

# **National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers**

## **Constitution**

### **1. Name**

The name of the Association shall be the “National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers” (hereafter called “NAWRA”).

### **2. Aims & Objectives**

a) The aims of NAWRA are:

- To challenge, influence and improve welfare rights policy and legislation;
- To promote NAWRA as the national voice of welfare rights advisers.

b) NAWRA’s objectives are:

- To build a strong national network of welfare rights advisers from all sectors;
- To seek to influence government proposals and existing legislation by utilising the expertise of our members;
- To identify and share good practice and to promote anti-discriminatory practice;
- To offer mutual support and provide a forum for discussion;
- To facilitate learning workshops and distribute information;
- To recognise and challenge discriminatory legislation;
- To promote welfare rights issues and encourage effective partnership working.

### **3. Powers**

In furtherance of the said aims and objectives, but not further or otherwise, NAWRA shall have the following powers:

a) To raise funds and apply for, invite, obtain, collect and receive contributions from any other person or persons whatsoever by way of subscription, donation, grant, legacy and otherwise; provided that NAWRA shall not undertake any permanent trading activities in raising funds for the said objective;

b) To engage, on such terms and conditions of employment as NAWRA shall determine, any paid or voluntary worker or workers to assist in the attainment of the said objectives;

c) To do all such other lawful things as shall further the attainment of the said objectives.

#### **4. Membership**

a) Membership shall be open to all welfare rights advisers (whether paid or voluntary) and to other persons who are interested in furthering the work of NAWRA.

b) Membership can be held collectively by a group (or workplace) or individually. One membership gives entitlement to one vote at the Annual General Meeting (see below).

c) The committee hereinafter constituted shall have the right

- To approve or reject applications for membership;
- For good and sufficient reason to terminate the membership of any member provided that the member concerned shall have the right to be heard by the committee before final decision is made.

d) Every member shall subscribe to NAWRA such annual sum (if any) for the next financial year as shall be determined at the Annual General Meeting and the words 'financial year' shall mean the period April 1 to March 31 inclusive.

#### **5. Honorary Officers**

a) Following the Annual General Meeting, the NAWRA Committee shall elect a Chair and vice-chair ('the Honorary Officers') being persons who are members of the NAWRA committee. The non-elected Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) representative will hold the post of Treasurer.

b) The Honorary Officers shall hold office for a period of up to two years ending at the second Annual General Meeting after their election. They shall be eligible for re-election provided that no Honorary Officer shall hold the same office for more than three consecutive periods (i.e. 6 years). On the expiration of such period, two further years must elapse before that person shall be eligible for re-election as an Honorary Officer.

## **6. Committee**

- a) Save as otherwise stated, the Committee shall direct the policy and general management of the affairs of NAWRA.
- b) The Committee shall consist of representatives from each of the English regions plus two from Wales, one from Scotland, one from Northern Ireland and one nominated by CPAG. This gives a total of 14 representatives.
- c) The representatives of the English regions and Wales must be members of NAWRA and be elected by the Annual General Meeting. The representatives from Scotland and Northern Ireland will be nominated by their respective membership organisations (with broadly similar aims and objectives to NAWRA).
- d) In addition to the Honorary Officers, other elected members and those nominated from Scotland, Northern Ireland and CPAG, the Committee may co-opt other interested individuals or representatives of statutory or voluntary agencies to serve on the Committee in an advisory capacity. No co-opted member shall be entitled to vote.
- e) The members of the Committee shall hold office for a period of up to two years ending at the second Annual General Meeting after their election or co-option, as the case may be. All Committee members shall be eligible for re-election or co-option.
- f) The Committee shall meet not less than three times per year.
- g) Four elected members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.
- h) Minute books shall be kept by the Committee that record all proceedings and resolutions.

## **7. General Meetings**

- a) The first general meeting of NAWRA shall be held not later than the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 and in each year thereafter an Annual General Meeting of NAWRA shall be held at such a time (not more than 15 months after the holding of the preceding Annual General Meeting) and place as the Committee shall determine. At the Annual General Meeting, the business shall include:
  - The receipt of an Annual Report and Accounts for the preceding year from the Committee;

- (At least every 2 years) The election of the Honorary Officers and the members (other than co-opted members) to serve on the Committee;
- The determination of the annual membership subscription payable under 4c hereof;
- The transaction of such other matters as may from time to time be necessary.

b) The Committee may at any time call a special General Meeting of NAWRA.

c) A special General Meeting can be called by written request, giving reasons for the request, signed by not less than one quarter of the members of NAWRA (or such other number as the General Meeting may from time to time determine). The Chair will call such a meeting within 21 days of receiving such a request.

d) All members will be given, in writing, at least 28 days notice of a General Meeting.

e) The quorum for a General Meeting shall be one quarter of the total membership of NAWRA, or such other number as NAWRA in General Meeting shall from time to time determine.

f) Save as otherwise provided, all questions arising at a General Meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and eligible to vote. Only one vote is allowed per membership held (i.e. individual members have the same voting power as large organisations).

g) A member of NAWRA shall be entitled to appoint a proxy who shall be a member of NAWRA to attend any General Meeting that he or she is unable to attend and to exercise the vote of the member in whose stead he or she is attending in addition to his or her own vote. No such entitlement shall apply in respect of clauses 9 and 10 below.

h) Apart from proxy voters, no member shall exercise more than one vote. In the case of all equality of votes the Chair, or in their absence the member elected to chair the meeting, shall have second or casting vote.

## **8. Finance**

### **a) Accounts**

The Committee shall, in partnership with CPAG,

- Keep accountancy records for NAWRA;
- Prepare annual statements of account for NAWRA
- Prepare an Annual Report

### **b) Funds**

The funds of NAWRA shall be applied in furtherance of its object and no payment shall be made to any member, or other person, except reasonable and proper out of pocket expenses.

### **c) Bank accounts**

All funds are held in CPAG accounts and accounted for by the nominated CPAG representative. The Committee shall authorise the Chair, the Treasurer and two members of the Committee (not being co-opted members) to authorise expenditure on behalf of NAWRA in line with the current financial protocol.

## **9. Alteration to the Constitution**

No alteration or addition to this constitution shall be made except at a special General Meeting of NAWRA called for such purpose. No alteration shall be made which would cause NAWRA to cease to adhere to its aims. Alterations or additions to the constitution shall receive the assent of not less than two thirds of all members present and voting at a special General Meeting.

## **10. Dissolution**

NAWRA may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a two thirds majority of those present and voting at a special General Meeting convened for the purpose, of which 21 days notice shall be given (to the members). Such a resolution may give instructions for the disposal of any assets held by or in the name of NAWRA but if any property remains after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, such property shall be given or transferred to another charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to some or all of the objects of NAWRA as NAWRA may determine and if effect cannot be given to this provision, then to some other charitable purpose.