

## The Independent Guide to the UK Constitution: An introduction to the ground rules of British democracy

Andy McSmith, Will Gore, Oliver Wright, James Cusick, Cahal Milmo



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The word "constitution" sounds dry and academic. The subject is anything but. Many of the most explosive, life-changing themes of today's news agenda have their roots in the UK's often-praised but never-written-down constitution.

The relationship between Westminster and Brussels; the flaws in our voting system; the primacy – or otherwise – of British courts; the Union between England and the UK's other component parts; the proper role of the monarchy ... all these are issues with the potential to change fundamentally the character of British life.

If you want to understand what the arguments are, what the underlying facts are – or even what your individual rights are – you need to understand at least the basics of the UK's sometimes nebulous constitutional arrangements.

Based on the newspaper series with which "The Independent" and "i" have marked the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, this book offers a simple, accessible overview of the current state of play in the most important constitutional areas. It also includes extracts from, and summaries of, some of the key texts that, in the absence of a written constitution, are the closest thing there is to a codification of the ground rules of British democracy.

The UK's democratic liberties are the envy of the world. They are also precarious. We have no written constitution, and the unwritten traditions on which we rely instead are increasingly being called into question. They are an imperfect guarantee of our freedoms, but they are best we have. Unless we value and understand them, those freedoms could all too easily be lost.

We hope this book will prove a helpful starting-point for those who wish to learn more about this crucial aspect of modern life.

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