

# **The Autistic Rights Movement United Kingdom Constitution**

Adopted on the 20th day of March, 2010

## **A - Name**

The name of the Association is  
**"The Autistic Rights Movement United Kingdom"**  
(Hereafter referred to as "the Association")

The Association shall also be known as **"ARM UK"**

## **B - Administration**

The Association is a not-for-profit, unincorporated voluntary association.  
The Association is not a charity.

Subject to the matters set out below the Association and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the Executive Committee, constituted by clause F of this constitution ("the Executive Committee").

## **C - Objects**

The objectives of the Association shall be;

(1) To campaign throughout the UK<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere to advance the interests of autistic<sup>2</sup> people and those people with "related conditions"<sup>3</sup>.

(2) - To campaign for the civil and human rights of such people to be recognised, respected and upheld and to attempt to ensure that such legislation as guarantees or promotes such rights is respected and enforced.

(3) - To raise awareness of autism and to educate the general public, relevant professionals and organisations in the private, voluntary and statutory sectors.

(4) - To work with professionals and organisations in the private, voluntary and statutory sectors so that they may improve services, facilities and conditions for autistic people.

(5) - To encourage the involvement and engagement of autistic people in the commissioning, design, delivery and evaluation of statutory sector services used by autistic people and to campaign for the enforcement of such legislation and guidance which guarantees such involvement and engagement.

(6) - To develop and encourage the development of mechanisms, structures, procedures and processes by which agencies such as those referred to above may involve and engage with autistic people.

(7) - To establish or to encourage and support the establishment of regional, sub-regional and local Autistic Rights Movement organisations with autistic-led governance arrangements similar to the Association and with aims and objectives similar to the Association and to bring any and all such organisations together into a national network

(8) - To establish or to encourage and support the establishment of Autistic Rights Movement organisations with autistic-led governance arrangements similar to the Association and with aims and objectives similar to the Association for the Nations of the United Kingdom and the British Isles as well as territories dependent on the British crown including England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and all other British Crown territories and possessions.

(9) - To establish or to encourage and support the establishment of a European Autistic Rights Movement and a global Autistic Rights Movement with due recognition from the relevant authorities.

(10) - To promote;

- a) the involvement and engagement of autistic people in statutory sector strategic planning at all levels and in all areas
- b) positive autistic identities and oppose negative stereotypes
- c) the social model of disability
- d) the recognition that there is a hierarchy of disabilities and consequent hierarchy of equalities and to promote the abolition of such inequity
- e) social inclusion and independent living
- f) the concept of neurodiversity.

## **D - Powers**

In furtherance of the objects but not otherwise the Executive Committee may exercise the following powers:

(1) The power to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Executive Committee shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;

(2) The power to buy, take on lease or in exchange any property necessary for the achievement of the objects and to maintain and equip it for use;

(3) The power subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Association;

(4) The power subject to any consents required by law to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the property of the Association with repayment of the money so borrowed;

(5) The power to employ such staff (who shall not be members of the Executive Committee) as are necessary for the proper pursuit of the objects and to make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions and superannuation for staff and their dependants;

(6) The power to co-operate with other organisations, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objects or of similar purposes and to exchange information and advice with them;

(7) The power to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects;

(8) The power to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Executive Committee may think fit;

(9) The power to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

## **E - Membership**

(1) There are two types of membership of the Association, full and associate.

(2) Full membership of the Association is open to:

a) autistic individuals (over the age of 18 years) who are interested in furthering the work of the Association and who have paid any annual subscription laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee (any such person being called in this constitution an "individual member"), and;

b) any organisation which is interested in furthering the work of the Association and has paid any annual subscription laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee and which is controlled entirely by autistic people (any such body being called in this constitution a "member organisation").

"Individual members" and representatives of "member organisations" are referred to collectively in this document as "full members".

(3) Associate membership of the Association is open to;

a) non-autistic individuals (over the age of 18 years) who are interested in furthering the work of the Association and who have paid any annual

subscription laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee (any such person being called in this constitution an "associate member"), and;

- b) autistic people under the age of 18 (any such person being called in this constitution an "associate member"), and;
- c) any organisation which is interested in furthering the work of the Association and has paid any annual subscription laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee but which is not entirely controlled by autistic people (any such body being called in this constitution an "associate organisation").

(4) Each member organisation shall appoint an individual to represent it and to vote on its behalf at meetings of the Association.

In addition member organisations may appoint an alternate to replace its appointed representative at any meeting of the Association if the appointed representative is unable to attend.

(5) Each member organisation shall notify the name of the representative appointed by it and of any alternate to the secretary.

If the representative or alternate resigns from or otherwise leaves the member organisation he or she shall forthwith cease to be the representative of the member organisation.

(6) Each associate organisation shall appoint an individual to represent it at meetings of the Association.

In addition associate organisations may appoint an alternate to replace its appointed representative at any meeting of the Association if the appointed representative is unable to attend.

(7) Each associate organisation shall notify the name of the representative appointed by it and of any alternate to the secretary.

If the representative or alternate resigns from or otherwise leaves the associate organisation he or she shall forthwith cease to be the representative of the associate organisation.

(8) Every individual member shall have one vote.

(9) Every member organization shall have one vote.

(10) Associate members (and representatives of associate organisations) shall be able to propose and second motions (and amendments to motions) but shall not be entitled to vote on them.

(11) The Executive Committee may, by a two thirds majority and for good reason terminate the membership of (or reject the application for membership of) any individual or organisation provided that the individual concerned or the appointed

representative of the organisation concerned (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee, supported by a person of their choice, before a final decision is made.

Such a hearing may be in person or in writing or by electronic communication or by telephonic communication or otherwise as best suits the member in question subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

## **F - Executive Committee**

(1) At the annual general meeting of the Association the individual members (and representatives of member organisations) shall elect from amongst the representatives of member organizations members of an Executive Committee who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting

(2) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than three members and not more than twenty members

(3) Those persons elected to serve as members of the Executive Committee shall at the annual general meeting elect from amongst themselves three honorary officers, being a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer, who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

(4) The Executive Committee may in addition appoint not more than six co-opted members but so that no-one may be appointed as a co-opted member if, as a result, more than one third of the members of the Executive Committee would be co-opted members.

Each appointment of a co-opted member shall be made at a special meeting of the Executive Committee called under clause N and shall take effect from the end of that meeting unless the appointment is to fill a place which has not then been vacated in which case the appointment shall run from the date when the post becomes vacant.

(5) All the members of the Executive Committee shall retire from office together at the end of the annual general meeting next after the date on which they came into office, excepting those persons referred to in the following clause, but they may be re-elected.

(6) For the three years from the date of the adoption of this constitution the three signatories of this constitution shall serve as Executive Committee members.

They shall retire from office together at the end of the first annual general meeting following that three year period but they may be re-elected.

(7) The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.

(8) No person who is not diagnosed autistic shall be a member of the Executive Committee.

(9) No person shall be appointed as a member of the Executive Committee who is under 18 years of age.

(10) No person shall be entitled to act as a member of the Executive Committee whether on first or on any subsequent entry into office until after signing a declaration of eligibility to serve as such under the terms of clause G (1-5) of this document.

(11) Any member of the Executive Committee may be removed from office by a resolution passed by all other members of the Executive Committee after inviting the views of the Committee member concerned and considering the matter in light of any such views, subject to approval by members at an extraordinary general meeting.

### **G - Determination of Membership of the Executive Committee**

A member of the Executive Committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

- (1) is disqualified as a company director; or
- (2) is an un-discharged bankrupt; or
- (3) has defaulted under a county court administration order; or
- (4) has an unspent conviction involving dishonesty or deception; or
- (5) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs; or
- (6) is absent without the permission of the Executive Committee from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the Executive Committee resolve that his or her office be vacated; or
- (7) gives notice to the Executive Committee of a wish to resign (but only if at least three members of the Executive Committee will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect).

### **H - Executive Committee Members shall not be personally interested**

No member of the Executive Committee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Association or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a member of the Executive Committee) in any contract entered into by the Executive Committee.

### **I - Meetings and Proceedings of the Executive Committee**

(1) The Executive Committee shall hold at least two ordinary meetings each year. Meetings may be conducted electronically or telephonically or by any such means or combination thereof as the Executive Committee may from time to time decide.

A special meeting may be called at any time by the chairperson or by any two members of the Executive Committee upon not less than seven days' notice being given to the other members of the Executive Committee of the matters to be discussed but if the matters include an appointment of a co-opted member then not less than 21 days' notice must be given.

(2) The chairperson shall act as chairperson at meetings of the Executive Committee.

If the chairperson is absent from any meeting, the members of the Executive Committee present shall choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting before any other business is transacted.

(3) There shall be a quorum when at least one third of the number of members of the Executive Committee for the time being or three members of the Executive Committee, whichever is the greater, are present at a meeting.

(4) Every issue may be determined by a simple majority of the votes cast at a Committee meeting but a resolution which is in writing and signed by all members of the Committee is as valid as a resolution passed at a meeting and for this purpose the resolution may be contained in more than one document and will be treated as passed on the date of the last signature.

(5) The Executive Committee shall keep minutes of the proceedings at meetings of the Executive Committee and of any sub-committee.

(6) The Executive Committee may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings and the custody of documents.

No rule may be made which is inconsistent with this constitution.

(7) The Executive Committee may appoint one or more sub-committees consisting of two or more members of the Executive Committee and any other persons as required for the purpose of making any inquiry or supervising or performing any function or duty which in the opinion of the Executive Committee would be more conveniently undertaken or carried out by a sub-committee provided that all acts and proceedings of any such sub-committee shall be fully and promptly reported to the Executive Committee.

Sub-committee members who are not members of the Executive Committee may propose items and amendments, but may not vote on them.

## **J - Receipts and Expenditure**

(1) The funds of the Association, including all donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Executive Committee in the name of the Association at such bank as the Executive Committee shall from time to time decide.

All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least two members of the Executive Committee.

All transactions involving funds of the Association must be authorised by at least two members of the Executive Committee.

(2) The funds belonging to the Association shall be applied only in furthering the objects.

## **K - Accounts**

The Executive Committee shall:

- (1) keep a record of the financial transactions of the Association;
- (2) prepare an annual statement of accounts for the Association;
- (3) make arrangements for the auditing or independent examination of the statements of account of the Association as necessary.

## **L - Annual Report**

The Executive Committee shall prepare an annual report to be presented to the annual general meeting.

## **M - Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

- (1) There shall be an annual general meeting of the Association which shall be held in the month of September each year or as soon as practicable thereafter.

No more than 15 months should elapse between annual general meetings.

- (2) Every annual general meeting shall be called by the Executive Committee.

The secretary shall give at least 21 days' written notice of the annual general meeting to all members of the Association.

Such notification must be by post or by e-mail.

All individual members of the Association and representatives of member organisations of the Association shall be entitled to vote at the meeting.

- (3) Before any other business is transacted at an annual general meeting the persons present shall appoint a chairperson of the meeting.

- (4) The Executive Committee shall present to each annual general meeting the report and accounts of the Association for the preceding year.

- (5) Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be made by individual members (or by member organisations) of the Association in writing and must be in the hands of the secretary of the Executive Committee at least 14 days before the annual general meeting.

Written nominations may be by email or by post

Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by ballot.

Any individual member or member organization may self-nominate.

Full members may nominate any other full member (or members).

No member shall be nominated without their consent.

No more than a single nominator shall be required per nomination.

### **N - Extraordinary General Meetings**

The Executive Committee may call an extraordinary general meeting of the Association at any time.

If at least three individual members or three member organizations (or a combination thereof) request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered the secretary shall call such a meeting.

At least 21 days' notice must be given to all members.  
The notice must state the business to be discussed.

### **O - Procedure at General Meetings**

(1) The secretary or other person specially appointed by the Executive Committee shall keep a full record of proceedings at every general meeting of the Association.

(2) There shall be a quorum when at least one tenth of the number of full members of the Association for the time being or three full members of the Association, whichever is the greater, are present at any general meeting.

Those participating electronically shall be counted as present.

### **P - Notices**

Any notice required to be served on any member of the Association shall be in writing.

Notices shall be served by the secretary of the Executive Committee on any member either;

1) - in person, or;

2) - by sending it through the post in a prepaid letter addressed to such member at his or her last known address in the United Kingdom, and any letter so sent shall be deemed to have been received within 10 days of posting, or;

3) - by email with a request for a delivery receipt and any such e-mail will be deemed to have been received only when the secretary has received a response to that request.

### **Q - Alterations to the Constitution**

(1) Subject to the following provisions of this clause the Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting at a general meeting.

The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.

(2) No amendment may be made to clause H, clause R or this clause.

### **R - Dissolution**

If the Executive Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association it must call a meeting of all members of the Association, of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) must be given.

If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Executive Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Association.

Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities must be given or transferred to an organisation or organisations having objects similar to the objects of the Association as the members of the Association present and voting may determine.

### **S - Arrangements until first Annual General Meeting**

Until the first annual general meeting takes place this constitution shall take effect as if references in it to the Executive Committee were references to the persons whose signatures appear at the bottom of this document.

This constitution replaces the "Interim Constitution of The Autistic Rights Movement United Kingdom, British Isles and United Kingdom Overseas Dependencies" of 13 March 2009.

This constitution was adopted on the date mentioned above by the persons whose signatures appear at the bottom of this document.

**Signed**

**Signed**

**Signed**

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document the term “UK” is used to refer to not only the constituent countries of the United Kingdom, namely England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but also all territories dependent on the United Kingdom, directly or indirectly and all countries and territories ruled jointly by the United Kingdom with other powers.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this document the term “autism” and its variants are used to refer to Asperger Syndrome, “Kanner Syndrome”, “autistic spectrum disorders”, “autistic spectrum conditions”, “autistic spectrum differences” and any and all such terms as are in common usage or which may come into use .

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this document the term “related conditions” is used to refer to: dyspraxia, developmental co-ordination disorder, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD(H)D), attention deficit disorder (ADD), hyperkinesia, dyslexia, Tourette’s Syndrome, pervasive developmental disorders (PDD AND PDD(NOS)) and all other neuro-developmental conditions and all other related neurological conditions.