

A constitution is a written document which states the rules and structures that govern a group.

## WHY DO YOU NEED IT?

- It establishes a group's identity, stating it's name, purpose and structure.
- It helps the group and committee run smoothly because it lays out how things should be done.
- A constitution will be required by funding agencies as confirmation of the group's existence and reassurance as to the nature of the group.

## HOW TO WRITE IT

A constitution is written by the committee and the leaders. The members of the group should also have a say in what is included in the constitution.

To help you write up a constitution, there is a template of a group constitution available from CDYSB. Your Liaison Officer is available to support you in writing your own constitution.

## HOW DO WE ADOPT IT?

When completed all committee members, leaders and young people should take a vote to adopt the new group constitution.

## HOW CAN WE MAKE CHANGES TO IT?

The constitution should be reviewed annually at the AGM. At the AGM people can propose changes to it and vote to adopt those changes.

## THE CONTENTS OF A CONSTITUTION

**The purpose** states what the group was set up to do. For example the purpose of a group might be to provide a safe place for young people to enjoy themselves.

**The Structure of the Group lays out:**

- The roles and responsibility of the committee
  - The responsibility of the leaders
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**The policies** mentioned in the constitution mostly relate to the rules that the committee and members have to follow. These rules cover the day to day running of a group such as:

- The conditions of membership.
- The requirements to be a group leader.
- The keeping of accounts.

**The procedures** are simply the way certain decisions are made in the group.

These decisions are mostly related to the committee and the constitution and will cover questions such as:

- How does a young person become a group member?
- How to become a committee member?
- How does the group decide who can become an officer?
- How do members vote on decisions etc?
- How will AGM's be run?

## TIPS FOR WHEN WRITING YOUR CONSTITUTION

1. All groups have a structure and policies and have an understanding of how things are done in the group but they might not have a written constitution. In writing your constitution it is helpful to consider:

- **How do we currently make our decisions?**  
e.g. decisions made when the leaders meet?
- **Do we have a policy on that already?**  
e.g. what age must you be to be a member?
- **Do we have a procedure for that already?**  
e.g. how do we recruit and train volunteers?

2. Writing a constitution is a good opportunity to think about how the group is run and is there anything you would like to improve on.

3. Before agreeing to include something in the constitution, consider is it practical and useful in running the group.

Remember constitutions can be changed and should be reviewed regularly to keep them up to date and effective.