

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **The SSJ Service User and Residents Association (SURA)**

The Association covers the following defined geographical area of SSJ Service Provision:

**Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire**

### **1. The Aims & Objectives of the Association are:**

- a) To represent the interests of and promote membership to all the eligible members
- b) To promote the interests and rights of service users and residents
- c) To be non-party political
- d) To identify and undertake a variety of capacity building exercises
- e) To support and advocate on behalf of its members
- f) To assist in formal communication with SSJ
- g) To raise its own funds which further the objects of the association
- h) To work with SSJ concerning quality and delivery of services
- i) To undertake any other tasks in keeping with the association's general aims
- j) To work with individuals and agencies who share or can assist in the operation and development of the association's objects

### **2. Equalities and Diversity**

- a) The SURA will actively seek to promote equal opportunities within its membership.
- b) The SURA will value diversity and promote good relations with all of its members and not discriminate on the grounds of:
  - Race and Ethnicity
  - Religion or Belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual Orientation

- Gender Reassignment
  - Disability
  - Age
  - Being married or in a Civil Partnership
- c) The SURA will ensure that where possible meetings will be held in venues that are accessible.
- d) The SURA will provide information on all the ways that members can contribute their views and how it can meet people's individual needs.
- e) The SURA recognises that all sections of their membership have a positive contribution to make to the life of all SSJ service users and residents.
- f) The SURA will represent the interests of all residents to the best of its ability and carry out its day-to-day business in an efficient, fair and responsive way.
- g) The SURA will provide all new members upon request, with information and support in accordance with its objects.

### **3. Membership**

- a) Membership of the SURA is open to all service users and residents of SSJ.
- b) Members who wish to receive minutes and details of any planned meetings or who wish to include an item on an agenda, need to register their interest by completing a membership registration form.
- c) Every *registered* member shall receive a copy of the constitution and contact details in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation of the committee members.
- d) There will be no membership fee, but this may be subject to review at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- e) Associate membership is open to people who do not use the services of SSJ, but who are interested in helping the SURA achieve its aims. The Committee will decide whether to grant associate member status, and whether or not to grant associate member voting rights.

#### **4. Ceasing to be a member**

- a) Membership will end when a member ceases to be an SSJ service user or resident, unless the Committee decides to grant associate membership.
- b) Any offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the SURA Equality and Diversity policy may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign from the committee if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.
- c) In the event of breaches of the Constitution or Code of Conduct membership of the SURA can be suspended or ended by a two thirds majority vote of the Committee.
- d) Notification of suspension of a member must be given in writing to the member with a copy of the Constitution attached.

#### **5. The Committee**

- a) The Committee shall monitor the work, finances and membership of the SURA.
- b) The Committee will produce and update a simple action plan throughout the year to be used to prepare an Annual Report to members at the AGM.
- c) The Committee shall have a minimum of the following officers: Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The Committee shall have the power to appoint if they wish a Vice- Chairperson, Vice-Secretary and Vice-Treasurer. Committee members shall vote in the vacant official roles at the first inaugural meeting.
- d) Additional Committee members shall be elected in at an Annual General Meeting
- e) The Committee shall have a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of fifteen (15) members at any one time.
- f) Any vacancies on the Committee may be filled by co-opting members

with full voting rights until the next general meeting or AGM.

- g) Committee members shall declare any potential conflict of interest and withdraw from discussion and voting where appropriate.
- h) The quorum for Committee Meetings shall be five (5) or 50 percent (whichever is the greater) of committee members. This quorum should also be applied when making decisions other than at meetings.
- i) The committee has the power to make decisions using a variety of media outside of committee meetings. Any vote held by electronic or other means must be logged and recorded by the Secretary and formally approved at the next meeting (general or committee).
- j) Committee meetings may be called by the Chairperson or at the request of one third of committee members and must do so if requested in writing. At least seven (7) days' notice must be given.
- k) A minimum of three (3) committee meetings will be held in each calendar year.
- l) All Members shall be entitled to minutes of committee meetings, available upon request.

## **6. Meetings**

### **6.1 Annual General Meetings (AGM)**

- a) The SURA shall hold an AGM once each calendar year and not more than fifteen months shall pass between one AGM and the next.
- b) The AGM shall:
  - Agree the minutes of the last AGM
  - Receive an Annual Report from the committee
  - Present a statement of accounts to members
  - Review election of committee members
  - Agree on membership fees (if any)
  - Vote on amendments to the Constitution
  - Consider any resolution put forward by members

- c) Any member over the age of 18 shall be entitled to stand for election to the Committee.
- d) Nominations for the Committee must be received by the Secretary in writing at least three days before the meeting, unless the Committee makes a decision to accept nominations at the AGM and notify both those who may be nominated and the nominators.
- e) Nominees should be present at the AGM unless they are unable to attend due to illness, holiday etc, at the discretion of the Committee. The Secretary must be informed, before the meeting, in writing or email and receive confirmation from the secretary.
- f) An independent observer shall attend each AGM and confirm that the meeting was arranged conducted in accordance with the SURA Constitution. The independent observer can be one of the following:
  - An elected councillor
  - A staff or committee member from another association
- g) All members must receive personal notification in writing not less than seven (7) days' notice of the AGM. Notice of the AGM shall also be displayed on notice boards in the Association's Area.

## **6.2 Special General Meetings**

The Secretary will call a Special General Meeting at the request of three of the committee or at least eight other members giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request. The meeting will take place within twenty-one (21) days of the request. All members will be given two weeks' notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda. Notice may be by telephone, email or post. The quorum for the Special General Meeting shall be 10% of members of the SURA or 10 members or whichever is least

### **6.3 General Meetings**

- a) General meetings are open to all people who currently use SSJ services. Everyone (as above) is entitled to vote on proposals put forward.
- b) Decisions of the General Meeting shall be binding if constitutionally acceptable on the Committee.
- c) At least seven (7) days' notice shall be given for a general meeting. Every eligible member will receive an invitation.
- d) The quorum for a general meeting will be will be 10% of members of the association or 10 members or whichever is least
- e) If a member believes an item to be of a confidential nature this must be made known to the Chairperson before commencement of business. The Committee must decide if the item is to be discussed in a closed session at the end of the general meeting.

### **6.4 Committee Meetings**

Committee meetings may be called by the Chair or Secretary. Committee members must receive notice of meetings at least 7 days before the meeting. The quorum for Committee meetings is four (4) Committee members.

## **7. Rules of Procedure for meetings**

All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to. If a consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the Chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

## **8. Voting**

- a) All decisions at meetings (except those dealing with alterations to the constitution) shall be taken by a simple majority of those voting, including any proxy votes.

- b) The named proxy must be a general committee member. The Secretary must be informed of the proxy not later than three (3) days before the meeting. Each member has one vote.
- c) In the event of a tie of the vote the Chair of the meeting shall have the casting vote.
- d) The Chair of the meeting shall not otherwise vote on any resolution. A vote is needed and the numbers shall be counted and recorded in the minutes.
- e) Alterations to the Constitution require a two-third majority of those present and voting at any general meeting.
- f) Full details of proposed changes must be circulated at the next general meeting.
- g) Amendments at the First AGM should be simple majority.
- h) Any potential conflict of interest<sup>1</sup> must be declared.
- i) A member who declares conflict of interest should then withdraw from the voting on the issue in question.

## **9. Minutes**

All formal meetings must be minuted and the minutes formally approved by the next meeting (committee or general)

## **10. Finance**

- a) An accurate record of income and expenditure must be produced each year at the AGM to be made available to all members on request.
- b) Accounts should be open to inspection by members on request
- c) All monies raised by or on behalf of the SURA shall be applied to further the aims of the SURA and for no other purpose.
- d) The SURA will carry out any appropriate external scrutiny and/or audit of the accounts as or if required

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford Languages: conflict of interest

*noun*

1. a situation in which the concerns or aims of two different parties are incompatible.  
"the conflict of interest between elected officials and corporate lobbyists"

by current legislation.

- e) Account(s) must be opened in the name of the SURA. Cheques, transfers and other banking instruments or instructions shall be signed by the Treasurer and at least one (1) other signatory who must also be a member of the Committee.
- f) Signatories must not be related to, or be members of, the same household.
- g) Proper records of all transactions including petty cash transactions must be kept.
- l. Finances raised for or on behalf of any sub-committee must be applied only within the terms agreed by the SURA Committee.

## **11. Amendments to the Constitution**

Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the AGM or any General Meeting. Any proposal to amend the constitution must be notified to the Secretary and an agreed form of wording. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of meeting. Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote.

## **12. Dissolution**

The Committee, or if a committee no longer exists, a majority of remaining members of the SURA, can propose that the SURA should be dissolved. They must give at least fourteen (14) days' notice to all eligible members that a meeting is taking place proposing to dissolve the SURA. In this circumstance the notification may be through SSJ. For the sole purpose of dissolution, a quorum need not apply and the SURA may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of those present. Any assets remaining after settling any liabilities shall be applied for the benefit of the community in accordance with the aims of the Association.