



Model Group Rules (Constitution) for a Local Community Organisers Group

This is a guideline and template to help you with writing your Local Community Organisers Group Rules (constitution).

A set of rules (constitution) is simply the aims and rules that your Group will use. It's a statement of what your Group is going to do and how it is going to do it. It is important because:

- Without this written understanding people can easily find themselves at cross purposes and the jobs won't get done
- It will serve as a reference, and help to resolve problems in times of controversy
- Outsiders, especially potential funders, will want to see that your Group has a clear purpose and is democratic and accountable. This involves having a clear procedure by which decisions are made.
- Effective community organising requires the development of a structure which enables people to act collectively, build power and support its members.

It is important to try and get a set of rules that actually reflects the way in which you want to do things. There is no point in lumbering yourself with a lot of bureaucracy you don't want, or writing down loads of things you don't intend to do, simply because you think they are what people expect.

We have included a template for an unincorporated Group structure. Please feel free to use different constitution layouts if you wish.

Constitution/Rules for Community Organisers [Insert Place Name]

Note: Rules which are essential are in bold.

1. **The Local Organising Group is called Community Organisers [Insert Place Name].**
2. The purpose and aim of the Group are to organise and promote activities that will involve and benefit all people of [Insert Place Name], and improve the social, economic and environmental conditions of the area they live in.
3. **The Group supports the Object(s) of Community Organisers Limited as set out in their Articles of Association.**

3.1 To develop the capacity and skills of the members of socially and economically disadvantaged communities so that they are better able to identify and help meet their needs and participate more fully in society;

3.2 To advance public education and promote the practice, theory, and techniques of community organising;

3.3 To prevent and relieve poverty by providing support, items and services to individuals in need

And the Group is also established to:

3.4 To organise the local members of Community Organisers Limited in (Insert Place Name) and to represent their views to the Trustees of Community Organisers Limited

4. **To achieve and further its objectives, the Group will:**
 - Listen to its members and to members of the community and share and promote its findings
 - Organise training and skill share activities
 - Promote and enable local action to address the needs of people living in the area
 - Form partnerships, alliances and relationships with other organisations and initiatives
 - **Promote the Group and its Objects**
 - Raise and spend funds on its Objects
 - Pay reasonable “out of pocket” expenses to volunteers, Group members and acting officers
 - **Undertake any other activities in support of its Objects**
5. **The Group requires a minimum of 21 people whom are listed as current members of Community Organisers Limited to operate.**

All members of Community Organisers [Insert Place Name] must also be current members of Community Organisers Limited and reside in the area where the Group is established.

The membership of the Group is open to people who can show commitment to the principles, aims and objectives of Community Organisers **[Insert Place Name]**.

- 6. The Group will have the right to appoint one member to represent them on the National Members Working Party (NMWP), which shall advise the Trustees of Community Organisers Limited on the views of its members.**
- 7. The Group must appoint a Chairperson (or responsible person) for the Group who will be responsible for convening the Group and its meetings.** The Group may choose to appoint other roles as it sees fit i.e. Vice-chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The Chairperson (or responsible person) are appointed from the Group by a show of hands or a secret ballot. The Chair role may be shared between more than one person or may rotate. The Chair should not remain in position for more than one year without a re-election.
The nominated Chairperson (or responsible person) cannot be the same person who holds the position of Local Member Organiser for the Group.
The Chairperson (or responsible person) will act as the contact point for communications between the Group and Community Organisers Limited.
- 8. The Group will keep a record of the meetings and decisions made by the Group and be responsible for notifying members of meetings. All members present at meetings will have equal voting rights (1 person = 1 vote). Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible. The Group will undertake to be accountable to its members and to the wider community.**
- 9. The Group shall meet not less than four times per year. A quorum for Group meetings and decisions will be a minimum of 7 members.** The business of the Group may also be conducted electronically through an agreed process.
- 10. The Group will be responsible for using any funds raised for the purpose for which they were given. **[The Treasurer or designated member]** will keep records of income and expenditure and produce a regular financial statement.**
- 11. A bank account operating with at least three signatories may be opened by **[The Treasurer or designated member]** in the name of **Community Organisers **[Insert Place Name]****. Whilst this is being established the funds of **Community Organisers **[Insert Place Name]**** can be held by a nominated accountable body.**
- 12. In the event of the Group being dissolved, any surplus funds will, with the agreement of the majority of Group members present at a meeting called for the purpose, be used to develop a named project to benefit the people of **[Insert Place Name]** or distributed to local groups with similar aims (or returned to the funders).**

These Rules were Agreed and Adopted by the following Members of Community Organisers Limited: