

# POSSIBLE PROBLEMS IN GROUPS, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

Not all groups run smoothly! Some have problems of a varying nature. Learning to deal with such problems is one of the reasons students are asked to work with others.

Here are some possible problems, and some suggestions as to how you might solve them.

## People not pulling their weight

- allocating tasks sensibly and fairly is first step towards avoiding this problem [[link to Allocating tasks info sheet](#)]
- try to find out why someone is not pulling their weight – there may be good reason
- explain to the person (tactfully and one-to-one – a role for the group leader), the effect on the group and on achieving the task in hand

## Too much work involved

- revisit group's aims – are you trying to do too much? Have you gone off track?
- prioritise the work you have left to do, according to how much there is of it and how important it is.

## Quiet group members

- the role of the group leader is important here. The leader could try to bring quiet group members in to the discussion and ask their views, but not too directly if the person is shy. The leader could also try to find out why the person is quiet – there may be an underlying reason
- the rest of group should listen to what the quieter members say, not interrupt them, and be positive about their comments. This will encourage them to speak out more
- Ask yourself if it matters that someone is quiet, if they are doing the tasks allocated to them, and doing them well.

## Disruptive group members

- initially, ignore any talking over others, texting and other disrupting behaviour
- try to find out why they are disruptive; for example, they may be covering up the fact that they do not understand the work

## Deadends

- backtrack and revisit the aims of the group
- try a brainstorm
- Break the work into smaller steps and then tackle the tasks one by one