

# THE LESBIAN AND GAY LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

## CONSTITUTION

as approved by the AGM on 19 January 2010

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### 1. NAME

- 1.1 The name of the association is The Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association ("the Association") and is also referred to as "Lesbian and Gay Lawyers" or "LAGLA".

### 2. OBJECTS AND POWERS

- 2.1 The Association is established for the following objects:

2.1.1 To highlight the discrimination faced by lesbians, gay men, bisexual men and women and transgendered people (LGBT) and to make proposals to reform the law to remove such discrimination;

2.1.2 To campaign for anti-discrimination policies, to tackle prejudice in the provision of legal services, to promote diversity and to provide information to the LGBT community to ensure that members of that community have access to unprejudiced, supportive, quality legal advice and representation;

2.1.3 To provide support to LGBT lawyers, to assist them to be out at work and to increase the visibility of LGBT people in the profession;

2.1.4 To represent the viewpoint of LGBT lawyers in the UK in a professional context and to promote the representation of LGBT lawyers within their professional bodies;

2.1.5 To establish links with similar regional, national and international groups.

- 2.2 In furtherance of such objects but not otherwise the Association may:

2.2.1 Employ and pay any person or persons to supervise, organise and carry on the work of the Association and make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions and superannuation to or on behalf of employees and their widows and other dependents;

2.2.2 Bring together in conference representatives of voluntary organisations, Government departments, statutory authorities and individuals;

2.2.3 Promote and carry out or assist in promoting and carrying out research, surveys and investigations and publish the useful results of such research, surveys and investigations;

2.2.4 Arrange and provide for, or join in arranging and providing for, the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures, classes, seminars and training courses;

- 2.2.5 Collect and disseminate information on all matters affecting such objects and exchange such information with other bodies having similar objects whether in this country or overseas.
- 2.2.6 Undertake, execute, manage or assist any charitable trusts which may lawfully be undertaken, executed, managed or assisted by the Association;
- 2.2.7 Procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise such papers, books, periodicals, pamphlets or other documents or films or recorded tapes as shall further such objects;
- 2.2.8 Purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and any rights and privileges necessary for the promotion of such objects and construct, maintain and alter any buildings or erections necessary for the work of the Association;
- 2.2.9 Make regulations for any property which may be so acquired.
- 2.2.10 Sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or assets of the Association.
- 2.2.11 Accept gifts and borrow or raise money for such objects on such terms and on such security as shall be thought fit;
- 2.2.12 Procure contributions to the Association by personal or written appeals, public meetings or otherwise;
- 2.2.13 Invest the money of the Association not immediately required for such objects in or on such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit, subject nevertheless to such conditions (if any) as may for the time being be imposed or required by law;
- 2.2.14 Join and become a member of other organisations and bodies;
- 2.2.15 Do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the attainment of such objects.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- 3.1 Full Membership:
  - 3.1.1 Full membership of the Association shall be open to LGBT people who are interested in furthering the work of the Association and who have provided either details and signed up through the Association's website and who have paid the annual subscription, if any, as laid down from time to time by the executive committee mentioned below.
  - 3.1.2 Any applications for membership from new members are subject to approval or rejection by the Executive Committee in accordance with 3.4, even if they initially have full access to all membership rights.
- 3.2 Honorary members may be appointed at the discretion of the executive committee. Honorary members shall not be entitled to vote.

### 3.3 Corporate Membership:

- 3.3.1 Corporate membership of the Association shall be open to law firms, barristers chambers, in-house departments, non-profit-making organisations and similar organisations who are interested in furthering the work of the Association. Corporate membership shall entitle all staff of the organisation or its legal department the same benefits as full members including serving as members of the Committee, except as to voting rights, in respect of which corporate members may appoint a representative with the right to vote at meetings, be counted towards the quorum and nominate members for election as Officers. The annual membership fee shall be set by the Treasurer for each applicant for corporate membership in accordance with guidance based on the size of the organisation.
- 3.3.2 Corporate members will be listed on the public area of the Association's website.
- 3.3.3 No member shall have more than one vote even if they are full members and corporate members.

### 3.4 The executive committee shall have the right:

- 3.3.1 to approve or reject applications for membership;
- 3.3.2 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 executive committee before a final decision is taken.

## 4. OFFICERS

- 4.1 At the Annual General Meeting mentioned below the Association shall elect a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary and such other officers as the Association shall from time to time decide.
- 4.2 The officers of the Association shall hold office until the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting next after their election but shall be eligible for re-election.
- 4.3 The Association may appoint one or more qualified auditors and may determine their remuneration, if any.

## 5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Subject as mentioned below the policy and general management of the affairs of the Association shall be directed by an executive committee ("the Committee") which shall meet not less than four times a year and when complete shall consist of not less than six members.
- 5.2 The members of the Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association in accordance with clause 7 and must be members of the Association.
- 5.3 Election to the Committee shall be for 3 years. One-third of the membership shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election, the members so to retire being

the ones who have been longest in office since the last election. As between members who have been in office the same length of time, those due to retire shall be chosen by lot.

- 5.4 In addition to the members so elected the Committee may co-opt up to two further members who shall be full members of the Association and who shall serve until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting after individual co-option. Co-opted members shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Committee.
- 5.5 Any casual vacancy in the Committee may be filled by the Committee and any person appointed to fill such a casual vacancy shall hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Association and shall be eligible for election at that meeting.
- 5.6 The proceedings of the Committee shall not be invalidated by any failure to elect, or any defect in the election, appointment, co-option or qualification of, any member.
- 5.7 The Committee may appoint such special or standing committees as may be deemed necessary by the Committee and shall determine their terms of reference, power, duration and composition. All acts and proceedings of such standing committees shall be reported back to the Committee as soon as possible.

## **6. MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- 6.1 The Annual General Meetings of the Association shall be held once in each calendar year at such time (not being more than fifteen months after the holding of the preceding Annual General Meeting) and place as the Committee shall determine. At least 28 days clear notice shall be given by the Secretary to each member. At such Annual General Meeting the business shall include the election of members to serve on the Committee; the appointment of an auditor (if any); the consideration of the annual report of the work done by or under the auspices of the Committee and of the accounts and the transaction of such other matters as may from time to time be necessary.
- 6.2 The Chairperson (or another officer) may at any time at her or his discretion within 21 days of receiving a written request so to do signed by not less than ten full members and giving reasons for the request, call a special general meeting of the Association.

## **7. NOMINATIONS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- 7.1 Only full members of the Association shall be eligible to serve as members of the Committee;
- 7.2 Nominations for members of the Committee shall be invited at the same time as notification of the Annual General Meeting is given. Prospective Committee members must be nominated by another member of the Association to the Secretary at least fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting.

- 7.3 Should nominations exceed vacancies, the Secretary will notify the candidates to the members at least seven days before the Annual General Meeting, enclosing ballot papers to allow for the elections which shall be by a system of postal voting (the arrangements for which shall be made by the Committee).

## **8. RULES OF PROCEDURE AT ALL MEETINGS**

- 8.1 The quorum at any meeting of the Association or the Committee or of any committee appointed under clause 5.7 shall be two or such other members as the Association may in general meeting from time to time determine.
- 8.2 All questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote. Arrangements for proxy voting may from time to time be made by the Committee. In the event of an equality of votes the chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- 8.3 Minute books shall be kept by the Committee and all other committees, and the appropriate secretary shall enter in the minute book a record of all proceedings and resolutions.
- 8.4 The Committee shall have power to adopt and issue standing orders and/or rules for the Association. Such standing orders and/or rules shall come into operation immediately provided that they shall be subject to review by the Association in general meeting and shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this constitution.

## **9. FINANCE**

- 9.1 All money raised by or on behalf of the Association shall be applied to further the objects of the Association and for no other purpose provided that nothing contained in this constitution shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration of any employee of the Association or the repayment of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses;
- 9.2 The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Association;
- 9.3 The accounts may be audited once a year by any auditor appointed at the Annual General Meeting.
- 9.4 A statement of accounts for the last financial year shall be submitted by the Committee to the Annual General Meeting.
- 9.5 A Bank account shall be opened in the name of Association with HSBC Bank Plc of Chancery Lane, WC2. The Committee shall authorise the Treasurer, the Secretary and such other officers as are agreed by committee to sign cheques on behalf of the Association.

9.6 Money received by the Association which is not attributable to any membership fee, event fee or other specific debt shall be treated as a donation and no refunds shall be given.

## **10 TRUST PROPERTY**

10.1 The title to all real or personal or other property which may be acquired or developed by or on behalf of the Association shall be vested in a corporation lawfully entitled to act as custodian trustee or in not less than two or more than four individual members.

## **11. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

11.1 Any proposed alteration to this Constitution shall receive the assent of not less than two thirds of the members of the Association present and voting at a meeting specially called for the purpose provided that notice must be given to the Secretary not less than 21 clear days before the meeting at which the alteration is brought forward. At least 14 clear days' notice in writing of such a meeting setting forth the terms of the alterations to be proposed shall be sent by the Secretary to each member of the Association.

## **12. DISSOLUTION**

21.1 If the Committee by a simple majority decides at any time that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association, it shall call a meeting of all members of the Association on at least 21 days notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed). If such decision shall be confirmed by a simple majority of those present and voting at such a meeting the Committee shall have the power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of the Association. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other association or institution having objects related to the objects of the Association as the Committee shall determine.

## **13. NOTICE**

13.1 Any notice may be served by the Secretary on any member either personally or by email to the email address provided by the member to the Association.