**Constitution Amendments: Proposal (February 2025)**

The HRLA Constitution makes provision for a Young Lawyers Committee (YLC). On 9 July 2024, the YLC Chair informed the HRLA’s Executive Committee that the YLC had voted in favour of changing its name from Young Lawyers Committee (YLC) to Junior Lawyers Committee (JLC). The Executive Committee subsequently approved this change. The Executive Committee has therefore directed that a resolution to replace references to “Young Lawyers Committee (YLC)” in the HRLA’s Constitution with “Junior Lawyers Committee (JLC)” and “YLC” with “JLC” be put to the HRLA’s membership at the 2025 Annual General Meeting. The proposed amendments to the HRLA Constitution are shown in tracked changes below.

**HRLA Constitution**

**Name**

1. The Association shall be known as the Human Rights Lawyers Association.

**Objects**

1. The objects of the Association are:
	1. to promote the effective legal protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of the United Kingdom;
	2. to further research, education and training in the areas of human rights law and practice, and the effective implementation of human rights law within the United Kingdom;
	3. to co-operate with other organisations whose objects are similar to those of the Association.

**Membership**

1. Persons shall be eligible to be members of the Association if they support its objects and fall within one or more of the following categories:
	1. members of the Bar or admitted solicitors in England and Wales or Northern Ireland or members of the Faculty of Advocates, Writers to the Signet or solicitors in Scotland;
	2. pupil barristers, trainee solicitors or students of law or human rights;
	3. persons who are or have been teachers of law;
	4. Fellows, Members or Associates of the Institute of Legal Executives;
	5. persons resident in the United Kingdom who have acquired professional status as lawyers in other Member States of the Council of Europe or the Commonwealth;
	6. current or retired members of the United Kingdom judiciary or the judiciary of other Member States of the Council of Europe or the Commonwealth;
	7. other persons having connections with the teaching, practice or administration of the law who, in the opinion of the Association’s Executive Committee (**EC**), would be likely to make a valuable contribution to the work of the Association.
2. An eligible person who wishes to become a member of the Association shall submit an application through the Association’s website and pay the prescribed fee. The EC may also consider applications for membership from organisations. The EC may in its discretion refuse to admit any applicant to membership.
3. Membership shall terminate:
	1. upon the member ceasing to be eligible for membership;
	2. upon receipt by the Secretary of the member’s written notice of resignation;
	3. if the member’s subscription shall be six months in arrears;
	4. if the member shall be expelled by a vote of two thirds of the members of the EC present and voting at a meeting and comprising, in addition, not less than half the members of the EC, the member being entitled to appeal to a general meeting.

**Officers and the Executive Committee (EC)**

1. The Association in General Meeting may on the recommendation of the EC elect any person as Honorary President, Honorary Vice-President, or Honorary Member of the Association.
2. The Officers of the Association shall be a Chair, two Vice-Chairs, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and a Bursary Officer.
3. The EC shall consist of the Officers, up to 12 elected members, up to three co-opted members selected in accordance with Article 9, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Junior Lawyers Committee (JLC), and two other members of the JLC nominated by the JLC.
4. The co-opted members shall be selected by the EC with a view to ensuring that the EC is best placed to serve the interests of members of the Association. Co-opted members may be selected on the basis of their position within a human rights or other organisation but in such cases it is the individual rather than the organisation who is co-opted to the EC.
5. Subject to Article 13, the Officers and other elected members of the EC shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (**AGM**).
6. Association members seeking election as Officers or elected members of the EC shall submit an application in a process to be determined by the EC from time to time.
7. All contested elections for Officer or membership of the EC shall be conducted by ballot of the members of the Association present at the AGM. For contested elections for Officers, the candidate who receives the most votes shall be declared elected. For contested elections for membership of the EC, the 12 candidates who receive the most votes shall be declared elected.
8. If there shall be a vacancy in any office the EC shall appoint one of the other Officers or an elected member of the EC to fill the vacancy until the close of the next AGM.
9. Co-opted members of the EC shall hold office until the close of the AGM following their co-option.
10. The tenure of all members of the EC shall be subject to the terms of this Article. Any EC members who fail to attend three consecutive EC meetings without reasonable excuse will be deemed by the EC to have resigned, and the member notified accordingly.
11. Committee members are expected to attend 75% of Committee meetings and to participate actively in the work of the EC. Members of the EC, including co-opted members, may be removed by a vote of two thirds of the members of the EC present and voting at a meeting who comprise, in addition, not less than half the members of the EC. The remaining members of the EC shall have power to co-opt any member of the Association to fill the resulting vacancy, subject to the limit in Article 8.

**Junior Lawyers Committee (JLC)**

1. The JLC shall consist of up to twelve members of the Association who are students of law or human rights, trainee solicitors, pupil barristers, or other junior professionals working in the human rights sector. Association members seeking election as members of the JLC shall submit an application in a process to be determined from time to time. Subject to the approval of the EC, the JLC may appoint up to three Association members to fill vacant posts on the JLC.
2. The JLC reports to the EC, which may overrule decisions of the JLC in case of disagreement.
3. Any member of the JLC may attend meetings of the EC, but only the Chair and Vice Chair of the JLC and the other members of the EC nominated by the JLC in accordance with Article 8 may vote at EC meetings. In the event that the Chair or Vice Chair of the JLC or another member of the EC nominated by the JLC ceases to be a member of the EC, the JLC may nominate one of its other members to take that person’s place.

**General Meetings**

1. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held at least once in every year on such day as may be appointed by the EC, being not more than fifteen months after the previous Annual General Meeting.
2. The business to be conducted at the Annual General Meeting shall be such as may be required by this Constitution or directed by the EC, together with any resolution of which notice in writing to the Secretary signed by two members of the Association has been given not less than twenty-one days before the meeting. Any other matters may in the discretion of the Chair of the Meeting be raised without notice for purposes of discussion only.
3. The Secretary shall ensure that each member of the Association is given not less than thirty days’ written notice of the date, time and place of the Annual General Meeting. The Secretary shall, not less than ten days before the date of the meeting, send to each member of the Association an agenda specifying the business to be conducted at the meeting and the names of candidates for election.
4. A Special General Meeting shall be held:
	1. if requested by the EC; or
	2. on the request of not fewer than ten members of the Association made in writing to the Secretary and specifying the business for which the Special General Meeting is to be requisitioned.
5. The Secretary shall ensure that each member of the Association is given not less than fourteen days’ written notice of any Special General Meeting, specifying the date, time and place of the Meeting and the business to be transacted. Such business will be limited to that for which the meeting was requested.
6. Accidental failure to give notice of a General Meeting or send an agenda to any member in due time or at all shall not invalidate the proceedings at the General Meeting.
7. Subject to Article 12, voting at a General Meeting shall be by show of hands. In the event of equality of votes the Chair of the Meeting shall have a casting vote.
8. The Chair of the Association (or in their absence a Vice-Chair) shall take the chair at any General Meeting. In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chairs, the members present at the Meeting shall elect a chair. In the absence of the Secretary, the chair of the Meeting shall appoint a member to take the minutes of the meeting.
9. The quorum of any General Meeting shall be ten members of the Association.
10. If the business of a General Meeting is not concluded within the time available, the Meeting shall be adjourned to such time and place as the chair of the Meeting shall direct.

**Committee Powers and Meetings**

1. So far as not otherwise provided in this Constitution and subject to any directions which may be given by a resolution of the Association at a General Meeting, the affairs of the Association shall be controlled and directed by the EC. The EC may seek assistance from those outside the EC as and when necessary.
2. The Chair of the Association (or in their absence a Vice-Chair) shall take the chair at any meeting of the EC. In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the members present at the meeting shall elect a chair.
3. The quorum at any meeting of the EC shall be five.
4. The chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote in the event of equality of votes.
5. Meetings of the EC shall be convened at such times and places as shall be agreed by the EC and may also be convened at the request of any of the Officers or any three members of the EC. The Secretary shall give to each member of the EC not less than seven days’ notice of any meeting, but the period of notice may be abridged in case of urgency. Accidental failure to give notice to any members in due time or at all shall not invalidate the proceedings.
6. The EC may appoint sub-committees for specific purposes and may co-opt any persons (whether or not members of the Association) to such sub-committees.
7. The EC shall at each Annual General Meeting report to the members of the Association on its conduct of the affairs of the Association since the previous Annual General Meeting.

**Subscriptions and Finance**

1. The subscriptions rates for individual and corporate membership of the Association shall be determined by the EC from time to time.
2. The Association shall open and maintain an account at a bank (to be selected from time to time by the EC) into which the subscriptions and other receipts of the Association shall be paid. Money not for the time being required for the purposes of the Association may be placed on deposit account or invested in any other manner approved by the EC.
3. The Treasurer shall be responsible (under the supervision of the EC) for the management of the finances of the Association. The Treasurer shall cause accounts to be prepared in respect of each year and such accounts shall be laid before the Annual General Meeting in the following year.

**Amendments to the Constitution**

1. Subject to Article 34, this Constitution may be altered only by a resolution at a General Meeting supported by at least two thirds of the members present and voting thereon.

**Notice**

1. Any written notice shall be deemed to be given to a member if it has been sent by post or delivered or sent by electronic mail to a member’s address last notified in writing by such member to the Secretary or when completing the process of joining the Association.

***Adopted February 2003.***

***Amended 10 December 2009, 10 December 2009, November 2011, January 2020, January 2023, March 2024, and February 2025.***