



Constitution of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Union

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1. Title

The Union shall be named the PSYCHOTHERAPY AND COUNSELLING UNION.

2. Aims

The aims of the Union shall be to improve the working conditions of psychotherapists, counsellors and allied trades (hereinafter, therapists) in the United Kingdom and to raise awareness of the contribution of therapists to society. To represent and advise its members in employment and contractual matters and with regard to complaints and grievances; to promote, protect and further the economic, social, emotional and legal interests of its members in their professional capacity; to achieve the best possible terms and conditions of work in all aspects in which our members are engaged; to propose and promote various changes and improvements in the institutions and practices associated with therapy, and in aspects of society into which our work gives us insight; to secure these aims by organisation and all other effective methods of unity of action.

3. Membership

a) Membership of the Union shall be open i) to all therapists practising in the UK, and also ii) to retired and unemployed therapists and to trainees, and iii) to like-minded organisations, which will be treated as equivalent to individuals; members of any

such organisations will not be members of the Union unless they join individually. Group ii) will pay a reduced subscription. Members of group i) may also apply to pay a reduced subscription if their circumstances require it.

b) Membership may be deemed to have lapsed only in case of failure to pay the annual subscription within 90 days after the date at which such subscriptions were due.

c) Members' Vested Rights - All right and interest in the Union and in the property thereof, shall be vested in the members for the time being, but on the cessation of membership by death, resignation or otherwise, neither the member nor their representative nor assignees shall have any right, title or interest in or claim upon the Funds of the Union.

d) Liability of members - Members shall have no financial liability beyond their liability for their annual subscription, except for a possible surcharge to meet some abnormal expenditure, providing that such expenditure has been in the first place approved at an Annual General Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose, with postal and electronic voting, by two-thirds of the members voting.

4. Groups

The life and energy of the Union is in its members. Members are encouraged to form whatever groups and sections they wish, based on shared factors like location, employment, modality, interests, and campaigning issues. These groups are free to organise and act as they see fit, with the proviso that any actions or statements using the name of the Union must be agreed in advance with the Executive Committee. They may also make proposals and suggestions to the Union as a whole, either via the Executive Committee, directly at general meetings, or by email to the membership.

4. The Executive Committee of the Union

a) The Union's business shall be managed by an Executive Committee required to carry out the decision of general meetings, consisting of up to twelve Executive Committee members including office bearers who shall be members of the Union, and who shall be elected directly by the members of the Union at a general meeting, postal/electronic votes being allowed. The Executive Committee is empowered to make day to day decisions, and to carry out urgent actions, which may require later ratification by a general meeting.

b) The Executive Committee's preferred means of reaching a decision shall be by consensus, at least to the extent that all members are willing to accept the majority decision even if they do not agree with it. If it is impossible to reach consensus, the proposal will be put to a vote; but any three members of the Executive Committee may require that the proposal be suspended and put to the next general meeting. In

cases of tied voting in Executive Committee, the Chair shall have a casting as well as deliberative vote.

c) The Executive Committee shall also propose to general meetings such actions and policies as it sees fit.

d) The Executive Committee shall have the right to establish subcommittees for specific purposes and to co-opt into them as necessary members of the Union.

e) Office bearers shall be members of the Union and shall be elected by members of the Executive Committee at the first committee meeting after every Annual General Meeting. Postal/electronic voting for Executive Committee members shall be available in elections for these offices. The office-bearers shall be -

(i) Chair who shall speak for the Union and chair meetings of the Executive Committee and general meetings of the Union.

(ii) Vice-Chair who shall act to assist the Chair in her/his duties.

(iii) Secretary who shall act as secretary in all matters affecting the Union.

(iv) Treasurer who shall have charge of membership subscriptions of the Union, and who shall ensure members are sent due reminders of subscriptions owing.

f) In its composition and choice of officers the Executive Committee should seek to be representative of the practices and geographic, ethnic, gender and other composition of the membership.

g) Sub-committees shall be responsible to the Executive Committee of the Union. Office-bearers shall be responsible to the Executive Committee of the Union. The Executive Committee shall be responsible to the Union's members in general meeting.

5. Terms of Office

a) Members of the Executive Committee shall serve for a two-year term.

b) In the interests of both continuity and renewal of the Union's Executive, Officer-bearers may serve up to (but not more than) three consecutive terms in any one, or five consecutive terms in any combination, of the four posts. (For example, someone may be Secretary for up to three years, and then Chair for a maximum of two further years, making a total of five years.)

c) Office Bearers and Members of Executive Committee may be removed from office only by a vote of censure passed by members at a general meeting and receiving an absolute majority of the votes of all members voting, postal/electronic votes being allowed. Two weeks notice must be given of the intention to bring a vote of censure.

d) Nominations for Executive Committee - Nominations for the vacancies on the Executive Committee shall be invited from members in the preliminary notice of the Annual General Meeting, which shall be sent to each member at least 28 days before the date of the Meeting, and such nominations must be with the Secretary at a given date. A member may nominate or second any member as a candidate. Nomination papers will be sent to every member before the Annual General Meeting giving sufficient time to allow voting in the selected method before the Meeting. At least one new Member should not have served before on the Executive Committee.

e) Failure to fulfil Executive Committee duties - Executive Committee Members who miss two consecutive meetings without giving due notice, or consistently fail to support the work of the Committee will, at the discretion of the Chair and Executive Committee, be invited to resign their position.

6. General Meetings

a) Form

(i) Annual general meetings must be held once a year, in an appropriate location, and members must receive two calendar months notice of such meetings and receive an agenda and an abstract of accounts for the previous year not less than two weeks before the meeting.

(ii) Extraordinary general meetings may be requisitioned by an Application to the Executive Committee by any twenty one members of the Union. Within two weeks of receiving such an application, the Executive Committee must call a general meeting, giving members one month notice and providing an agenda for the meeting. In no event should there be more than two calendar months between the receipt by the Executive Committee of the requisition and the general meeting.

b) Purpose

(i) Only a general meeting of the members of the Union shall have the right to decide on matters of Union policy.

(ii) Only the general meeting shall have the right to amend any of the terms of this constitution, or to wind up the Union. In order to do so, members must be notified of the proposal/s two weeks in advance of the general meeting. For the proposal to pass, it must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes of those voting, postal/electronic votes being allowed.

(iii) The Treasurer of the Union shall be required, in the case of annual general meetings, to circulate with the agenda an abstract of accounts for the year ending April 5 and to present a report and answer questions at the meeting itself

(iv) Subscription rates for the Union shall be fixed by general meetings and shall be open to review only at annual general meetings.

7. Paid Administrator and Staff

The Executive Committee shall be empowered to appoint an administrator or other paid staff as and when deemed necessary to assist with administrative duties of the Union. The Administrator or other paid staff shall act in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment laid down by the Executive Committee. They shall be able to attend meetings of the Executive Committee, and may be members of the Executive Committee.

8. Quorums

a) General meetings A quorum shall be one tenth or twenty-one of the members of the Union, whichever is the less. If a meeting is non-quorate, or if those indicating their intention to attend do not constitute a quorum, it shall be reconvened within two months with no quorum requirement.

b) Executive Committee Meetings A quorum shall be five members including at least two officers.

9. Investment of Funds

Any cash balance of any kind accruing to the Union from whatever source shall be invested by the Treasurer or Administrator in the name of the Union in Securities authorised by law for investment of Trust Funds or placed on deposit receipt or invested in a Savings Account or in a Savings Bank.