

A Constitution is the written document that sets out how an organisation or group works. Some rules are determined by an organisation's legal structure and whether it wishes to acquire charity status, others depend on how it wants to manage its own efforts.

Funding bodies often want to see a copy of an organisation's constitution to make sure that the group is properly organised and that checks are built in to make sure one person cannot take decisions without reference to other members.

Broadly, a Constitution has the following sections:

- **Name** of organisation
- **Objectives and Beneficiaries**
What you intend to do, who will benefit, plus area of benefit if defined
- **Powers**
How you will achieve your aims, e.g. employ staff, purchase property
- **Procedures and Rules** for running the organisation
Membership – how people can join
Management Committee - composition, election of members and officers, frequency of meetings etc
Annual General Meetings: when, period of notice etc.
Financial accounting
- **Alterations** to the Constitution
A description as to how the constitution may be altered at the AGM.
- **Dissolution** of the organisation
A description of the steps to be taken to dissolve the organisation and what will be done with any remaining assets.
- **Adoption**
The constitution must be signed by a senior officer evidencing adoption.

Further information can be found in:

1. Voluntary but not Amateur; Reason, Hayes and Forbes, London Voluntary Service Council
2. Jordans Charities Administration Service File

Model Constitutions can be found in:

1. Charity Commission booklets GD1, GD2, GD3
2. Jordans Charities Administration Service File