

LIBERTY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

18 MAY 2019, CLOTH HALL COURT, LEEDS

RESOLUTIONS PASSED

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS (CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT)

This AGM resolves to amend the constitution of the National Council for Civil Liberties (Liberty) to reduce the minimum number of meetings of the Executive Committee from eight to six meetings per year.

This is to allow the Executive Committee to make better use of the time of its members by, for example, meeting in smaller Sub-Committees to focus on specific areas of business, e.g. Finance. The changes to the constitution are shown below in red.

8.2 *The Executive Committee shall meet at least ~~eight~~ six times each year and one half (rounded up) of the current membership of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum;*

2. AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP RATES (CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT)

The Liberty constitution requires that affiliate rates for membership organisations are set by the AGM. These rates have not been amended for at least 10 years, and are currently out of sync with our standard individual membership rate (£30 per year).

The proposed affiliate fee structure also clarifies the rates for non-membership affiliate organisations, and only sees a moderate increase. This AGM resolves to amend affiliate membership rates to the National Council for Civil Liberties (Liberty), as outlined in the tables below.

Current membership organisation affiliate fees:

NUMBER OF MEMBERS (IF APPLICABLE)	CURRENT RATE	AGM VOTES
Under 250	£26	1
250 -1,999	£58	1
2,000 - 4,999	£116	2
5,000 - 9,999	£215	2
10,000 - 49,999	£431	2
50,000 - 99,999	£504	3
100,000 or more	£725	3

Proposed new affiliate fee structure:

NUMBER OF MEMBERS (IF APPLICABLE)	TURNOVER (IF NON-MEMBERSHIP)	PROPOSED RATE	AGM VOTES
under 1,000	Under 100,000	£50	1
1,000- 4,999	£100,000 - £499,999	£120	1
5,000-9,999	£500,000 - £999,999	£250	2
10,000- 49,999	£1,000,000 -£3,999,999	£450	2
50,000 - 99,999	£4,000,000 - £7,999,999	£650	3
100,000 or more	£8,000,000 or more	£900	3

3. ALGORITHMS

This AGM notes with serious concern the expanding use of algorithmic decision-making by public authorities, including the police, without meaningful public understanding, consultation or debate on the potential of such decisions to negatively impact human rights.

This AGM recognises that algorithms are not inherently neutral. They are trained using data from the society in which we live, and used in the context of existing institutions. As such, algorithmic decisions have the potential to entrench and exacerbate inequalities.

This AGM further recognises that algorithms involving machine learning make decisions in opaque and constantly developing ways. They risk inscrutability, undermining traditional accountability mechanisms and increasing the risk that people will be subject to arbitrary exercises of State power.

This AGM notes that the use of algorithmic processing by public authorities relies on the continued expansion of big data. The use of big data and algorithms, fuelled by the State's ever-expanding mass surveillance powers, represents a significant threat to our rights and to the principle of individual liberty.

This AGM therefore resolves to be vigilant to the threat to privacy, freedom of expression, fair trial and freedom from discrimination that State use of algorithms poses, and to campaign against the use of algorithms in ways that undermine human rights.

4. COUNTER-TERRORISM POWERS

This AGM condemns the latest raft of intrusive and unnecessary counter-terrorism powers introduced by the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019, which will criminalise activities such as overseas travel, publication of images online, viewing content over the internet and discussion of banned groups without any requirement of criminal intent.

This AGM further condemns the unprecedented use of counter-terrorism legislation, and specifically the Maritime and Aviation Security Act 1990, to criminalise the group known as the 'Stansted 15'. They undertook a peaceful direct action to prevent a deportation flight which included people who feared grave human rights violations on return to their countries of origin, and to protest the cruelty of the UK Government's practice of mass deportation flights, and the hostile environment.

This AGM reiterates the importance of keeping the public safe from serious violence. At the same time, it commits to resisting the encroachment of counter-terrorism powers on fundamental rights and freedoms, and to upholding the rights to protest, privacy, freedom of religion, free expression and non-discrimination that have been progressively undermined by counter-terror legislation in recent decades.

5. POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This AGM recalls its resolution in 2012 which affirmed the AGM's belief that Government austerity measures should never lead to:

1. destitution or other inhuman and degrading treatment;
2. the denial of access to justice for those unable to pay; or

3. discriminatory erosion of rights and freedoms on the basis of gender, race, disability or other protected characteristics.

This AGM notes with serious concern the preliminary findings of the UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty and Human Rights, following a country visit to the UK in November 2018, in which he sets out that “[i]n the past two weeks I have talked with people who depend on food banks and charities for their next meal, who are sleeping on friends’ couches because they are homeless and don’t have a safe place for their children to sleep, who have sold sex for money or shelter, children who are growing up in poverty unsure of their future, young people who feel gangs are the only way out of destitution, and people with disabilities who are being told they need to go back to work or lose support, against their doctor’s orders.” The report also establishes the disproportionate impact of austerity measures on women, children, disabled people, older people, asylum seekers and migrants, and people in rural settings.

This AGM calls on the Government to take urgent and decisive measures to ensure that the clear negative impact of austerity policies on the universality and inalienability of human rights is reversed.

This AGM further reiterates its longstanding opposition to the criminalisation of poverty by central Government and local authorities, including through the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders which punish homeless people for survival activities such as rough sleeping and begging.

6. THE RIGHT TO DATA PRIVACY FOR BENEFITS CLAIMANTS

This AGM condemns the Department for Work and Pensions’ (DWP) disregard for benefits claimants’ right to data privacy under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act (and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)). In particular this AGM is deeply concerned that:

1. the DWP recently advertised for a company to build ‘data-slurping’ software to download claimants’ medical records from GP surgeries;
2. this data will be used for disability assessments;
3. this system will harm patients who fear that disclosing information to their GP will be used against them by the DWP;

4. the DWP do not rule out sharing the data outside the DWP;
5. Jobcentres are misleading Universal Credit claimants into believing that unless they register online and consent to having their data processed they will not get any benefits;
6. library staff have reported concerns that claimants who are not computer literate are being referred to libraries by Jobcentres and that they are seeing highly confidential and sensitive information; and
7. the DWP has no policy in place to protect and compensate claimants if Verify (GOV.UK's online identification system) is hacked.