Constitution of the Liberal Democrat Disability Association

1. Name

The name of the Organisation is:

"**Liberal Democrat Disability Association**" abbreviated to **LDDA**.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of LDDA shall be: -

a. To work for the election of Liberal Democrats to all levels of local, regional and national government in the United Kingdom.

b. To provide information to and raise awareness amongst Liberal Democrat members, elected representatives, legislators and the general public, on civil rights and equal opportunities issues that affect people with disabilities.

c. To promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities within the Liberal Democrats - part of a wider commitment to promote equal opportunities regarding sex, race, colour, creed, age, sexual orientation and disability in the wider general population.

d. To ensure that Liberal Democrat policies reflect the rights and needs of people with disabilities, their carers, and their families.

e. To produce and promote a Liberal Democrat charter for people with disabilities.

f. To reach out to and engage with organisations outside of the Party that address all aspects of disability.

3. Membership

a. **Full Membership** of LDDA shall be open to anyone who:
    i. Is a Member of the Liberal Democrat Party, and

ii. Supports the Aims and Objectives of the LDDA, and
iii. Pays the required subscription to the LDDA.

b. **Associate Membership** shall be open to persons or bodies who are not members of the Liberal Democrats provided that they support the Aims and Objectives of the LDDA and pay the required subscription. Associate Members may attend and speak at any General Meeting or function arranged by the LDDA but may not vote or serve on the Executive.

c. **Eligible Members** are those who have been fully paid-up members of the LDDA for at least one month prior to the date of issuing the calling notice for an AGM or EGM. Only Eligible Members will have the right to stand for election as an Officer or Committee Member or vote in any ballot for Officers or Committee places or Constitutional amendments.

d. Refusal Suspension or Revocation of Membership:

i. The Executive may refuse, suspend or revoke, the Full or Associate Membership of any person or body on the grounds provided in the Party Constitution and using the procedures defined in the Membership Rules of the Liberal Democrats in England.
    1. At least 7 days prior to such a vote the Executive must be notified of the intended vote.
    2. At least 7 days prior to such a vote the person must be offered an opportunity to make a statement to the Executive prior to the vote.

ii. The person or body must be informed of the reasons for the refusal or suspension of membership within seven calendar days of the Executive's decision.

iii. The person or body may appeal against the Executive's decision within six weeks of the decision, or they shall cease to be a member of the Association.

iv. Any appeal will be heard in a confidential session of a General Meeting of Members at the next Federal Conference.
    1. Members of the Executive who participated in the original vote may not participate in the appeal session.

v. A General Meeting shall not consider an appeal if a quorum is not present.

vi. The Federal Party shall be informed of any expulsion along with copies of the relevant paperwork.

4. Subscriptions

a. The Executive shall draw up rules governing the payment of subscriptions and membership procedures which will be subject to the approval of the Annual General Meeting.

b. The Executive shall determine the subscription levels which may include a reduced subscription for the unwaged those receiving benefits and students. Anyone under 26, is permitted to pay a subscription of £1.00 at conferences.

5. General Meetings

a. The Annual General Meeting [AGM] is the governing body of the LDDA and will normally be held in the last three months of the calendar year, via online means.

b. The Secretary will issue the calling notice for the AGM to all Eligible Members of the LDDA as defined in 3c] above at least 21 days prior to the date of the AGM.

c. If the calling notice is issued late this does not invalidate the AGM.

d. The calling notice will give the date, time, venue and agenda for the AGM and will include nomination forms for the Officers and General Committee Members.

e. The AGM will be chaired by the Honorary President if appointed and shall:

   i. Receive Reports from the Chair, the Treasurer and other Officers as appropriate. Copies of all reports will normally be circulated with the notice of the AGM.

   ii. Adopt the Audited Accounts.

   iii. Elect the Officers and General Committee Members as appropriate [see 6a].

   iv. Amend the Constitution.

   v. Conduct any other appropriate business that has been notified to the Secretary in advance of the meeting.

f. If no Honorary President is appointed or the Honorary President is not available, the meeting will appoint one of the members present to chair the AGM.

g. The quorum for an AGM or Extraordinary General Meeting [EGM] shall be 20 members or 20% of the fully paid-up membership, whichever is the lower.

h. If the AGM is held in person, members must be given a hybrid option either through telephone or online means.

i. An EGM may be requested by the Executive or by a written request to the Secretary from five eligible members. The request for an EGM must state the business to be discussed. This will be the ONLY business dealt with at the EGM.

j. On receipt of a request for an EGM, the Secretary will issue a calling notice to all fully paid-up members of the LDDA in time to be received at least 21 days prior to the date of the meeting. The calling notice will give the date, time, venue and agenda for the meeting.

If an AGM or EGM is non-quorate it may proceed subject, there being no objection from any of the members present. However, if the Agenda includes the hearing of an Appeal under 3d] iv] above, that item of business may only proceed if a quorum present.

6. Officers and Executive Committee

a. The Executive shall comprise the following Officers and General Committee Members:
   i. Honorary President [optional]
   ii. Chair
   iii. Vice Chair
   iv. Secretary
   v. Treasurer
   vi. Membership Secretary
   vii. Six General Committee Members.
   viii. non-voting representatives from the formal other Diversity AOs (who sit on the Federal People Development Committee) through appointment of their own means.

b. All Officers and General Committee Members will be elected at an AGM to serve for a period of two years.

c. All Officers and Committee Members will be eligible for re-election except that no member shall hold the Office of Chair for more than four years consecutively and shall then not be eligible for nomination for the post of Chair for a further period of one year.

d. At least seven of the eleven members of the Executive and at least two of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer must be members of the LDDA who are either disabled or carers.

e. All nominations must be proposed and seconded and signed by the candidate to indicate agreement to the nomination. The candidate, proposer and seconder must all be Eligible Members, see 3c] above.

f. Completed nominations together with the candidate's statement if any [maximum 100 words] must be received by the Secretary not

later than the starting time for the AGM as stated in the calling notice for the meeting.

g. If at the start of the AGM any Officer position has only one valid nomination or no more than six valid nominations have been received for General Members those positions will be elected unopposed.

h. If no valid nominations have been received for any Officer position or fewer than six valid nominations have been received for General Committee Members, the vacancies may be filled from those attending the AGM.

i. In the event that two or more valid nominations for any Officer position or more than six valid nominations for General Committee Members are received prior to the starting time for the AGM a secret ballot will take place at following the AGM conducted using STV in accordance with the election rules in the Party Constitution.

j. The Chair of the AGM [see 6e] and 6f]] above will normally act as Returning Officer to conduct the ballot[s]. However, if the Chair of the AGM is a candidate for any position on the new Executive or is otherwise unable to act as the Returning Officer, a Returning Officer will be appointed by the meeting.

k. The first meeting of the new Executive shall take place not more than two months after it takes office. At this first Meeting the following optional positions may be filled from those elected as General Committee Members:
    i. Assistant Secretary
    ii. Press Officer

b. If an Officer other than Honorary President resigns during their period of office the Executive shall have the power to fill the vacancy from among the existing Executive members.

c. The Executive shall have the power to co-opt General Committee Members to fill any vacancies remaining after an AGM or any casual vacancies that may occur.

d. In addition to the provisions of n] above the Executive shall have the power to co-opt up to three additional General Committee Members for a specified purpose and for a period terminating at the next AGM.

e. The Executive Committee shall meet at least three times per year in addition to the AGM.

f. The quorum for an Executive Committee shall be 50% of its current membership including co-opted members, fractions will be rounded down. e.g. Membership = 11 – Quorum = 5

6. **Finances**

a. The LDDA financial year shall run from 1st January to 31st December each year or such other period as may be required under any future legislation or the Constitution of the Federal Party.

b. The Executive shall be empowered to open such Bank or Building Society Accounts in the name of the LDDA as it considers appropriate.

c. The authorised signatories for all these accounts shall be the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary - any two signatures being enough authorisation.

d. The Treasurer shall maintain records of all financial transactions and prepare a balance sheet and statement of accounts at the end of the Association's Financial Year for audit and presentation to the next AGM.

e. The Treasurer shall make such reports to the Executive on the financial status of the LDDA as are necessary to allow the Executive to assure itself of the proper management of the LDDA finances.

f. A copy of the audited accounts shall be sent to the federal party within six months of the end of the financial year.

7. **Interpretation and Amendment of the Constitution**

a. One copy of this Constitution shall be deposited with the Federal Party and another with the Secretary of the LDDA.

b. Any member of LDDA shall be provided with a copy of the Constitution on request.

c. The Honorary President, if appointed or otherwise the Executive Committee, shall be the guardian of this Constitution and shall be:
    i. charged with the interpretation of the Constitution in any matters of dispute
    ii. be empowered to rule on any issue not covered by this Constitution

d. Any interpretation or ruling under c] above shall be consistent with this Constitution and the Constitution of the Federal Party.

e. Any amendments to this Constitution must be proposed and seconded by eligible members and notified to the Secretary in writing at least 28 days before the AGM or with any valid request for an Extraordinary General Meeting.

f. No amendment shall be made to this constitution that conflicts with the Constitution of the Federal Party of the Liberal Democrats or the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000(PPERA) or any subsequent legislation.

g. No word or construction in this Constitution shall be taken to imply any discrimination whatsoever regarding sex race colour creed age disability sexual orientation or any other ground other than political belief or practice.

h. In the event of the dissolution or suspension of the LDDA the assets of LDDA shall vest in the Federal Party on trust for the future reconstitution of the LDDA or similar body.

6. Life Membership

a. Honorary Life Membership may be conferred on any person who has made a special contribution to the LDDA.

b. Candidates will be recommended to the AGM by the Executive and confirmed by a simple majority of those present and voting.

7. Communications with Members

Any correspondence to or from Members may be either by post, FAX or email.