



# **National Federation of Plus Areas**

## **Standard Groups Constitution**

Version of Document	Date Changed	Author
Corrected and amended following the November 2009 NEC Meeting.	November 2009	The NEC

**STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION  
CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**CONSTITUTION of the ..... Group**

**1. NAME OF GROUP**

1.1 The name of the Group shall be "The .....<sup>1</sup> Group" (hereafter referred to as 'the Group').

**2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE AREA**

2.1 The Group shall be a Member Group of .....<sup>2</sup> (hereinafter called "the Area") and shall comply with the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Area, and, where appropriate, with those of the National Federation of Plus Areas (hereinafter called "the National Federation").

**3. PURPOSES OF THE GROUP**

3.1 The Group shall adopt the Purposes of the Area.

**4. MEMBERSHIP**

**4.1. FULL MEMBERSHIP**

4.1.1. Full membership of the Area is open to all persons over the age of 18 who agree with its fundamental values and objectives. Persons under the age of 18 and those who have reached their 36th birthday may not join the Area as full members.

**4.2 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

4.2.1 Persons over the age of 36 may join the Group if it has created or maintains a Second Tier Group in accordance with Article 14.

4.2.2 Persons who join a Second Tier Group shall be known as Associated members of the Area.

4.3 Each member shall pay an annual membership fee as shall be agreed by the National Federation from time to time (or such other sum in excess of such fee as may be determined by the Group at an Annual General Meeting).

4.4 Prospective new members shall be asked to pay the annual membership fee on or before their fourth attendance, or leave the Group.

**4.5 RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP**

4.5.1 The annual membership fee shall be due for renewal on the anniversary in each succeeding year of the day of the month in which the member first joined.

4.5.2 Applications for renewals of membership will be processed on the basis of issuing the membership card as valid from the date of expiry of their previous membership, except when the period of lapsed membership is greater than 6 months.

4.6 Any membership not renewed shall expire on the anniversary of the day of the month in which the member first joined or renewed and the member shall be deemed to have resigned.

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<sup>1</sup> Insert Name of the Group here. Remember: a group does not need the words "Plus" in the title, but it **must** refer to the geographical location where it is based.

<sup>2</sup> Insert Name of the Area here.

## **STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**4.7** A member who holds a valid membership card issued prior to their 36th birthday shall remain entitled to full membership notwithstanding that they attain the age of 36 during the currency of such card.

**4.8** After reaching the age of 36, a member may only renew their membership only if they hold a current valid membership card at the time.

### **4.9 ELIGIBILITY FOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS WITHIN THE GROUP**

**4.9.1** Eligibility for election or re-election to any executive position within the Group shall be determined as follows: as of January 1st in the year of the election –

**4.9.1.1** A member who has not attained their 36th birthday is automatically eligible;

**4.9.1.2** A member who has attained their 36th birthday is ineligible unless there are no members aged 35 or less wishing to stand for the same post.

**4.10** A prospective member shall be given the opportunity to read the Constitution of the National Federation, the Area Constitution and the Group Constitution, together with their related Standing Orders, prior to their application for membership.

### **4.11 MEMBERSHIP CARD, ETC**

**4.11.1** In confirmation of their agreement to abide by these Constitutions, they shall be admitted into membership of the Group and shall be deemed to be a member when they have received a completed and signed Membership Card from the Group as from the date thereon shown. (In the interim period between completing the application form and paying the membership fee and receipt of a signed Membership card, the receipt portion of the standard application form shall be deemed as acceptable proof of membership entitling the holder to receive the benefits and privileges of membership for a period not exceeding twenty eight days).

### **4.12 REFUSAL OF MEMBERSHIP**

**4.12.1** Membership may be refused or terminated by a Member Group (by a two thirds majority of the full members present and voting at a Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group) or the Area Committee in accordance with its internal procedures, on one or more of the following grounds:

**4.12.1.1** Material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the Area.

**4.12.1.2** The admission of the applicant would be likely to bring the Member Group or any part of the Area into disrepute.

**4.12.1.3** The admission of the applicant would be seriously detrimental to the interests of the Member Group or any part of the Area.

**4.12.1.4** The admission of the applicant would hinder the Member Group or any part of the Area from acting in pursuance of the said aims and policy of the Area.

**4.12.2** Any person aggrieved by such refusal shall, subject to the relevant procedures of the NEC, have the right of appeal as provided by Article 16 of the Area Constitution.

**4.12.3** Details of any refusal shall be sent to the Area Committee.

## **STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**4.13** Should a member of another Member Group of the Area or any other Area which is a member of the National Federation visit the Group, they shall not be required to pay the annual membership fee.

**4.14** In addition to the annual membership fee, full members (including "Life Members") shall pay a weekly subscription of a sum to be determined by the Group Committee.

**4.15** Persons attending the Group for the first time, or members of other Member Groups who, in the opinion of the Group Chairman or their representative, are visiting the Group in an official capacity, shall not be required to pay the weekly subscription.

### **5. Life Membership**

**5.1** Full members may become "Life Members" and be exempt from paying the annual membership fee upon payment of a 'once and for all' fee of 6 times the current annual full membership fee.

### **6. RESIGNATION, SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF MEMBERS**

**6.1** A member may resign from the Group at any time by letter addressed to the Secretary indicating their desire so to do.

**6.2** A member is deemed to have resigned if their membership is not renewed in accordance with Articles 4.4 and 4.5.

**6.3** No member who resigns or is deemed to have resigned shall be entitled to be repaid any part of any membership fee which they shall have paid whether in respect of a period before or after such resignation.

#### **6.4 EXPULSION OF MEMBERS**

**6.4.1** Membership may be revoked by two thirds majority of the full members present and voting at a Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group, or the Area Committee in accordance with its internal procedures, on one or more of the following grounds,

**6.4.1.1** material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the Federation.

**6.4.1.2** conduct which has brought, or is likely to bring, the Member Group or any part of the Federation into disrepute.

**6.4.1.3** the continued membership of the individual would be seriously detrimental to the interests of the Member Group or any part of the Federation.

**6.4.1.4** the continued membership of the individual would hinder the Member Group or any part of the Federation from acting in pursuance of the said aims and policy of the Federation.

**6.4.2** Details of any revocation shall be sent to the Area Committee.

**6.5** Membership shall not be revoked unless the member has been notified of the grounds on which revocation is to be considered and has been given a reasonable opportunity to reply.

**6.6** In case of urgency, the Group Committee or the Area Committee (by a simple majority of its voting members) may direct that any member may be suspended from the rights and privileges of membership for a period not exceeding one month while the question of termination of their membership is under consideration.

## **STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**6.7** Any person aggrieved by such a revocation shall, subject to the relevant procedures of the Area Committee, have the right of appeal as provided by Article 16 of the Area Constitution. The revocation shall be suspended while the appeal is heard.

**6.8** No person whose membership has been revoked shall be eligible to rejoin any Member Group without the prior approval of the Area Committee who shall consult with the Member Groups concerned before reaching a decision.

**6.9** Any person whose membership is revoked while they hold any elected or appointed position on any Committee with the Federation shall be deemed to have been removed from office from the date that the revocation takes effect.

**6.10** No member who is suspended or whose membership is revoked shall be entitled to be repaid any part of any membership fee which they shall have paid whether in respect of a period before or after such suspension or revocation of membership.

### **7. GENERAL MEETINGS**

#### **7.1 THE GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**

**7.1.1** The Annual General Meeting of the Group (hereinafter called "the Group AGM") shall be held between the date of the January Area Conference, and the Annual General Meeting of the National Federation in February, and the Committee shall notify the members not less than 14 days prior to the date of such meeting.

**7.1.2** The business of the Group AGM shall be:

**7.1.2.1** The reception of the reports of the Group Committee;

**7.1.2.2** The reception of Accounts;

**7.1.2.3** The election of the Group Committee;

**7.1.2.4** The adoption of Standing Orders;

**7.1.2.5** The appointment of the Independent Examiner;

**7.1.2.6** Any other matters which may, consistent with this Constitution and the Group Standing Orders (if any) be introduced at the meeting.

**7.1.3** The Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and any other members of the Committee shall submit reports to the Group at the Group AGM.

#### **7.2 EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS**

**7.2.1** Extraordinary General Meetings shall be convened by the Secretary (or the acting Secretary) by notice given to all members of the Group not less than 14 days prior to the date fixed for such meeting and specifying the purpose for which such meeting is so convened;

**7.2.1.1** upon a resolution of the Committee to that effect; or

**7.2.1.2** upon receipt by the Secretary of a request for such a meeting made in writing, specifying the nature of the business proposed to be transacted at it and signed by not less than one-third of the full members of the Group.

## **STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**7.3** Only full members of the Group shall be eligible to vote at any meeting, stand for election on the Committee, or take part in the running of the Group, and this shall be announced to all persons present by the Chairman at the commencement of the meeting.

### **7.4 QUORACY AT AGMS**

**7.4.1** A quorum for the AGM shall be achieved when;

**7.4.1.1** A minimum of one-third of the total current full members of the Group are present, or;

**7.4.1.2** If the Group has less than 15 full members at the date of the Group AGM, a minimum of 5 full members of the Group are present.

**7.4.2** If, within thirty minutes from the time fixed for the Group AGM to begin, a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be adjourned until such time as a quorum is achieved.

**7.4.3** If, in the opinion of the Group Committee it will prove impossible to hold a meeting which is quorate, the Area Chairman shall be notified, and the Area Committee shall have the power to allow a Group AGM to take place without a quorum present.

**7.5** Notice and minutes of all Group AGM's shall be sent to the Area Committee.

## **8. COMMITTEE**

### **8.1 GENERAL**

**8.1.1** The affairs of the Group shall be managed by a Committee who may do all such things and transact all such business as is not by this Constitution required to be done or transacted by a General Meeting PROVIDED THAT the Committee shall be solely responsible of its own debts and liabilities and shall not pledge the credit of any other constituent part of the Area, or the National Federation, or member thereof.

**8.1.2** The Group Committee shall obtain the approval of members of the Group to borrow or to obtain goods or services on credit or otherwise incur any liability in excess of the Group's assets and those members of the Committee who incur any liability in breach of this proviso shall be jointly and severally liable to indemnify the Group members and the Area against any loss caused thereby.

**8.2** The Committee shall consist of the Executive Officers of the Group, who shall be a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary by the members at the AGM.

**8.3** A serving committee member may, subject to Article 4.9, re-stand for election when their term of office expires, PROVIDED THAT:

**8.3.1** The holder of the post of Group Treasurer shall not hold the same office for more than three consecutive terms.

**8.4** The Group Committee shall be elected by members attending the Group AGM. Those elected shall take office on 1st March following the Group AGM, for a period of one year.

**8.5** The Committee shall meet at least once a month, and half the elected members of the Committee shall form a quorum. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings.

**8.6** The Committee may co-opt any member to the Committee to fill any vacancy or for specific purposes, but such co-opted members shall not be entitled to vote at any Committee meeting.

## **STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**8.7** The Committee shall manage the affairs of the Group in accordance with the Purposes of the Area and have regard to the advice and guidance of the officers of the Area and, where appropriate, the National Federation.

**8.8** The Committee shall take all necessary steps to ensure the representation of the Group at Area Conferences.

### **8.9 REMOVAL FROM OFFICE OF A COMMITTEE MEMBER.**

**8.9.1** If it shall appear to a majority of the voting members of the Group Committee that any Committee member is failing to fulfil their duties it shall cause to be sent to such officer a statement in writing of their failings and shall afford them a reasonable opportunity of giving an explanation in writing or orally; and if having considered such explanation (if any), the Group Committee is of opinion that the officer should be removed from office the Committee shall put such resolution before the members at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group.

**8.9.2** Both the Group Committee and the Committee member that it is proposed to be removed from office shall have the right to present their case. And such resolution shall require a simple majority of the full members present and voting to be passed.

**8.10** In the event of the death, resignation or removal from office of any officer the Group Committee shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting to fill the office thereby vacated until the expiration of the term of office of the officer who has died, resigned or been removed.

## **9. DELEGATES TO THE AREA CONFERENCES**

### **9.1 ELIGIBILITY TO ACT AS DELEGATES**

**9.1.1.** To be eligible to represent the Group a delegate must be a full member of the Group.

**9.1.2.** If at any time the Group is in the process of being Developed or Re-developed by the Area, it may be represented by members of the Group (or Groups) responsible for developing the Group.

### **9.2 NOMINATION OF DELEGATES**

**9.2.1** The Group shall nominate in writing to the Area Administrator two delegates to attend the Area Conference, or to the Honorary General Secretary two delegates to attend the National General Meeting.

**9.2.2** **One delegate** shall be the Chairman for the time being of the Member Group, or a representative appointed by them, and the other shall be elected by the votes of a majority of the full members of the Member Group voting at a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group.

### **9.3 DELEGATES VOTING RIGHTS**

**9.3.1** The delegates nominated as described in clause 9.2 shall be exclusively entitled to exercise all rights of voting on behalf of the Group at the Area Conference or National General Meeting.

## **10. FINANCE**

**10.1** The Group shall have a current Bank Account to which the signatories shall be the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman of the Area.

## **STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**10.2** The Bank Mandate shall provide that the signatures of two signatories shall be required to authorise any payment.

**10.3** It shall be the duty of the Treasurer for the time being to ensure that the Bank Mandate is amended as necessary.

**10.4** If the signatories mentioned in Article 10.1 include two or more related persons the Chairman shall nominate such alternative signatories as they considers necessary so that no two signatories are related one to another.

**10.5** The Treasurer shall make copies of all bank statements available to all the signatories included on the bank mandate within fourteen days of receipt.

**10.6** The Committee shall ensure that correct accounts are kept by the Treasurer and are submitted to the new Committee at the commencement of their term of office.

**10.7** The Treasurer shall forward the annual membership fee in respect of each new membership and membership renewal to the Area Membership Officer (or, where the Area does not have a separate Membership Officer, to the Area Treasurer) within seven days of receipt and in accordance with the internal procedures of the Area Committee.

**10.8** The financial books of the Group shall be closed on the 30 September each year and submitted for Independent Examination.

**10.9** The Independently-Examined Statement of Accounts for the 6 months prior to closing the books shall be submitted in writing to the Group AGM held next thereafter.

### **10.10 INDEPENDENT EXAMINER – WHO:**

**10.10.1** The Independent Examination shall be carried out by a competent person elected at the Group AGM, preceding that at which the Independently-Examined accounts are to be submitted.

**10.10.2** Neither the retiring Treasurer, nor any member of the newly elected Committee or the Committee which precedes it shall be eligible for election to the post of Independent Examiner. The Independent Examiner need not be a member of any Group.

**10.11** A certified Statement of Account signed by the Independent Examiner shall be sent to the Area Treasurer within 21 days of each Group AGM.

### **11. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

**11.1** An enrolled member of the Group shall have the right to transfer their membership to another Member Group, in the following circumstances:

**11.1.1** The Group has closed in accordance with Article 12 of this Constitution PROVIDED THAT such application for transfer is made within one month of the date on which the Group closed. Any member who has not applied to transfer their membership within this time shall be deemed to have resigned.

**11.1.2** The Group has been closed in accordance with Article 12 of the Area Constitution,

**11.1.3** The member has changed their permanent address such that attendance at the Group is impractical,

**11.1.4** There are other good reasons why such member should transfer their membership.

**STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION  
CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**11.2** The transfer of membership from one Group to another shall require the approval of the Area Committee and may be refused by the receiving Member Group in accordance with Article 4.1.

**11.3** An individual who transfers their membership in accordance with this Article shall not be required to pay the annual membership fee until the expiry of their current membership PROVIDED ALWAYS that the Area Committee shall have the right to collect a reasonable levy to cover the administrative costs associated with such transfer.

**11.4 TRANSFER FROM ANOTHER AREA**

**11.4.1** An individual who is a member of another Member Area of the National Federation shall have the right to transfer their membership to the Group within the Area in the following circumstances:

**11.4.1.1** The member's current Area has closed for whatever reason; or

**11.4.1.2** The member has changed their permanent address such that attendance at a group within their current area is impractical; or

**11.4.1.3** There are other good reasons why such member should transfer their membership.

**11.4.2** The transfer of membership shall require the approval of the Area Committee and, except in the case of Article 11.4.1.1, of the area from which the member intends to transfer their membership.

**11.4.3** The Group may refuse the transfer.

**11.4.4** An individual who transfers their membership in accordance with this Article shall not be required to pay the annual membership fee until the expiry of their current membership PROVIDED ALWAYS that the Area Committee shall have the right to collect a reasonable levy to cover the administrative costs associated with such transfer.

**11.5 TRANSFER TO ANOTHER AREA**

**11.5.1** An enrolled member of the Group shall have the right to transfer their membership to another area which is also a Member Area of the National Federation, in the following circumstances:

**11.5.1.1** The Group has closed in accordance with Article 12 of this Constitution.

**11.5.1.2** The Group has been closed in accordance with Article 12 of the Area Constitution,

**11.5.1.3** The member has changed their permanent address such that attendance at the Group is impractical,

**11.5.1.4** There are other good reasons why such member should transfer their membership.

**11.5.2** The transfer of membership from one Member Group to another shall require the approval of the Area Committee and is subject to any condition laid down by the area to which the member intends to transfer their membership.

**11.5.3** Once a member who transfers to another area under this article is accepted as a member thereof, they cease to have membership of this Group and of this Area.

**STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION  
CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

**12. DISSOLUTION**

**12.1** The Group may be dissolved at a special Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group, of which not less than 21 days notice in writing shall be given to all the members and to the Area Administrator, and at which the Area Chairman is present.

**12.2** If a resolution to dissolve the Group is duly passed by three-quarters majority of the full members present and voting at such meeting, the Group shall be dissolved and its affairs shall be wound up by the Committee under the supervision of the Area Committee in accordance with its own internal procedures.

**12.3** The Group's Membership Certificate and any other property belonging to the either the Area or the National Federation shall be returned to the Area Administrator forthwith.

**12.4** All charitable funds held by the Group shall be applied by the Committee under the supervision of the Area Chairman in accordance with the particular trusts (if any) affecting the Standard Group Constitution – February 2008

## **STANDARD GROUPS CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTION FOR MEMBER GROUPS**

same and (if there are no such trusts) for such charitable purposes as the Area Committee in its absolute discretion may appoint.

**12.5** All other funds held by the Group shall be paid to the Area Treasurer for the benefit of the members for the time being of the other Member Groups in the Area to be applied in such manner as the Area Committee in its absolute discretion shall think fit.

### **13. STANDING ORDERS**

**13.1** Any resolution passed by a simple majority of the full members of the Group at a Group AGM or Extraordinary General Meeting concerning the running of the Group shall be incorporated into Standing Orders.

**13.2** Such Standing Orders shall be appended separately to the Constitution.

### **14. SECOND-TIER GROUPS**

**14.1** The Group may, with the agreement of the Area Committee, establish a Second Tier Group by a majority vote of its members present and voting at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

### **15. CONSTITUTION AND INTERPRETATION**

**15.1** If the Standard Group Constitution is amended by the National Federation, any provision of this constitution shall be deemed to be correspondingly amended.

**15.2** One copy of the Constitution shall be deposited with the Administrator of the Area Committee, and one shall be kept with the minutes of the Group. Any member of the Group shall be provided with a copy of the Constitution on request.

**15.3** In any case where it shall appear that the Area Constitution and Standing Orders current within the Area to be in conflict with the provisions of the Group Constitution then the Area Constitution and Standing Orders will be deemed the definitive document.

**15.4** In the event of any question of interpretation arising, or any question on which this Constitution is silent, the Area Committee shall have power to act according to its interpretation of the Constitution in accordance with Article 16 of the Area Constitution, or at its discretion.