core Team think are likely to significantly impact or raise major concerns or differences with others in RadHR.

These issues can be addressed at weekly Core Team meetings, quarterly away days, or at the RadHR AGM each year. Currently Core Team meetings are held on Wednesday afternoons. (We can review when workers have overlapping work time, if Wednesday afternoon doesn't work as the team grows, as long as there is a regular slot, most weeks, that we can all attend.)

## **When and how to use Consent**

Consent can be used to address situations where a decision goes beyond the Mandate remit of an individual or smaller group, and is unlikely to have major impacts on: the rest of the team, the organisational budget or RadHR's wider reputation.

In these cases, proposals may be shared in Chat or added to a Core Team meeting agenda, with any relevant information and as much notice as is possible, with a clear deadline for feedback. The assumption will be that if no objections are raised by this deadline, that the decision will be made and the proposal will go ahead.

For urgent decisions when it is not possible to convene a full consensus process, we use a 'quick consensus process' (outlined below).

## **Preparation**

The following steps should be taken to ensure that all Core Team members are able to participate in these types of decisions:

- Information regarding the decisions should be shared at least a week before the decision is due to be made;
- If possible, the decision should be discussed and made at a time when all Core Team members are able to be present in the meeting;
- There should be sufficient time allocated to the discussion around the decision.

These steps are an important part of ensuring participation in decision-making is accessible to everyone in the Core Team. That said, it is not always possible to meet all of them, for instance in the case of time-sensitive or unexpected decisions.

*Attendance:* If for whatever reason a member of the Core Team is unable to attend the meeting where the decision will take place, other members of the team should create opportunities to feed into the discussion. However, decision making will still land with those who are present in the meeting itself.

*Information:* For decisions where it is not possible to share information at least a week before a meeting, information will be shared as soon as it is available and Core Team members will allow for as much time between the information-sharing and meeting as feasible. This may mean postponing other meetings or work tasks

where possible in order to give Core Team members sufficient time to review the relevant information ahead of the decision-making meeting.

## Formal consensus process steps

In any situations where differences have arisen amongst the Core Team, a more formal consensus process should be followed when the issue is discussed. It should include the following steps:

1. **Frame the problem:** What is the issue that the group wants to address?
2. **Explore the topic:** What are the different ways the group could address this issue?
3. **Underlying concerns:** Are there any concerns around the ideas that are coming forward from the group?
4. **Develop proposal:** What does the group feel should be done, which can address the different concerns that were raised? (If a proposal is already formed before the meeting, you can start with Step 4)
5. **Agreement/opinion check:** How are people feeling about it? Can do a go-round to ask everyone, or use hand signals (i.e. - hands up for support, hands down for opposition, hands in the middle for mixed feelings). If there are still strong objections, the group should work to reshape the proposal.
6. **Decision:** If the temperature check hasn't brought any strong objections forward, the group should formalise the decision (and the facilitator should be clear that this is not just an opinion check!) A decision is made by all members indicating a 'Fist-to-Five' opinion on the proposal, where everyone shows a number of fingers, based on their feelings about the proposal (or types the numbers 0 to 5 in the chat).
  - a. 3-5 fingers = consent (these indicate medium-to-strong support)
  - b. 2 fingers = stand aside (a stand aside means that someone doesn't feel equipped to make a decision but trusts others to do so)
  - c. 1 finger = disagree (indicates that someone doesn't like the decision, but is not worried that it is a major problem if it goes ahead. If someone presents a 1, other members should always check in with them, in case there are additional steps that might help them feel better about the proposal)
  - d. 0 = block (this is an indication that someone in the group feels the current proposal is at fundamental odds with the values of the group and must be re-evaluated. If someone in a group uses a block, they need to be prepared to explain why they have done so [i.e. what values are being violated], and it means that the group must start on a new proposal.)
7. **Closing:**
  - a. *Addressing a situation where not everyone is super happy:* If there have been any stand-asides, think about what is needed to help those who haven't been as strongly in-favour of the decision to stay involved and invested in the group. Often someone making time to talk to them one-to-one afterwards, to listen to their needs, can help with this.

- b. *Agreeing particular action points and actually doing the thing:* Leaving time in the meeting for members to think through the next few steps needed to implement a decision together, and then getting multiple people committed to the action points involved in the follow-up steps.

## **Urgent decision-making**

Where an unexpected and/or urgent decision arises, we will do a quick consensus process amongst Core Team members who are present, as to if this decision should be prioritised over existing meeting agenda items.

If so, we will also agree which other agenda items can be postponed if there isn't sufficient time. We will also try to limit how often this happens, keeping 'urgent' decisions to those in which a delay is likely to affect the wellbeing (mental, physical, financial) of Core Team members' or others we work, and those that are likely to have significant negative impacts on the organisation if not taken (e.g. funding deadlines).

There may be other reasons why a decision needs to be made urgently, but we should avoid treating discussions this way, as much as possible.

## **Financial decision-making**

Financial decision-making should follow the process outlined in the [Financial Accounts, Decision-Making & Monitoring Policy](#).

## **Limits to consensus process**

In situations where there has been an inability to reach consensus for two Core Team meetings, we will make decisions by a two-thirds majority at the third meeting discussing the issues. This should always be a last-resort option.

In the event that a decision is made via two-thirds majority, those who have secured the decision should arrange to meet with those who have stood against it at the earliest chance. If either party feels the decision has been a significant source of conflict, or has worries about how internal power dynamics may affect the discussion, they can arrange for outside facilitation in this meeting, paid for by RadHR (as is financially viable). The aim should be to find ways to support further compromise between those involved and, if needed, to repair any harm or difficult feelings that came up in the decision-making process.

If a Core Team member is ever unclear if they can make a decision themselves, or if a smaller group of Core Team members is ever unclear about if they should make a decision themselves, another Core Team member who hasn't been involved, should be asked. This may lead to a decision being taken to a wider group, up to the full Core Team, aiming for consensus.

There may also be exceptional moments, as laid out in our [Conflict, Grievance and Accountability Policy & Process](#), in which a member of the Core Team, following attempts to address a conflict, loses their decision-making power and other members of the Core Team are empowered to make a decision without them. This is likely to only

happen at the point in which there are no further options for resolving a conflict, or in which a member of the Core Team has not been willing to engage with the processes included in the policy. This situation should be avoided, if at all possible, via the steps outlined in the policy.

## Making involvement in decisions more possible

We recognise that it will not be possible for everyone to engage in decision-making on equal terms, without active support from the group. This may be because a member is newer to the team, or because of different communication or learning needs, or because the team is still subtly reproducing wider societal power dynamics. To help counteract these factors, the team will take responsibility for practicing the following:

1. **Facilitation techniques:** Those who are facilitating (or everyone, if the meeting isn't being formally facilitated) will take responsibility for noticing who has and hasn't spoken, or if there are signs of tension or distress arising from anyone in the team. If it feels appropriate, we should encourage one another to share their perspectives, or offer space to discuss the decision in private, to help them to voice their perspectives, if they are not able to do so in the group, in the moment.
2. **Consensus amendments:** The outline of consensus process above can be amended to include specific go-rounds so everyone is encouraged to speak by default (rather than having to proactively make a point). It can also include guiding questions (ideally brought by the person/people raising the proposal), to help encourage more direct feedback about what is being proposed.
3. **Side conversations:** Offering to have 1:1 conversations in advance of a decision making meeting, or after it has occurred, can help bring to the surface thoughts and opinions that some members of the team might feel less-comfortable sharing in the full group. This can also help to keep team members in the loop, if they aren't able to be present when a decision is going to be made, or have had to miss a key meeting unexpectedly. This work should always be distributed amongst the team, so it doesn't fall on one person to keep others involved and informed.
4. **External facilitation:** Any member of the team is free to suggest outside facilitation for any upcoming discussions. This will likely end up requiring some planning to fit the schedules of, and prepare a brief for, an external facilitator, but there is budget that has been allocated for this purpose and should be spent any time there is felt to be a need amongst the team, as is financially viable. Recognising that it may feel difficult to raise this kind of suggestion, anyone can say 'I think we need some extra help with this conversation' and someone else on the team can support them to make arrangements around securing an outside facilitator. It may be that members of the current RadHR Community, or representative bodies of the RadHR membership (as they develop), would be able to offer this support.

## Towards a RadHR Community Decision-Making Process

At the time of writing, RadHR is still in its early stages of development and thus all decisions will be held by the current Core Team (or smaller configurations of its

members), based on work mandate, consent and consensus approaches, involvement mechanisms and the wider principles outlined above. While this is the case, there is still a longer-term commitment to involving more of the RadHR membership in various aspects of decision-making, both for the website and for the organisation.

This commitment, and steps towards practicing it, will be balanced against the need to uphold RadHR's core values. We are aware that members' ideas of what is or isn't radical will vary, and that there are voices and experiences that can easily get lost or silenced, in both online and offline communities, if there is not proactive work to shift or challenge existing power dynamics.

At this stage, responsibility lies with the Core Team to ensure that these values are upheld, even if there are moments when this is not the most democratic option. Over time, we aim to support the RadHR community to share greater responsibility for upholding core organisational values, and will continue to take steps to bring more members into consultation and involvement in more decisions (via the RadHR Community Forum, and one-to-one outreach). This assessment will be included in the annual review of this decision-making process.

## References

[PIRC Decision-Making](#)

[RadHR Core Team policy](#)

[Decision-making Methods for Decentralised Teams](#)