

Sheffield City Branch of UNISON RULE BOOK

SECTION 1

1. INTRODUCTION

These rules are intended to supplement the UNISON Rule Book and incorporate, as far as practicably possible, the relevant elements of the UNISON Code of Good Branch Practice' and to provide advice on the operation of the Branch and its relationship with other parts of the Union.

1.1 TITLE AND COMPOSITION

- 1.1.1 The name of the Branch shall be the Sheffield City Branch of UNISON (hereinafter called the "the Branch").
- 1.1.2 The membership of the Branch shall comprise of all appropriate UNISON members who are employed by Sheffield City Council etc and those members employed by appropriate and/or associated employers in the Community, Voluntary or Private Sector, as approved by the Regional Secretary.

1.2 CONSTITUTION

- 1.2.1 The Branch rules will be in accordance with the National Rules, decisions of the National Delegate Conference and the National Executive Council.
- 1.2.3 In the event of any question arising as to the interpretation of these rules, the question shall be referred to the Regional Secretary, whose decision shall be final.
- 1.2.4 Any member who makes a request shall be supplied with a copy of the Branch Rules.
- 1.2.6 The Branch agrees to abide by the guidance within the UNISON Code of Good Branch Practice as amended by the National Executive Council.
- 1.2.7 All members should be able to exercise their rights as set out in the union rules, and in particular to:
- i. Receive information about the union and its activities on a regular basis in a user friendly format and language that is easily understood.
 - ii. Take part in meetings, discussions and educational activities arranged by the union to meet their Trade Union, working and domestic needs.
 - iii. Stand for election to any office open to them within the union rules.
 - iv. Vote for policies, representatives and delegates.
 - v. Hold to account those representatives elected on their behalf.
 - vi. Participate in the development, change and implementation of policy.
 - vii. Raise questions about any matter and receive a considered reply within a reasonable time.
 - viii. Have access to a wide range of union services.

ix. Have guaranteed standards of advice, representation and service.

1.2.8 Equally with these rights come responsibilities and members are required to act in accordance with these responsibilities, in particular members are required to:

i. obey the Union's rules

ii. treat others with dignity and respect

iii. keep subscription payments up to date

iv. advise the Union of any change in circumstances, e.g. change of address, change of job or change of hours etc.

1.2.9 Equality principles require Branches to actively seek members' participation in activities of the Branch and to take particular steps to encourage the participation of previously disadvantaged individuals or groups.

UNISON is based on a commitment to participatory democracy and a belief that collective Involvement is essential to the creation of efficient and effective local organisation. In this regard the following principles shall underpin the branch's approach:

- ◆ If members are to participate in a wide variety of ways with different degrees of commitment they should know what their rights and responsibilities are.
- ◆ Representatives will play a key role in informing and enthusing members as well as being the first in line point of contact and service for members.
- ◆ Representatives, Branch Officers and other Representatives should be well resourced and valued.
- ◆ The Branch should have clear objectives for developing local organisation as close as possible to the members in order to facilitate maximum participation in the structure, whilst recognising that because of the size of the Branch, participation at some levels may be through indirect representation.
- ◆ The Branch will establish and promote levels of representative democracy founded on the principle that Representatives act for, and are accountable to, their members.

SECTION 2

2. MEMBERS IN THE BRANCH

2.1 ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

2.1.1 Individuals employed by Sheffield City Council etc and those members employed by appropriate and/or associated employers in the Community, Voluntary and Private Sector, working within the broader public sector shall be entitled to join this UNISON Branch.

2.1.2 The eligibility of membership is as defined in the UNISON National Rule C.

2.2 BECOMING A MEMBER

2.2.1 Any eligible person wishing to become a member shall be provided with an application form, the person is required to complete and sign the prescribed form. Applications for membership shall be accepted as valid where the application is completed on line through UNISON national web site.

2.2.2 Applicants for membership must as a condition of their membership agree to accept the constitution and rules of UNISON and agree to comply with them.

2.2.3 Should a person, who is otherwise eligible for UNISON membership, apply to the Branch for membership, yet she/he is employed within an area which the Branch does not service or represent, then the Branch Officers, Representatives and members should use their best endeavours to ensure the person becomes a member of an appropriate UNISON Branch.

2.2.4 An eligible person applying for membership shall be accepted into membership, provided that this is in compliance with National Rule C5.

2.2.5 Any person whose application for membership is declined shall have the right of appeal to a Regional Appeals Committee as set out in National Rule C5.6

2.2.6 Once a person has been accepted into membership that member's details shall be enrolled onto the Register of Membership System.

2.2.7 INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS.

New members will receive a Branch new member's pack which will contain brief but clear information on UNISON. A membership card and other information shall be sent direct to their given address by the National Office.

2.2.8 LOCAL INFORMATION.

The Branch will also supply to the new member the following information:

- i. Names of Branch Officers, Representatives, Health and Safety Representative, Learning Representatives and their contact telephone numbers and addresses.
- ii. The location and contact details of the Branch Office.
- iii. A step by step guide to raising issues and concerns, indicating the first point of contact, for any problems members may have.

2.3 OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

- 2.3.1 All members shall comply with the rules of the Union.
- 2.3.2 It is the duty of any member who changes her or his home address or workplace location or other relevant details to notify the Branch Secretary or another appropriate Officer of the Branch, in writing, either electronically or otherwise, or UNISON Direct, either electronically, in writing or by telephone, of the changes as soon as possible thereafter.
- 2.3.3 It is the duty of each member to ensure, so far as they are able, that her/his subscriptions are sent to and received by UNISON's Regional or Head Office.
- 2.3.4 It is the responsibility of members to make reasonable efforts to take part in the activities of the Branch and the wider Union, including attending appropriate Branch meetings and events and responding through consultative processes.

2.4 CEASING TO BE A MEMBER

- 2.4.1 Any member ceasing to be eligible for membership within National Rule C.1, who does not fall within the classes of membership set out in National Rule C2, shall automatically cease to be a member, unless:
- a) The National Executive determines otherwise; or
 - b) She or he intends to be absent from the employment defined in the National Rule C.1 for a temporary period only, in which case she or he may be allowed by decision of the Branch to retain membership.

2.5 RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 2.5.1 Any member may at any time resign her or his membership by submitting a written resignation to the Branch Secretary, Regional Secretary or the General Secretary. Upon resigning, that member shall forfeit any right to receive or continue to receive the benefits or privileges of membership and shall forfeit all that she or he has paid to the Union.

2.6 SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES

- 2.6.1 The rate of subscription payable by a member will be as set out in Schedule A of the National Rules, as amended by National Delegate Conference.
- 2.6.2 The preferred method of payment of subscriptions is through the employers Deduction of Contributions at Source (DOCAS) arrangements, however, payment of subscriptions may also be made by way of direct debit, standing order or cheque; or by any other method acceptable to the National Executive Council.
- 2.6.3 Any person owing more than three months subscriptions shall cease to be a member of the Union (unless the National Executive Council decides otherwise) and shall forfeit all that she or he has paid to the Union.
- 2.6.4 Such a person may rejoin the Union; however, the National Executive Council shall require such a person to pay any outstanding subscriptions or such other amount that it determines.

2.7 ALL MEMBERS - NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INFORMATION

- 2.7.1 All members will receive a free copy of the union journal. All members will be entitled to request and receive union publications from their Representatives or the Branch.

2.8 BRANCH INFORMATION

- 2.8.1 The Branch will provide regular written information on local bargaining and other developments within UNISON. This information should be received in good time for members to participate in decision making before decisions are made. The branch will produce a newsletter four times each year and shall maintain its web site.

2.9 ADVICE TO MEMBERS

- 2.9.1 Information on who to contact will be included in the branch information pack on joining and amendments issued when necessary.
- 2.9.2 A member contacting their branch representative with an enquiry should receive a response before it is too late for action to be taken.
- 2.9.3 Responses to member's enquiries will be in an understandable language with the minimum use of jargon. The branch should aim to give clear explanation as to why a particular decision is being given.
- 2.9.4 The Branch will make arrangements for members to receive advice from an Officer of their own race or gender where appropriate.

2.10.1 CONFIDENTIALITY AND RESPECT

- 2.10.1 All members have the right for any matter raised with their union representative to be dealt within the strictest confidence. Branch representatives should ensure that any confidential materials in their possession are kept secure in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.
- 2.10.2 Branch representatives will respect members' rights to confidentiality and treat members in a considerate and courteous manner.

2.11 MEMBERS COMPLAINTS

- 2.11.1 Any member who feels that they have been treated in an unacceptable way or have had an infringement of their rights and/ or have not received benefits as specified in the rule book have the right to refer complaint to the Regional Secretary for consideration. Any complaints should not be frivolous or vexatious.

2.12 GETTING SUPPORT AND GETTING INVOLVED

- 2.12.1 Members should be actively encouraged to meet and discuss matters of interest and concern. Representatives should facilitate this through regular contact and visits to workplaces.
- 2.12.2 Problems and issues should be debated in a language that members understand Representatives should consult members regularly on the time and place of the branch, sectional and workplace meetings to ensure that members in all grades, occupations and with difference hours or work have the chance to become involved. Paid officials and specialist branch officers will give encouragement guidance and advice in handling matters as required.

2.13 MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES

2.13.1 INFORMATION

- 2.13.2 Members are responsible for advising the Branch Secretary of their contact details and of any changes to them, e.g. if they change their name, home address, telephone number, e-mail address etc. The information is used by the union to ensure that our records are accurate and up to date

and that members are kept informed and involved and to assist with any casework the Union conducts on the members behalf.

- 2.13.3 Members are also responsible for supplying information to their Representative on problems and issues that occur at their workplace.

2.14 DEBATE

- 2.14.1 Members should use every opportunity to widen debate. Talking to others and gaining support is a very important part of union activity. We know how strength can be gained when the debate is widened and other members, users of services, and the public in general and politicians support us in our campaigns.

2.15 DEVELOPMENT

- 2.15.1 Members will receive information about UNISON Education and Training and should take the opportunity to develop their own education programme within the Branch. Education in UNISON is geared to help all members learn about their union and issues that affect them at work and at home. Education should be simple, enjoyable and accessible.

2.16 SUPPORT

- 2.16.1 Members should recognise that UNISON'S success and growth depends on a wide variety of individuals who give time and commitment to the organisation. Members should recognise the contribution made by others and provide consideration and support to those who take up union responsibilities on their behalf. Members should also recognise the collective benefits of participation and seek to play an active part in the union's activities.

SECTION 3

3. BRANCH ACCOUNTS AND THE FINANCIAL YEAR

3.1 THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL YEAR

3.1.1 The administrative and financial year of the Branch shall be the period commencing on the first day of January and ending on the thirty-first day of December of the same year, or such other period as is determined in accordance with the National Rules.

3.2 BRANCH ACCOUNTS

3.2.1 The Branch shall maintain adequate financial records and books of account, to facilitate the financial administration a Bank Account(s) shall be established and maintained with either/ both, the Unity Trust Bank plc and the Britannia Building Society.

3.2.2 The Branch shall control and ensure the safe custody of all assets and all income and expenditure shall be recorded in the books of account and all payments and receipts and credits or debits shall be made through the Branch Bank Account(s).

3.2.3 The assets together with any depreciation in their value shall be recorded in the annual statement of accounts. All such records, books and statements of account shall be kept for at least ten years and as a minimum comply with statutory obligations.

3.2.4 Branch expenditure shall be met from the Branch income, unless an agreement to vary this is granted by another appropriately authorised body of the Union e.g. the NEC or the Regional Committee, and all expenditure shall be in line with UNISON rules, policy aims and values and must have appropriate prior Authority.

3.2.5 Payments shall not be made from the Branch funds, which are the general funds of the Union, to any political party, or its organs, nor shall any payments be made for political purposes. Such payments can only be dealt with through the General (GPF) or Affiliated (APF) Political funds of the Union, as appropriate.

3.3 EXPENSES AND ALLOWANCES

3.3.1 The Branch shall publish each year a Scheme of Allowances and Expenses in accordance with the national guidelines on expenses and honorarium.

3.3.2 The Branch Officers, Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives, Learner Representatives and other representatives of the branch shall be eligible to claim for reimbursement of travel and other expenses in accordance with the scheme of allowances and expenses.

3.3.3 A member of the Branch attending an Education Course or otherwise participating in Trade Union activities may also be eligible to claim for reimbursement of travel expenses incurred in accordance with the scheme of allowances and expenses.

3.3.4 A member of the Branch who attends a Conference, Education Course, Seminar or such similar event as a delegate or visitor on behalf of the Branch shall be entitled to receive such subsistence allowance as deemed appropriate by the Branch Committee, provided that the costs of any accommodation and/or meals have not otherwise been met in accordance with the scheme of allowances and expenses.

- 3.3.5 No member or Representative of the Branch shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of travel or subsistence expenses incurred in connection with his or her attendance at any general meeting of the Branch.
- 3.3.6 Where an individual uses their own car for the purpose of participating in trade union duties or activities a payment will be made based on the mileage rate set in the scheme of allowances and expenses. Such a claim should not be made nor should any payment be made where the employer is paying any such mileage.
- 3.3.7 Where UNISON, Nationally or Regionally, or any other body funds, in whole or in part, the cost of meals, accommodation or travel for a particular event or activity, then only such expenditure as has not been met by the Union or these other bodies should be the subject of a claim.
- 3.3.8 Where an individual uses public transport, reimbursement of actual expenditure incurred will be made, up to a maximum of the cost of standard second class travel.
- 3.3.9 Members and officials are required to make every effort to reduce the costs to the Branch and the Union by taking such reasonable steps as is necessary to keep costs to a minimum.

SECTION 4

4. BRANCH MEETINGS

4.1 GENERAL MEETINGS

- 4.1.1 Branch General meetings will be held at least once per annum and may be held on an aggregate basis. Attendance at such meetings shall only be by members of the Branch and appropriate Regional and/or National Officer(s). Other individuals may be invited to attend subject to the agreement of a previously held and quorate Branch or Branch Committee meeting.
- 4.1.2 The quorum for any Branch general meeting shall be 75 members. All members have the right to speak and vote at Branch meetings, subject to any exclusion in the National Rules and the Regional and National Officer(s) shall have the right to attend and speak at the meetings. Members, other than appropriate Branch Officers, shall only be entitled to attend one aggregate meeting in each cycle of aggregate meetings. Branch Officers may attend all Aggregate Meetings but can only vote at one of them. The minutes should record at which aggregate meeting the Branch Officer(s) voted.
- 4.1.3 Any Branch Aggregate General Meetings held in addition to the Aggregate AGM, shall be held on dates to be determined by the Branch Committee and notified to members, in writing, to be received at least 14 days prior to any such meeting taking place and shall be held on dates and at times so as to maximise the opportunity for membership participation.
- 4.1.4 The Branch shall ensure details of the agenda, motions for debate and any reports, from the Branch Officers or Branch Committee or Branch Organising Committees shall be circulated, as appropriate, to the membership.
- 4.1.5 Decisions shall be reached by a simple majority with the exception of rule changes which must have a 2/3 majority of all those voting at the meeting, where aggregate meetings are held this will require a 2/3 majority of all votes cast after being aggregated together into a single result.
- 4.1.6 Voting can be either by show of hands or by secret ballot as determined by the first meeting within the cycle. The vote, however, will be by a show of hands unless either a majority of those present at the first meeting vote by a show of hands for a secret ballot or the branch committee so determine and announce such a ballot at the commencement of the process.
- 4.1.7 In any vote other than a challenge to a Chairperson's ruling, where a particular vote taken results in a tie, with an equal number of members voting for and against the proposition, the Chairperson may determine the issue either by exercising a casting vote or by ruling that the status quo apply where this is applicable.
- 4.1.8 Should the Chairperson's ruling on a particular issue be formally challenged at a meeting, the person making such a challenge shall state the grounds for the challenge.
- 4.1.9 The Chairperson will then explain the ruling she/he has made and hand over control of the meeting to another appropriate Branch Officer who will conduct a vote on the challenge to the Chairperson's ruling.
- 4.1.10 Once the appropriate Branch Officer has taken over as the Chair of the meeting she/he will immediately call for a vote on the challenge to the Chairperson's ruling. It is a requirement that two thirds of those members present, who are eligible to vote, must vote against the Chairperson's ruling for that ruling to be successfully challenged.
- 4.1.11 A challenge shall only apply to the particular meeting being conducted, whether aggregate or not. Only if a challenge on the same grounds and issue is made at other aggregate meetings, in any cycle of aggregate meetings, shall there be a requirement for the vote to be aggregated.

4.1.12 After such a vote in any meeting the Branch Officer chairing at this particular point should hand over to the Chairperson again who should continue to chair the rest of the meeting.

4.2 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4.2.1 Branch Annual General meetings will be held in accordance with the UNISON 'Code of Good Branch Practice' and may be held on an aggregate basis. Attendance at such meetings shall only be by members of the Branch and appropriate Regional and/or National Official(s). Other individuals may be invited to attend subject to the agreement of a previously held and quorate Branch or Branch Committee meeting.

4.2.2 The total quorum for a Branch Annual General Meeting shall be 150, or 5% of the full members of the branch whichever is the lower number. All members have the right to attend, speak and vote at the annual general meetings, subject to any exclusion in the National Rules and the Regional and National Officer(s) shall also have the right to attend and speak at such meetings. Members, other than appropriate Branch Officers and the movers of motions or amendments, shall only be entitled to attend one aggregate annual general meeting in each cycle. Branch Officers shall, wherever possible, attend all Annual General Meetings.

4.2.3 The branch committee shall be entitled to decide if there should be an aggregate Annual General Meeting. If it is decided that there shall be an aggregate annual general meeting members will be entitled to attend each aggregate meeting but only be entitled to vote at one meeting. The minutes should record at which meeting the vote was used. If the AGM is inquorate all business shall be referred to the first meeting of the Branch Committee.

4.2.4 The Branch Annual General meeting shall be held after the 1 January each year but as close to this as is practicably possible, on a date to be determined by the Branch Committee each year. In any event the AGM must be held by no later than the end of March each year.

4.2.5 The Branch Committee shall publish, as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting in any year, a calendar of Branch and Branch Committee meeting dates including the date(s) of the next AGM.

4.2.6 No later than 54 days prior to the first meeting in the AGM cycle, a letter must be sent to members requesting that the details of any motions or proposed rule changes they wish to submit for debate at the AGM be received by the Branch Secretary at a closing date determined by the Branch Committee but in any event no later than 40 days prior to the AGM.

4.2.7 Details of any proposed motions or rule changes shall be notified to members within 14 days of the closing date for receipt of such motions. The members will be invited to consider whether or not they wish to submit any amendments to such motions or rule changes and must submit any such amendments to be received by the Branch Secretary at a closing date determined by the Branch Committee but in any event no later than 21 days prior to the AGM.

4.2.8 The Branch Secretary shall ensure details of the agenda, motions for debate, proposed rule changes together with any amendments and the annual reports from the Branch Officers and Sectional Committees, including any proposals for the development of the Branch, together with any reports from the Branch Self-Organised Groups shall be circulated to the membership along with the final notice of meeting no later than 14 days prior to the AGM.

4.2.9 The preparation of a properly audited statement of the Branch accounts must also be completed by this point, in order that the statement of account can also be reported to members at the AGM.

4.2.10 Unless specified otherwise in these rules decisions shall be reached by a simple majority of all those votes cast at meetings within the aggregate cycle being added together to give a single result.

- 4.2.11 Voting will be by a secret ballot at each meeting within the cycle.
- 4.2.12 In any vote other than a challenge to a chairperson's ruling, where a particular vote is taken which results in a tie with an equal number of members voting for and against the proposition the Chairperson will determine the issue at the last meeting in the cycle either by exercising a casting vote or by ruling that the status quo continue, where this is appropriate.
- 4.2.13 Should the Chairperson's ruling on a particular issue be formally challenged the person making such a challenge will state the grounds of any such challenge.
- 4.2.14 The Chairperson will then explain the ruling she or he has made and hand over control of the meeting to another appropriate Branch Officer. No debate shall take place on this issue.
- 4.2.15 Once the appropriate Branch Officer has taken over as the chair of the meeting she/he will immediately call for a vote on the challenge to the Chairperson's ruling. It shall be a requirement that two thirds of those members present who are eligible to vote must vote against the Chairperson's ruling in order for such a challenge to succeed.

After such a vote the Branch Officer controlling the meeting shall immediately hand over to the Chairperson who should take her/his place and continue to chair the rest of the meeting.

The purpose of the Aggregate Annual General Meeting is to:

- to exercise democratic accountability over Branch Officers and the Branch Committee
 - to report on the Branch's finances.
 - to report on the Branch's activity during the past year and the implementation of its development and organising plan.
 - to receive a report on a proposed development and organising plan for the following year.
 - to elect or confirm the election of appropriate Branch Officers for the coming year.
 - to elect or confirm the election of Branch Representatives to external bodies and to other levels of the Union.
 - to consider motions
 - to consider rule changes
- 4.2.16 Where an AGM is inquorate over the full cycle of meetings, i.e. at least 75 members have not attended in total, with the exception of proposed Rule Changes which shall fall, any outstanding business shall be remitted to the next Branch Committee meeting which will decide on the appropriate course of action to follow.
- 4.3 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**
- 4.3.1 Branch Special General meetings will be held in accordance with the UNISON 'Code of Good Branch Practice. Attendance at such meetings shall only be by members of the Branch and appropriate Regional and/or National Official(s).
- 4.3.2 A special general meeting of the Branch can only be called if either:
- i) the Branch Committee calls for such a meeting by passing a resolution which specifies the purpose of such a meeting, the subject matter such a meeting is required to consider and the date such a meeting is required to be held on; or

- ii) a written request of members of the Branch is received by the Branch Secretary which has been signed by at least 5% of the full members of the branch – a written request must state the reason for and purpose of such a meeting together with the issue(s) for consideration at such a meeting.
- 4.3.3 Within 28 days of receipt of such a written request, as indicated in ii) above, or on such a date as is set by the Branch Committee, as in i) above the Branch Secretary shall arrange for a Special General Meeting to be held.
 - 4.3.4 In calling such a meeting the Branch Secretary shall arrange for all members to be notified of the date, time and agenda of the meeting together with any items for debate, no later than 7 days prior to the date of the meeting.
 - 4.3.5 The quorum for any Branch Special General Meeting shall be 75 of those members eligible to attend. All members have the right to speak and vote at a Branch Special General Meeting, subject to any exclusion in the National Rules, and the Regional and National Officer(s) shall have the right to speak at the meeting.
 - 4.3.6 Voting can be either by a show of hands or by secret ballot as determined by the meeting. The vote will be by a show of hands unless a majority of those present at the meeting vote, by a show of hands for a secret ballot.
 - 4.3.7 In any vote other than a challenge to a Chairperson's ruling, where a particular vote taken results in a tie, with an equal number of members voting for and against the proposition, the Chairperson may determine the issue either by exercising a casting vote or by ruling that the status quo continue, where this is applicable.
 - 4.3.8 Should the Chairperson's ruling on any particular issue formally be challenged the person making such a challenge will state the grounds for such a challenge.
 - 4.3.9 The Chairperson will then explain the ruling she or he has made and hand over control of the meeting to another appropriate Branch Officer who will conduct the meeting until after a vote has taken place on the challenge to the Chairperson's ruling.
 - 4.3.10 Once the appropriate Branch Officer has taken over as the Chair of the meeting she/he will immediately call for a vote on the challenge to the Chairperson's ruling. It shall be a requirement that two thirds of those members present who are eligible to vote, must vote against the Chairperson's ruling in order for such a challenge to succeed.
 - 4.3.11 After such a vote the Chairperson should take her/his place and continue to chair the rest of the meeting.
 - 4.3.12 At the discretion of the Branch Committee such a meeting may be held as a cycle of aggregate meetings, in such circumstances the quorum and voting procedures will be as specified for AAGM's.

SECTION 5

5. PARTICIPATION, PROPORTIONALITY AND FAIR REPRESENTATION

5.1 PARTICIPATION

5.1.1 The Branch shall take all such measures as are reasonable and practicable to encourage and assist members' participation in the activities and policy making of the Branch, and the Union in general.

5.1.2 Such measures shall include but are not restricted to, giving consideration to –

The timing of meetings

ii) The venues for meetings

The provision of crèche or childcare facilities at meetings

iv) The use of electronic mail and internet communication to extend and enhance member's participation in the policy making processes of the Branch

v) The provision of some social activity or activities concurrent with or consecutive to meetings

5.1.3 The Branch shall also encourage those members who are from under represented groups, e.g. women, black, disabled and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) and young members, to participate in the branch activities and to form self-organised groups, where appropriate, and shall provide such assistance and resources to them as is practicable and reasonable to allow them to do so.

5.1.4 The meetings of the Branch including meetings of the Branch Committee's, Sector Committees etc., shall be conducted in such a way as to allow members to participate in the process. The use of sexist, racist or homophobic language or behaviour or other inappropriate language or behaviour is forbidden and if it occurs may result in disciplinary action being taken by the branch against any offender.

5.2. PROPORTIONALITY AND FAIR REPRESENTATION

5.2.1 The Branch is committed to achieving proportionality and fair representation.

5.2.2. The UNISON rule book and the Code of Good Branch Practice require that proportionality and fair representation underpin UNISON structures and processes. They are integral to the union at all levels, and cannot be treated as separate or optional when developing Branch structures. A truly member – centred union must ensure that power and influence is shared between all members.

5.2.3 Proportionality

This means the representation of women and men in fair proportion to the relevant number of female and male members comprising the electorate.

5.2.4. Fair Representation

This is the broad balance of representation of members of the electorate, taking into account such factors as the balance between part-time and full-time workers, and low paid workers, different occupations, skill, qualifications, responsibilities, race, sexuality and disability.

- 5.2.5 The principles of proportionality and fair representation as defined in National Rules shall apply to the Branch and any election process carried out on behalf of the Branch.
- 5.2.6 In this respect the committees, delegations and constituencies should be identified so as to have a broad range of the membership and the differing occupational groups represented within the branch committees, sector committees, and branch delegations as appropriate to the membership.
- 5.2.7 If necessary, to ensure that there are representatives on the Branch Committee who reflect the full range of the membership, a further member elected from each of the following self-organised groups can be co-opted onto the Branch Committee in addition to the two full seats elected from each self-organised group under rule –
- i) Black members
 - ii) Members with disabilities
 - ii) Lesbian/gay/transgender/bisexual (LGBT) members
 - iv) Women members
 - (v) Young members
- 5.2.8 The Branch Committee will determine at its first meeting following the AAGM whether there is a need to involve Rule 5.2.7
- 5.2.9 Members who are co-opted onto the Branch Committee shall have the right to speak but not vote at meetings of the Committee. The two members per Self Organised Groups who attend as per rule shall have voting rights.
- 5.2.10 Proportionality, specifically in respect of gender balance, must be applied to the combined SOG delegate and co-optee grouping with at least one woman being elected or co-opted per SOG. Fair representation should be encouraged by each SOG when electing or co-opting members to the Branch Committee.

5.3 ACHIEVEING PROPORTIONALITY AND FAIR REPRESENTATION

- 5.3.1 The branch is responsible for ensuring that proportionality is achieved at local level. This responsibility lies with the Branch committee on a day to day level.

SECTION 6

6. JOB SHARING AND INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 The UNISON rule book allows for branch officer posts to be shared between two or more people. This is a valuable means of ensuring more members, particularly part-time members, to take up elected posts and thus play a greater role within the Union.
- 6.1.1 The Branch where possible should make every effort to make use of this facility as an effective means of sharing the work and encouraging greater involvement within the Branch and to ensure fair and consistent decision making. Each job shared post will be allowed one vote at any Branch Committee and this to be agreed by the job sharers in the said post. The Branch should consider if the said Branch Officer post can or cannot be Job Shared.
- 6.1.2 Branch Committee should adopt a “teamwork” approach to their work, rather than expecting a few people to do the work and shoulder most of the responsibility.
- 6.1.3 UNISON expects that everyone’s contribution is recognised, welcomed and valued. The branch should try to involve all members who wish to make a contribution to local organisation and activity.

6.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 6.2.1 The Branch will make use of the education and training resources to develop the skill and confidence of under represented groups within the Branch. A range of education and training activities will be available for UNISON members and activists. Branches should ensure that information on these is widely circulated, and that times, dates and venues for any such events are appropriate to the members concerned.

6.3 IMPROVING PARTICIPATION

- 6.3.1 The Branch should encourage women, part-time workers, shift workers, black people, people with disabilities, LGBT and young members, to become more active within the branch and to take up Branch Officer posts. The Branch should work towards developing a climate which encourages membership participation and activity, including:
- i. making meetings accessible to members by reviewing dates, times, venues and access,
 - ii. assisting with childcare and carer’s support
 - iii. ensuring that the agenda, format, language and conduct of meetings are welcoming and informal,
 - iv. developing strategies for responding to the extra difficulties faced by part-time workers,
 - v. acknowledging the problems and stresses faced by shift workers,
 - vi. fostering respect between members.

SECTION 7

7. SELF ORGANISATION

- 7.1 The Branch will facilitate the establishment of self-organised groups for women, disabled members and lesbian, transsexual and gay members (LGBT) Self-organised groups will be crucial to UNISON achieving proportionality and fair representation at all levels.
- 7.1.1 The Branch should reflect the particular needs of disabled members and make use of the facilities and resources within UNISON to encourage and support disabled people to become involved.
- 7.1.2 Fair representation will only be achieved if Branches adhere to UNISON'S aims and values and demonstrate commitment to meet the obligations set out in the rules. It is crucial for branches to recognise all the self-organised groups are different, with different needs, priorities and ways of working. The branches will need to be flexible to accommodate, and respond to, self-organised groups' needs.
- 7.1.3 The aim of self organisation is to enable members within these groups to:
- i. meet and share concerns and aspirations, and establish their own priorities,
 - ii. elect their own representatives to other levels of self-organisation and to other appropriate levels in the organisation,
 - iii. work within flexible structure to build confidence and encourage participation and provide opportunities for the fuller involvement of the disadvantaged members,
 - iv. work within the established policies, rules, and constitutional provisions of the union.

7.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BRANCH COMMITTEE

- 7.2.1 The Branch committee has the responsibility for facilitating the establishment of self-organised groups and should ensure that:
- i. appropriate members are encouraged to participate in self-organised groups,
 - ii. there is representation from each of the self-organised groups on the branch committee,
 - iii. that officers and delegates from self-organised groups are democratically elected and are accountable to members and self-organised groups,
 - iv. the Branch respects members' rights to confidentiality and that all information disclosed is kept secure.

7.3 PROCEDURES FOR RECOGNITION OF SELF-ORGANISED GROUPS

- 7.3.1 The Branch should facilitate open meetings from self-organised groups within the branch. Membership of each self-organised group is open only to that defined group of members.
- 7.3.2 The Branch Committee should ensure that there are proper procedures at the meeting for the election of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and any other Officers as appropriate.
- 7.3.3 The Branch should maintain a record of all elected officers of the self-organised groups.
- 7.3.4 The Branch Committee should also ensure that Officers of the self-organised groups can receive regular union communications, information and publicity materials.

7.4 RESOURCING SELF-ORGANISED GROUPS

- 7.4.1 UNISON rules require self organised groups to have agreed funding and other resources including: education and training access, publicity and communications. The Branch Committee should therefore agree levels of funding for self-organised groups.

7.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF SELF-ORGANISED GROUPS

7.5.1 Self organised groups are required to work within the established policies, rules and constitutional provisions of the union:

- i. each self organisation group must be accessible and open to all self defining members,
- ii. all meetings of self-organised groups, venues and materials for these meetings must be publicised widely to members within the Branch and agreed in advance with the Branch Secretary,
- iii. self-organised groups will be required to recognise the role of the Branch and must not seek to supplant or undermine the role or structures of the Branch.

7.5.2. All minutes of self organised group meetings must be submitted to the next meeting of the Branch Committee for consideration/approval.

SECTION 8

8. BRANCH STRUCTURE

8.1 ORGANISING COMMITTEES

8.1.1 The Branch membership shall be allocated to an appropriate employer or function based Organising Committee. Representatives within these employers/functions shall be allocated to the appropriate Organising Committee in the appropriate manner prescribed in these rules. The function of the Organising Committee shall be to organise workers in the area covered by the Organising Committee including individual and collective representation, communication, member education, steward development and campaigning.

The name of each Organising Committee shall be as follows –

- ❖ Organising Committee for the Communities Portfolio (SCC)
- ❖ Organising Committee for the Children and Young Peoples Service (SCC)
- ❖ Organising Committee for the Resources, Deputy Chief Executives and Chief Executives (SCC)
- ❖ Organising Committee for the Place Portfolio
- ❖ Organising Committee for Capita
- ❖ Organising Committee for Probation
- ❖ Organising Committee for Voluntary and Community Sector
- ❖ Organising Committee for Sheffield Homes
- ❖ Organising Committee for Sheffield College
- ❖ Organising Committee for Sheffield Future
- ❖ Organising Committee for Schools

8.1.3 Each Organising Committee shall have the authority, by agreement with the Branch Committee, to convene members meetings as appropriate. These meetings shall be convened by the Organising Committee Convenor and conducted in line with the rules of the union. The minutes of these meetings should be submitted to the next meeting of the Branch Committee for consideration/agreement.

8.1.4 A named Convenor will be assigned to each Organising Committee and shall be responsible for convening meetings of the committee, developing the work programme for the committee, providing leadership and support to the stewards and members covered by the Organising Committee.

8.2 BRANCH COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

8.2.1 The Branch shall have the following bodies to undertake its work between Annual General Meetings

- i) Branch Committee
- ii) Branch Labour Link Committee
- iii) Organising Committees
- iv) Finance and General Purpose Committee
- v) Staffing Committee
- vi) Disciplinary Sub-Committee

8.2.2 Only members employed in each Organising Committee will be entitled to attend those meetings. In addition, the Branch Secretary, Convenor and Regional Staff nominated by the Regional Secretary shall be entitled to attend.

8.2.3 The remit of the Organising Committees is to deal with issues specific to that group. Any cross sector issues must be considered by the Branch Committee.

8.3 BRANCH COMMITTEE

8.3.1 **FUNCTIONS** - The Branch Committee shall administer Branch business in accordance with the Branch Rules, any guidelines issued by the National Executive Council and any instructions from the Regional Secretary.

- i. To consider the recommendations of the Branch's Committees and Sub-Committees and determine appropriate action.
- ii. To establish effective representation of members' interests in each Organising Committee.
- iii. To organise around workplace learning and co-ordinate the activities of learning representatives.
- iv. To recruit and organise members in all employers and workplaces within the scope of the Branch.
- v. To co-ordinate health and safety activities conducted by health and safety representatives.
- vi. To maintain a record of membership showing the workgroup in which each member is employed.
- vii. To ensure that Branch Officers/Convenors are properly exercising their functions.
- viii. To elect representatives and/or delegates to regional and national committees of the Union.
- ix. To elect delegates to UNISON's conferences.
- x. To elect representatives and delegates to external bodies where appropriate.
- xi. To make decisions on policy and financial matters.
- xii. To make decisions on issues facing the Branch.
- xiii. To organise the Annual General Meeting and Branch Officer elections.
- xiv. To fill appropriate vacant Branch Officers' posts between Annual General Meetings.
- xv. To convene Special General Meetings of the Branch or its sections where necessary
- xvi. To organise the election of Lead Representatives, Representatives, Health and Safety representatives and Learning Representatives.
- xvii. To make recommendations on rule changes for submission to the AGM or SGM.
- xviii. To consider motions submitted by members of the Branch Committee.
- xix. To set up sub-committees of the Branch.
- xx. To make appropriate decisions on industrial action in accordance with the Union's Industrial Action Regulations and Procedures.
- xxi. To elect representatives to the branch's standing committee's and disciplinary sub committee.

8.3.2 COMPOSITION

- i. Chairperson and Secretary
- ii. All other Branch Officers and including Lead Convenors

- iii. Representatives elected from Organising Committees (weighted according to size of membership).
- iv. One representative from each of the Self-Organised Groups (see also Rule 5.2.7).

8.3.3 **QUORUM** : 1/3rd of those entitled to attend.

BRANCH LABOUR LINK COMMITTEE

8.4.1 FUNCTIONS

- i. To arrange an annual meeting of the branch APF levy payers to elect the Branch Labour Link Officer
- ii. To arrange such other meetings of the Branch APF members as are necessary
- iii. To liaise with the Regional Political Officer over affiliations to local Labour Parties.
- iv. To elect delegates, who must be individual members of the Labour Party, to represent the branch on local Labour Party bodies and promote UNISON policy within them by sending resolutions to them and receiving regular reports from the delegates?
- v. To send motions and elect delegates, who must be individual members of the Labour Party, to the Regional Political Forum, according to the entitlement set out in the APF operational rules, currently 2 motions and 4 delegates at least two of whom must be women.
- vi. To nominate branch members, who must be individual members of the Labour Party, for election to the Regional Labour Link Committee and for the Regional Delegation to the National Political Forum.
- vii. To develop and discuss UNISON policies and pursue them through Regional and National Labour Link structures and Labour Party structures to seek to secure their adoption and implementation.
- viii. To receive reports from delegates and representatives on activities.
- ix. To support and participate in Labour Party activities, initiatives and campaigns and support election campaigning for the Local, National and European Elections.
- x. To organise recruitment campaigns to persuade levy payers to become individual members of the Labour Party.
- xi. To organise in conjunction with the Regional Political Officer and participate in policy forums and political education events.
- xii. To link with other local affiliated union branches and the local community to seek to influence Labour Party policy.

8.5.2 COMPOSITION

- i. The Branch Labour Link Officer
- ii. Delegates to the Labour Party
- iii. Branch Chair (subject to paying levy)

- iv. Branch Secretary (subject to paying levy)

8.5.3 QUORUM : 6

NB. All members of the committee must be eligible and remain eligible to attend this meeting i.e. they must be affiliated political fund fee paying members. To hold the position of Labour Link Officer or delegate to any other labour link or labour party body they must also be individual members of the labour party.

8.8 BRANCH FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE

8.9.1 FUNCTIONS

- i. To consider the financial position of the Branch and to make recommendations to the Branch Committee on such issues.
- ii. To produce a budget for the Branch for the forthcoming year for approval by the Branch Committee.
- iii. To authorise the purchase of goods and services in accordance with the approved budget.
- iv. To receive a monthly financial report, at or during this meeting, from the Treasurer, this report must include details of income and expenditure together with any predictions or concerns regarding the future Branch budget.
- v. To make recommendations on income generally and possible savings to the Branch Committee.
- vi. To administer the payment of expenses in accordance with the Branch Rules.
- vii. To consider appeals from members of the Branch in relation to decisions made by the treasurer re the payment of expenses and to act as the Branch's sole arbiter on these matters.
- viii. To oversee the paying of staffs' salaries and other conditions of service.
- ix. To consider correspondence on financial matters.

8.9.2 COMPOSITION

- i) Branch Chairperson
- ii) Branch Treasurer
- iii) Branch Secretary
- iv) Welfare Officer
- v) Education Officer
- vi) Two members elected from the Branch Committee

8.9.3 QUORUM : 4

8.10 BRANCH STAFFING COMMITTEE

8.10.1 FUNCTION

- i. To consider staff welfare and terms and conditions of employment
- ii. To resolve disputes arising from staffing issues.
- iii. To act as a forum for addressing staffing problems, initially to deal with any individual issue outside the formal grievance procedure if requested or appropriate.

8.10.2 COMPOSITION

- i. Branch Secretary
- ii. Three members elected from the Branch Committee.

8.10.3 QUORUM : 3

8.11 DISCIPLINARY SUB-COMMITTEE

8.11.1 FUNCTIONS

- i. To appoint an Investigation Panel or Officer who have/has no prior involvement in the matter to conduct an investigation into allegations made by a member of the Branch or a member of Branch employed staff where that person believes a member or member of staff has or may have disregarded, disobeyed or broke any of the rules or regulations of the Union applicable to him or her or any instructions issued in accordance with the rules or acted in a manner prejudicial or detrimental to the Union or his/her Branch and/or has committed any acts of discrimination or harassment in line with national rules.
- ii. To refer the issue to the region where that member is a member of the Branch's Committee with a view to an investigation being carried out under Rule I.
- iii. To function as a Disciplinary Panel if the investigation concludes that there is a case to answer (any members of the panel involved in the investigation or the complaint will not be eligible to sit on the panel).
- iv. To administer any of the following sanctions if the case is upheld:
 - a) censure of the member;
 - b) debarring the member from attending the Branch Committee meeting and any of the meetings of the Branch's Sector Committees and Sub-Committees for a period not exceeding 24 months;
 - c) referring the matter to the National Executive Council via the region for consideration of a more serious penalty including suspension or expulsion.
- v. To appoint an Appeals Panel to deal with any appeal from members in relation to the decision of the Disciplinary Panel the appointees of which should not have had any prior involvement in the case which could affect their neutrality.

8.11.2 COMPOSITION

- i. Branch Secretary
- ii. Branch Chair
- iii. Three members elected by the Branch's Committee.

8.11.3 QUORUM: 3

SECTION 9

9. ORGANISING COMMITTEES AND SHOP STEWARDS

9.1 STRONGER WORKPLACE ORGANISATION

- 9.1.1 Achieving UNISON'S aims and values will require stronger workplace organisation, with a system of organisation that enables the development of collective action, based on full participation, democracy and accountability.
- 9.1.2 The basic building block of local democracy will be the work group, normally a self identifying group of members. The work group might be based on a location, on a shift or belong to an occupational group.
- 9.1.3 However, experience has shown that meetings and activities based on occupational groups of members within a specific area are the most effective in respect of attendance and participation. They are also more likely to facilitate fair representation for all members.

9.2 THE ELECTION OF SHOP STEWARDS

- 9.2.1 Shop Stewards will be elected by and from the work group they represent. Election will take place annually, in the month preceding the Annual General Meeting, and will be ratified by that meeting.
- 9.2.2 All members of the work group will be entitled to stand for election, on an individual or job share basis. In the event of a contest, all members of the work group shall be entitled to take part in a vote, which should be administered by the Lead Convenor for the Organising Committee in association with the Branch Committee. The vote will be conducted by a secret ballot. Any member in the constituency who wishes to stand as a Representative should complete a nomination form obtainable from the Branch office and should be duly signed by two UNISON members in that workplace, an election address of no more than 150 words should be provided where there is more than one nominee and this will be sent out with the ballot paper in any election.
- 9.2.3 In the event of a Representative resigning prior to the annual election, the branch committee shall be empowered to hold a by-election, on the same basis as above.
- 9.2.4 Members have the right to remove a Representative from office following a majority vote of the work group. Where such action is proposed, the Branch Committee has the responsibility to ensure that all parties have the opportunity to put their case and that the matter is dealt with as speedily and sensitively as possible.

SECTION 10

10. BRANCH OFFICERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES, THEIR ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

10.1 BRANCH OFFICERS

10.1.1 Listed below are the Officer roles within the Branch:

Branch Chair
Branch Secretary
Convenor*
Branch Treasurer
Equality Officer
Health & Safety Officer
Auditor (2)
Education Co-Ordinator
International Officer
Welfare Officer
Young Members Officer
Sports & Social Secretary
Labour Link Officer
Service Conditions Officer

Any other post as determined by National Rule

- **Must be employed within the Organising Committee**

10.1.2 All Branch Officer Posts will be elected annually by ballot of the membership. The successful candidates will be endorsed at the Annual General Meeting. With the exception of the role of Convenor which will be elected for a period of two years. Convenors will be elected from amongst those members that the convenor post relates. For example, members employed by Capita will elect the Convenor for Capita, members employed by Sheffield City Council will elect SCC Convenors etc.

10.1.3 All members of the Branch should receive notification of the forthcoming elections no less than three months before the Annual General meeting. Nominations should be received by the Branch Secretary no later than four weeks before a ballot takes place.

10.1.4 Any member who has been a full member of the branch for at least 4 weeks and is not in arrears with their subscriptions is entitled to be nominated for election to any of the Branch Officer posts, provided they meet any criteria set for the post. Any nomination must be supported by at least five members of the Branch. The responsibility for conducting the ballot rests with the Branch Committee

10.2 RETIRED MEMBERS SECRETARY

The Retired members in the Branch shall have the right to elect one of their number as a Retired Members' Secretary. Such an election shall take place annually, at a meeting of the Retired Members in the Branch and shall be reported to the Annual Branch meeting.

10.3 FUNCTIONS OF BRANCH OFFICERS

10.3.1 A number of functions are defined within the national rule book as the responsibility of specific Branch Officers. However these tend to be general statements covering overall responsibility for the proper running of the Branch, each of which entails a large number of tasks.

10.3.2 The core Branch Officer team shall comprise of the Branch Secretary, Branch Chair and Treasurer: -

- i. ensuring the day to day functions of the branch are undertaken
- ii. consultations and negotiations are conducted in line with branch policy
- iii. case management/allocation of cases in areas without local/lead representatives

10.3.3 The Team shall meet regularly with formal records to be kept and forwarded to the Branch Committee for information.

10.5 BRANCH CHAIRPERSON

10.5.1 TASKS RELATING TO THE BRANCH CHAIR

- i. To preside at the Annual General Meeting, Special General Meeting, Branch Committee and Branch sub committees as laid down in the Constitution of the Branch.
- ii. To make decisions if late items or emergency items can be admitted to the Agenda in accordance with the Standing Orders as laid down by the Branch.
- iii. To ensure that business is properly conducted in an efficient and even handed matter.
- iv. To advise the Branch Officers and Branch Committee in respect of matters relating to procedure and interpretation of rules.
- v. To ensure that all functions of the Branch are carried out.

10.7 BRANCH SECRETARY

10.7.1 The Branch Secretary is responsible for ensuring the proper completion of the following tasks. It is not expected that the Branch Secretary will personally undertake all these functions but will act as the strategic lead officer and co-ordinator within the Branch. The Branch Secretary will encourage partnership working within the Branch Committee and be responsible for the development and work of the Organising Committees. The Branch Secretary will be an ambassador for the union and represent the union in relations with employers, partner unions and other relevant external organisations. The Branch Secretary will be the manager of Branch Staff but in fulfilling this task they will work in partnership with members of the staffing committee. The Branch Secretary will work in partnership with Regional and National staff of the union. Further information on the role of the Branch Secretary can be found at rule G4.2 in the UNISON rule book or on the website at unison.org.uk.acrobat.15817.pdf.

10.7.2 TASKS RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF THE BRANCH SECRETARY

- i. to guide the Branch's development through the preparation and implementation of a Branch Organisation and Development plan
- ii. to ensure the representation of members within the Branch in accordance with National guidance (see UNISON guide to representation, unison.org.uk/acrobat/14795.pdf and stock no. 2426) and that case forms and applications for services forwarded to UNISON Offices are properly completed and authorised
- iii. to convene and attend all meetings of the Branch and Branch Committee's as laid down in the Branch constitution
- iv. to arrange for the minutes of meetings to be kept in a proper manner and circulated to all Branch Officers and Representatives and members where relevant
- v. to arrange for Branch records to be kept in a proper manner
- vi. to ensure the Branch, speedily and accurately, processes applications for membership and maintains records in accordance with UNISON's systems
- vii. To ensure that the appropriate Officers of the Branch maintain and improve membership levels.
- viii. to ensure regular communication with the members of the Branch with news of campaigns, negotiations, issues, branch developments and activities
- ix. to communicate with the Union's Regional and Head Offices on behalf of the Branch.
- x. to ensure that Branch members are aware of opportunities to participate in the activities of the wider Union, or within self-organisation if appropriate

- xi. to support, mentor and encourage the Representatives in the Branch on an individual and collective basis. The Branch Secretary should seek to meet with Branch Officers and Representatives to discuss Branch issues and workplace organisation
- xii. to ensure that members and Representatives are aware, and take advantage, of education and training opportunities within UNISON
- xiii. to ensure that appropriate publicity activities are developed and co-ordinated by the Branch.
- xiv. to act as spokesperson for the Branch when in contact with other levels of the Union and external organisations
- xv. to ensure that members receive the benefits, rights and services to which they are entitled.
- xvi. to act as lead negotiator and to co-ordinate all Branch negotiations and Industrial relations matters to carry out negotiations in line with decisions of the Branch and to report back on such negotiations on a regular basis to the Branch and to ensure that any agreement with the Authority is only reached with the approval of the Branch
- xvii. to seek to improve and maintain the Conditions of Service of the members of the Branch.
- xviii. to have delegated powers to register collective disputes with the Employers and to report back to the appropriate Committee on his/her actions
- xix. to ensure, in conjunction with the Branch Committee, that the Branch observes the Union's rules, supports UNISON campaigns and works towards achieving UNISON's objectives
- xx. to ensure the proper management and direction of Branch Employed Staff

10.9 CONVENOR

10.9.1 Convenors will be responsible for leading the Branch Organising Committees and will therefore normally need to be employed in the lead employer covered by the Organising Committee.

10.9.3 The time off arrangements for each post holder will be those negotiated with the host employers. This will be based on full or part time secondment from their substantive post on their substantive salary.

10.9.4 The post will be elected for a term of two years.

10.9.5 Due to the nature of the role these office bearers are required to undertake it will be necessary to meet minimum criteria before an individual is eligible to be nominated, this criteria is outlined below:-

ESSENTIAL

- i. Must have a minimum of three years experience as a shop steward which must include representing members at disciplinary and grievance hearings.
- ii. Must be ERA Accredited
- iii. Must have an understanding of and be committed to the principles of Organising
- iv. Must have knowledge of UNISON, its policies and procedures and its structures.
- v. Must have experience of negotiations at Departmental, Directorate or Employer level.
- vi. Must be able to work as part of a team and have good writing and communication skills.

DESIRABLE (while not essential, it is desirable that in addition to the above nominees should have the following)

- i. A minimum of two years experience as a Senior Steward or other equivalent experience e.g. have a minimum of two years advocacy or representational skills developed through their occupation or other life experiences.

10.9.6 ROLE OF THE CONVENOR

- i. To provide leadership for the Organising Committee including the formation and delivery of campaigns, lead negotiations, identification and development of stewards,
- ii. To liaise with the Branch Secretary and Regional Organiser on a regular basis on issues affecting the terms and conditions of employment of members or industrial relations with employers.
- iii. To provide support with the Negotiating and Representational functions such as attending Directorate or Departmental level negotiations.
- iv. To assist the Branch Secretary with the Branch Annual Report for the Annual General Meeting and any special meetings that are called from time to time as delegated by the Branch Secretary.
- v. To deputise for the Branch Secretary at appropriate meetings and committees in his or her absence or in a negotiating or representational role as appropriate.
- vi. To assist with or lead negotiations with employers including drafting claims that affect Members' pay and their terms and conditions, disciplinary, grievance and other industrial relations procedures.
- vii. To be involved in consultations as a representative of the Branch.
- viii. To ensure that recruitment is a priority by providing leadership in this regard and ensuring that all Representatives act on their responsibility to recruit new members into the union.
- ix. To report to the branch secretary on a weekly basis on their activities and negotiations.
- x. Where necessary represent Members cases at disciplinaries, grievances, disputes, appeals and seeking where appropriate legal advice or opinion or representation as appropriate to ensure that cases are properly dealt with.
- xi. To attend and present written reports to the Branch Committee and on their negotiations and issues facing their sector of the Branch.
- xii. To make recommendations to the appropriate branch Committee in conjunction with the branch secretary on claims to be submitted by the Branch and responses to employer proposals or actions in relation to service conditions and industrial relations matters.
- xiii. To undertake all negotiations and consultations within the Branch policy.
- xiv. To act as a spokesperson when attending consultative committees and other relevant bodies.
- xv. To provide advice, support and mentor the Stewards in their duties.
- xvi. To assist with and participate in training of Stewards.
- xvii. To uphold the rules of UNISON at all times.
- xviii. To deputise for the Branch Secretary in his/her absence in respect of the Branch Secretary's role as the senior lay negotiator.

10.10 BRANCH TREASURER

10.10.1 TASKS RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF BRANCH TREASURER

- i. To conduct the Branch's financial business.
- ii. To keep accounts in accordance with the Rules.
- iii. To provide reports on the financial position of the Branch to the Branch Committee and sub committees as laid down in the constitution of the Branch.
- iv. To provide a detailed financial report for the Annual Branch Meeting(s).
- v. To advise the Branch Officers and Branch Committee in respect of matters relating to financial management and appropriate expenditure.
- vi. To provide an audited return of Branch income.
- vii. To authorise payment of expenses to members.

10.11 BRANCH EQUALITY OFFICER

- 10.11.1 The Branch Equality Officer has a number of important functions. It is not expected that the Office holder will be the font of all knowledge on every equality issue, nor carry sole responsibility for the Branch's equality work. Everyone shares responsibility for tackling

prejudice and discrimination and promoting equality. The role of the Branch Equality Officer is to co-ordinate and monitor this shared responsibility.

10.11.1 **TASKS RELATING TO THE ROLE OF BRANCH EQUALITIES OFFICER**

- i. To be the identified and well published point of contact in the Branch for equality issues.
- ii. To collect and share information on equalities issues, including information from the Regional and National Self-Organised groups.
- iii. To make sure other Branch Officers and the Branch Committee consider the equalities dimension of everything they do.
- iv. To make sure “Equal Opportunities” is being raised in all collective bargaining – not just in bargaining on ‘pure’ equalities issues.
- v. To encourage and support the development of Branch self-organised groups on behalf of the Branch Committee.
- vi. To have a co-ordinating role among the self-organised groups, and between the self-organised groups and the rest of the Branch.
- vii. To make sure new recruits know about UNISON’s commitment to equality and opportunities to participate in self-organisation.
- viii. To advise the Branch Officers and Branch Committee on the development and monitoring of the action plan to achieve proportionality and fair representation.
- ix. To co-ordinate the development and training of members from under-represented groups.
- x. To co-ordinate motions and support to delegates attending self-organised group conferences.

10.12 **BRANCH HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER**

10.12.1 **TASKS RELATING TO THE ROLE OF BRANCH HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER**

- i. To increase the awareness of members, Health and Safety Representatives and Branch Officers of Health and Safety issues.
- ii. To organise the information held by the Branch on Health and Safety.
- iii. To co-ordinate the activity of Health and Safety Representatives and to organise regular meetings of Health and Safety Representatives to exchange information and consider priorities.
- iv. To be closely involved in all negotiations to exchange information and consider priorities.
- v. To be closely involved in all negotiations with the Employer on matters related to Health and Safety.
- vi. To advise the Branch Committee on Health and Safety issues arising in the Branch and to recommend policies and priorities and to report on a regular basis.
- vii. To act as a link between the Health and Safety Representatives and other Branch Representatives to ensure that Health and Safety issues are treated as an integral part of the work of the Branch.
- viii. To maintain contact with the Region and Regional Service Groups, for example via the Regional Health and Safety Committee.

10.13 **BRANCH AUDITOR**

10.12.1 The role of the Auditor is to act on behalf of the Branch’s members to ensure probity and that all branch expenditure is underpinned by democratic decisions made in accordance with UNISON rule. A candidate for the post of Auditor cannot be a member of the Branch Committee.

10.13.2 **TASKS RELATING TO THE POST OF AUDITOR**

- i. To oversee the financial records of the Branch
- ii. To undertake an annual audit of the Branch financial records
- iii. To provide a written report of the annual audit to the Annual General Meeting
- iv. To report any financial irregularities to UNISON’s internal audit department.

10.14 BRANCH EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR

10.14.1 TASKS RELATING TO THE POST OF BRANCH EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR

- i. To make sure all new Representatives receive initial information and guidance about their duties, e.g. Stewards Handbook, Rulebook, Service Conditions agreements etc.
- ii. To publicise the range of educational and training opportunities available to members and activists.
- iii. To get untrained Representatives, Safety Representatives and other Branch Officers onto appropriate training courses.
- iv. To co-ordinate and support the work of Learning Representatives.
- v. To encourage Branch members and activists to make use of the UNISON Open College courses, especially 'Return to Learn' and 'Women, Work and Society'.
- vi. To maintain contact with the Regional Education Officer/Regional Education Committee
- vii. To establish a plan of training for activists and to produce an annual budget to meet the costs.
- viii. To ensure that training costs are contained within the agreed budget.
- ix. To keep records of what training has been undertaken and by whom within the Branch.
- x. To make sure that activists get paid time off for training where appropriate

10.15 BRANCH LIFELONG LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR

10.15.1 A Branch with a number of Learning Representatives working as a team, led by a co-ordinator, can ensure that Learning Representatives are accountable and involved in the Branch; that learning is high on the Branch's Agenda and linked into its organising, bargaining and equalities work; and can provide a clear progression route for learning Representatives who want to become more involved in other aspects of Branch activity.

10.15.2 TASKS RELATING TO THE POST OF BRANCH LIFELONG LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR

- i. To work closely with the Branch Education Co-ordinator (the same person may take on both roles).
- ii. To co-ordinate the activity of Learning Representatives in the Branch Education Team.
- iii. To work with Colleagues to recruit new Learning Representatives.
- iv. To be closely involved in negotiating around learning with the Employer.
- v. To co-ordinate and disseminate information on learning opportunities in the Branch.
- vi. To ensure that the work of Learning Representatives is fully integrated into the Branch.

10.16 BRANCH COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

10.16.1 TASKS RELATING TO THE POST OF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

- i. To explain UNISON's policies and to provide the information members need to play an active role in their Union.
- ii. To assist with efforts to recruit new members.
- iii. To help support UNISON's National and Regional campaigns.
- iv. To help create a positive image for the Branch among members, potential members and the public.
- v. To lead on the development of electronic communication with members – email, web etc.
- vi. To ensure Branch communications are in the accessible formats members need – audit for any particular requirements such as large print/Braille etc.
- vii. To ensure that Nationally and Regionally produced publicity and campaign materials are distributed, as appropriate, to Stewards and onward to members and non-members.
- viii. To help ensure that the Branch makes effective contact with the media whenever necessary by:

- a) Creating and maintaining mailing lists of media outlets and contacts
- b) Writing press releases
- c) Ensuring that appropriate individuals within the Branch are available for comments, interviews, etc

NB *In all circumstances no comment or release should be given to the media purporting to be the views of the Branch or UNISON without the prior express approval of the Branch Secretary or, in the absence of the Branch Secretary, the Branch Chair. Newsletters, flyers, electronic communication should similarly be approved by the Branch Secretary or in his or her absence the Branch Chair.*

10.17 BRANCH SPORTS & SOCIAL SECRETARY

10.17.1 TASKS RELATING TO THE POST OF SPORTS & SOCIAL SECRETARY

- i. To oversee and co-ordinate Branch Sports & Social activities.
- ii. To develop, in conjunction with the Branch Committee and appropriate Sub-Committee's a range of social and sporting opportunities and activities for members of the Branch and their families.
- iii. To work within the Sports & Social Budget

10.18 BRANCH WELFARE OFFICER

10.18.1 TASKS RELATING TO THE POST OF BRANCH WELFARE OFFICER

- i. To ensure that Branch Officers, Representatives, and members and also employers, have regular up-to-date-information about UNISON Welfare and its range of services.
- ii. To ensure that members seeking welfare assistance receive a prompt, supportive and effective response
- iii. To liaise and co-ordinate with Regional and National levels to ensure that UNISON Welfare support is provided effectively
- iv. To undertake training and seek advice from UNISON Welfare where necessary
- v. To develop and implement local welfare activity
- vi. To develop links with local charities and sources of support such as Citizens Advice Bureau and women's refuges.

10.19 BRANCH YOUNG MEMBERS OFFICER

10.19.1 The role of the Branch Young members' Officer is ideal for someone who is interested in becoming more active in the union. The post may be a stepping-stone to becoming a Representative or taking on wider roles.

10.19.2 TASKS RELATING TO THE POST OF YOUNG MEMBERS' OFFICER:

- i. To recruit new members and to encourage existing young members to become active in the Branch.
- ii. To make sure issues of concern to young workers are raised by the Branch.
- iii. To act as a focal point for all young workers in the Branch and workplaces.
- iv. To receive and distribute UNISON Young Members information.
- v. To encourage involvement in UNISON young members campaigns.
- vi. To build Branch young members organisation and to ensure there are potential new young members' officers in the future.

NB *Other branch officers will also assist in these tasks and the Branch Young Members' Officer must be under 27 years of age for the whole of their term of office.*

10.20 BRANCH MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

10.20.1 TASKS RELATING TO THE POST OF BRANCH MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

- i. To map the Branch's membership in order to identify membership density and Representative coverage.
- ii. To convene and attend meetings of the Branch Recruitment and Retention working party.
- iii. To monitor the Branch's recruitment, and also leavers rate.
- iv. To work with the Branch Committee to develop and implement its organisation and development plan.
- v. To make recommendations to the Branch Committee on recruitment activities, targets, resources, budgets etc.
- vi. To implement, monitor, evaluate and report progress on the branch recruitment and retention strategy.

10.21 BRANCH INTERNATIONAL OFFICER

10.21.1 TASKS RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL OFFICER

- i. To co-ordinate the Branch's work on international relations.
- ii. To ensure that Branch members are informed of National policy on international matters.
- iii. To received and distribute relevant information.
- iv. To encourage members to be aware of the importance of international solidarity issues within the context of the overall work of the Union.
- v. To liase where appropriate with Regional international structures and to ensure that the views of the Branch on international activities are reported appropriately.
- vi. To liase with other Branch Officers concerning publicity and education on international issues.
- vii. To liase with the solidarity organisations and campaigns that UNISON is affiliated to.
- viii. To encourage members of the Branch to take action and participate in international solidarity activities organised Nationally or Regionally.
- ix. To ensure that information on Branch activity is shared at Regional and National level.
- x. To seek to develop an international perspective among members, Representatives and Branch Officers.

10.22 BRANCH LABOUR LINK OFFICER

- 10.22.1 The Labour Link Officer is elected and accountable to the Labour Link section within the Branch and must be an individual member of the Labour Party – this is because the post holder should work to take UNISON policy forward in the labour party, often being a delegate to the general committee of the party and encouraging joint work and campaigning with the local constituency Labour Party's (CLP's)
- 10.22.2 The Branch UNISON Labour Link Officer is the key contact point for information about Regional and National UNISON Labour Link matters and is responsible for co-ordinating our activities in the Branch. They also represent the interests of Labour Link levy payers on the UNISON Branch Committee.
- 10.22.3 The Labour Link Officer will receive support, training and advice on their role and responsibilities from their Regional Political Officer.
- 10.22.4 **ROLE OF THE BRANCH LABOUR LINK OFFICER**
- i. To explain and develop the role of the UNISON Labour Link within the Branch and ensure that correct procedures are followed regarding the rights of Labour Link levy payers.

- ii. To receive correspondence and information on Labour Link matters from National and Regional levels and from the Labour Party.
- iii. To circulate information to Labour Link members in the Branch and convene meetings of members as necessary.
- iv. To attend the UNISON Branch Committee and agree appropriate means of promoting UNISON policy in the labour party.
- v. To carry UNISON's policies into the Labour Party and actively campaign for it's introduction as party policy.
- vi. To organise elections for Branch UNISON Labour Link representation within the Regional Labour Link as necessary and ensure reports are made by Branch delegates on their activities on behalf of members.
- vii. To liase with the Labour Link Regional Political Officer.
- viii. To promote political education and policy discussions.
- ix. To strengthen links with local Labour Parties by affiliating to constituencies and arranging for the election of delegates to attend meetings.
- x. To communicate with Labour Party members within the Branch and encourage individual membership of the Labour Party.
- xi. To build campaigning work around key issues and co-ordinate campaigns with the Labour Party in council, Westminster, European and other elections to public office.

10.23 BRANCH RETIRED MEMBERS' SECRETARY

10.23.1 THE ROLE OF THE RETIRED MEMBERS' SECRETARY (RULE D6.2, UNISON.ORG/ACROBAT/15817.PDF)

- i. To enable Retired Members of the Branch to continue to be active in the union through the Branch's Retired Members' section.
- ii. To ensure that those members approaching retirement have the opportunity to become Retired Members.
- iii. To organise meetings of the Branch Retired Members.
- iv. To encourage the participation of Retired Members in Branch activities as appropriate.
- v. To establish links with other retirement organisations in the area.
- vi. To attend meetings of the Branch Committee (rule D6.3 unison.org.uk/acrobat/15817.pdf).
- vii. To submit a budget to the Branch Committee to fund Retired Members activities.
- viii. To ensure that the Retired members' section functions in accordance with UNISON Rule and any Branch standing orders and procedures.

10.22.2 To be a Branch Retired Members Secretary, you must be eligible for Retired membership under Rule C2.6.1 unison.org.uk/acrobat/15817.pdf.

10.24 LEAD SHOP STEWARD

10.24.1 THE ROLE OF THE LEAD SHOP STEWARD

- i. To assist the Branch Secretary in their role.
- ii. To attend meetings as laid down in the Branch Constitution.
- iii. To recruit new members, Learner Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives and Representatives. To undertake casework and cover for Representatives in their absence.
- iv. To convene regular meetings of the appropriate Sector Committee and provide written minutes of such committee's.
- v. To co-ordinate the work of the Representatives in their area.
- vi. To undertake other duties as laid down in the function of the Steward.
- vii. To ensure that Management within the Sector/Directorate comply with National and Local Agreements.

- viii. Assist and liaise with the Lead Negotiators and undertake the lead on issues of consultation between the Directorate and the Union.
- ix. To undertake a lead role within the Directorate to ensure that new members are recruited and that membership is retained in line with the Branch and National Policies and to undertake such tasks in conjunction with the Branch Membership Officer.
- x. To convene regular meetings of members where appropriate.

10.25 SHOP STEWARD

10.25.1 THE ROLE OF THE SHOP STEWARD

- i. To recruit new members.
- ii. To represent their members interests.
- iii. To keep their members informed and consult regularly with them.
- iv. To undertake casework and cover for Lead Stewards in their absence.
- v. To attend meetings as laid down in the Branch Constitution.

10.25.2 THE FUNCTION OF THE SHOP STEWARD

10.25.3 The role of the Steward in UNISON is vital to the success of UNISON. Stewards can expect support and assistance to carry out their duties effectively.

A UNISON Steward should seek to:

- i. be the first line of general service to members
- ii. play a key role in informing members
- iii. motivate members
- iv. recruit new members
- v. represent members with the employer
- vi. represent members within the sector committee
- vii. be answerable to the members they represent.
- viii. keep their members informed and consult regularly with them.
- ix. undertake case work and cover for Lead Stewards in their absence.
- x. attend meetings as laid down in the Branch Constitution.

10.25.4 In order to achieve the above a UNISON Steward should aim to:

- i. respond to queries from members within a reasonable time
- ii. meet regularly with the members they represent
- iii. distribute written information promptly
- iv. listen to members' views and ensure they receive an appropriate confidential and sympathetic response
- v. take part in Organising Committee meetings and other appropriate Branch meetings
- vi. meet with managers to represent members both individually and collectively
- vii. involve members identifying and achieving solutions to problems
- viii. explain and justify their activities on behalf of the membership in an appropriate fashion
- ix. uphold the policies and practices of UNISON

10.25.5 UNISON recognises that it requires a great deal of those who are prepared to be representatives. In return representatives have rights, in addition to those of members, to ensure that they are able, and continue to be willing to undertake the task.

10.25.6 A UNISON Steward has the right to:

- i. assistance, encouragement and support from the branch and paid officials to enable the representative to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- ii. support, encouragement and respect from branch officers, other representatives, members and paid officials.
- iii. clear advice from branch officers and paid officials – quickly and understandably.
- iv. regular, clear information from UNISON nationally and regionally, including a weekly representative, bulletin and copies of relevant UNISON publications as they become available.
- v. a prompt response to queries, appropriate to the severity of the problem. From branch and paid officials.
- vi. practical support in obtaining time off for trade union duties.
- vii. share the load with colleagues, with practical assistance and support from branch and paid officials.
- viii. participate in the wider activities of the union through local, regional and national structures.
- ix. proper notification and explanation of the activities of the wider union.
- x. education and training activities to aid personal development, enhance skills and build confidence. these should be organised by UNISON locally, regionally and nationally at times and venues appropriate to individual circumstances.
- xi. access to TUC training activities.
- xii. clear information about, and prompt reimbursement of expenses incurred while fulfilling their role as a representative.
- xiii. consideration and support of individual needs in respect of domestic and caring responsibilities and work commitments.
- xiv. access to a range of administrative services and support to enable stewards to fulfil their role.

10.26 WORKPLACE CONTACTS

10.26.1 Members who might not be willing to take on the full role of Steward can play a vital role in ensuring that UNISON has a presence in every workplace. Not an elected position, it can also prove a useful way for a member to gain experience or build confidence before making a further commitment.

10.26.1 Tasks relating to the post of Workplace Contact (see also workplace representatives leaflet unison.org.uk/acrobat/14735.pdf. stock number 2233):

- i. to be a point of contact between members and the Branch.
- ii. to refer new members to the appropriate Branch Officer or Steward.
- iii. to give support to members at work by advising them where to seek assistance.
- iv. To recruit new members
- v. to keep notice boards up to date.
- vi. to distribute information sent by the Branch for members.

10.27 LEARNING REPRESENTATIVES

10.27.1 Learning Representatives (see the Learning Representatives Handbook, stock number 23450 are selected by Branches and are volunteers who are willing to encourage and support other colleagues with “learning” in the workplace. The Branch is responsible for ratifying their appointment and issuing credentials. Their work should be supported by the Branch Education Co-ordinator and the Branch Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator. Learning Representatives are accountable to the Branch and branches should ensure that there are means by which Learning Representatives can report on activity and participate in the development of the Branch through an education network led by the Branch Education and Lifelong Learning Co-ordinators.

10.27.2 TASKS RELATING TO THE ROLE OF LEARNING REPRESENTATIVE:

- i. to raise awareness of lifelong learning issues in the workplace.
- ii. to offer support and encouragement to learners.
- iii. to encourage learners to get involved in the Branch.
- iv. to work with the Branch to promote workplace learning with Employers.
- v. To signpost prospective learners to appropriate training.

10.28 SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

10.28.1 The Branch has the right to appoint safety representatives under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1997 (SRSC Regulations). These regulations give safety representatives the right to carry out a number of specific functions the employer legal responsibilities to consult with Health and Safety representatives and provide facilities have been extended by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

10.28.2 The Branch should ensure that:

- i. enough Health and Safety representatives are appointed to effectively represent and protect member's interest in all workplaces. The numbers appointed should be determined by: the size of the workforce and the workplace; whether there are different sites; members on different shifts or work rotas; the variety of different occupations; and the type and risks of work activity,
- ii. all members are represented on union and joint management (Union Health and Safety committees in the workplace,
- iii. safety representatives are elected annually for each work group or workplace, by members in that work group or workplace,
- iv. the election of each safety representative must be reported to the Annual Branch meeting for ratification and the issue of credentials,
- v. employers are notified in writing of the names of elected safety representatives, as required by SRSC regulations. Branches must keep up to date records of safety representatives and stewards with a Health and safety role.

2.28.3 THE ROLE OF A SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

The role of a safety representative may be fulfilled in one of two ways:

- i. by Representatives acting in a dual capacity,
- ii. by members who may have a particular interest in Health and Safety.

Each option is equally acceptable. However the Branch should ensure that all members and Representatives are aware of the arrangements that apply to them.

The Branch should also make sure that the following arrangements are taken into account in order to provide safety representatives with the support they require.

Where safety representatives are not also Representatives, Branches should ensure that those safety representatives are:

- i. accountable within Branch arrangements: they should have the same status as Stewards and have access, as appropriate to any branch committees,
- ii. given access to local negotiations so that the Health and Safety implications of any decision are properly considered at an early stage,
- iii. given particular training in dealing with management and members, such as the investigation of problems and negotiating skills,
- iv. valued equally with Representatives and other activists within the Branch,
- v. encouraged to work with Representatives, Branch Officers, activists and members.

If Stewards carry out the functions of safety representatives the Branch should ensure that:

- i. there is sufficient number of Representatives for each work group or workplace,
- ii. the employers are notified, in writing, that the Representative is also a UNISON safety representative,
- iii. such Representatives receive training, information and support provided from safety representatives.

SECTION 11

11. BRANCH COMMITTEE

11.1 The Branch Committee will comprise of the following:

- i. All Branch Officers, Branch Convenors and Stewards elected from the Organising committees (weighting to be agreed).
- ii. The Retired Members Secretary, who shall have the right to speak and vote on all issues, other than those connected to the pay and/or conditions of employment of those members in employment.
- iii. Two representative elected from each of the Branch self organised groups as follows:
 - a) Black Members
 - b) Disabled Members
 - c) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Members
 - d) Women Members
 - e) Young Members

In addition the following shall have the right to attend and speak but not to vote:- but are not members of the Branch Committee.

- i. The Branch Auditors.
- ii. The appropriate Regional and/or National Official(s) who have responsibility for the Branch or Sections of the Branch.
- iii. The membership as it stands at the end of December each year shall be the membership figure used to determine the number of representatives who shall sit on the Branch Committee from any occupational group, area or section for the following calendar year.

11.1.1 The quorum for any meeting of the Branch Committee shall be 1/3 of those entitled to attend.

11.1.2 The Branch Secretary shall notify the Branch Committee members of the date, time and agenda together with details of business no later than five working days prior to any meeting.

11.1.3 Branch Officers shall give a brief update, either verbally or in writing, in respect of the area(s) of responsibility at each meeting, in the event that they are unable to attend a written report should be submitted.

11.1.4 The Branch Committee shall set a programme of at least, six weekly committee meetings for the full year at the first meeting following the AGM and the Branch Secretary shall notify all Committee members as soon as practicably possible thereafter.

11.1.5 A special Branch Committee can be called provided at least 10 members of the Branch Committee agree to call a meeting and provided the matter to be determined upon is of a genuine emergency nature and cannot be left until the next scheduled Branch Committee or Branch Management Committee and could not have been dealt with at an earlier meeting.

11.1.6 In the event that a special Branch Committee meeting has to be called to deal with such emergency matters the Branch Secretary shall ensure that all Committee members are notified of the date time and venue at least *two* full working days prior to such a meeting and shall provide details of the business to be conducted.

11.2 BRANCH COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

- 11.1 The Branch Committee shall ensure that the Officers of the Branch properly exercise their functions. The Branch Committee may form, from among their number, sub-committees of the Branch Committee to deal with specific issues, e.g. finance or welfare. Such sub-committees shall report to the Branch Committee and shall only be given delegated responsibility to decide on an issue on the specific approval of the Branch Committee, on an issue-by-issue basis.
- 11.2.1 The Branch Committee shall ensure that an accurate record of Branch members is maintained based on the home address, the occupation and workplace address of each member. The Branch Committee shall also supervise any elections conducted for positions within the Branch.
- 11.2.2 The Branch Committee shall also consider and deal with all other matters affecting the interests of members of the Branch, whether raised by the Branch Officers, Representatives or Health and Safety Representatives or arising out of communication from national or Regional Office or the Regional Council or Committee or otherwise.
- 11.2.3 The Branch Committee shall publish through the Branch Secretary a newsletter, at least once every four months, and distribute it to all members of the Branch in hard copy or a combination of both hard copy and electronic data transfer, or any other format for a member with a disability at their request.
- 11.2.4 The Branch Committee shall ensure that all such publications and any other material or press release or media statements made on behalf of or published or distributed by or on behalf of the Branch shall comply with the rules, aims, objectives, values and policies of UNISON and shall be in accordance with any guidance provided by the Union either Nationally or Regionally,.
- 11.2.5 The Branch Committee shall have authority to give consideration to donations and/or affiliations to other organisations within the wider Labour and Trade Union movement, provided that any donation or affiliation is in accordance with UNISON's aims, objectives, values and policy and is within UNISON rules.
- 11.2.6 The Branch Committee shall ensure that all campaigns and requests for support whether from sources external to the Branch or not are only supported where they are in accord with UNISON aims, objectives, values and policy and that such support complies with the rules of the Union.
- 11.2.7 The Branch Committee shall elect from among its number, delegates to the Regional Council and nominees for the Regional Committee, on the basis of proportionality and fair representation.
- 11.2.8 The Branch Committee shall encourage the development of self-organised groups and the participation of members in the affairs of the Branch and the Union, in accordance with National Rules and Guidance.
- 11.2.9 The Branch Committee shall ensure that all meetings are conducted in accordance with the Code of Members behaviour.
- 11.2.10 The Branch Committee shall encourage and support sports and social events and activities and encourage the participation of members, and where appropriate their partner/family, in these events and activities, subject to the funds being available.
- 11.2.11 The Branch Committee shall also agree arrangements to elect substitutes to cover any vacancies arising in delegations where the elected delegate is subsequently unable to attend.

- 11.2.12 The Branch Committee shall consider issues relating to the wider issues of the membership pay and terms and conditions of employment and the Industrial Relations with the Employer(s) covered by the Branch, and shall discuss motions, put to the Committee by its members, on these issues. Issues of Pay and Conditions of service should be discussed with the relevant Organising Committee except in relation to requests for steps to be taken to seek Industrial Action.
- 11.2.13 The Branch Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the Training and Education requirements of Branch Officers, Representatives and members are met, as appropriate.
- 11.2.14 The Branch Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the filling of casual vacancies arising on the Committee during the course of the year and determining the time of such.

11.3 Branch Sub Committees

- i. Staffing Committee
- ii. Finance and General Purpose Committee
- iii. Disciplinary Committee

11.3.1 The UNISON Rule Book states that the branch committee should:

“consist of one or more Representatives from each work group as the Branch meeting may approve, considering the size of the membership in that work group’ as well as, ‘ such representatives of self organised groups as the branch may determine’ together with branch officers”.

11.4 TIMING AND VENUE OF MEETINGS

- 11.4.1 The Branch will give serious consideration to the timing and venue of meetings, to ensure maximum participation. As far as possible meetings should be held in work time, with Representatives and Branch Officers securing paid time off to attend. However, one Representatives working day will be another’s off duty, and to ensure that all members of the committee have opportunity to take part on a regular basis; it is very likely that meeting times will vary.
- 11.4.2 For this reason, it is essential that all Representatives receive proper notice of meetings in order that they make appropriate arrangements to attend. As far as possible, meeting dates, time and venues, should be agreed for a year at a time, advertised to all committee members and notified to management.

11.5 PROCEDURES FOR MEETINGS: BRANCH COMMITTEE

- 11.5.1 The quorum for meetings of the Branch Committee shall be 1/3 of those entitled to attend, providing that the attendance broadly reflects the requirements of proportionality and fair representation within the branch.
- 11.5.2 Branch Officers, Convenors, Stewards elected from the Organising Committees and representatives of self-organised groups will have the right to speak and vote at the Branch Committee.
- 11.5.3 The Retired Member’s Secretary will have the right to speak and to vote on any issue or matter other than those that concern the pay and conditions of work of members of the union in employment.
- 11.5.4 Where possible, agreement should be reached by consensus; otherwise decisions will be made by a show of hands with a simple majority of those voting.

- 11.5.5 All meetings will have minutes taken and the minutes published at the earliest practicable opportunity thereafter.
- 11.5.6 The paid official responsible for the Branch should be encouraged to attend meetings of the Branch Committee regularly and should have the right to speak but not to vote.
- 11.5.7 Meeting agenda should be designed to place members' concerns and interests as the first priority.

SECTION 12

12. BRANCH, WORK AND MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

12.1 Meetings of members are central to the democratic process of a trade union. They should provide opportunities for members to come together to receive and share information, to express their views and to influence the development of the organisation.

12.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

12.2.1 UNISON members have the right to two key opportunities for participatory democracy: work group meetings and branch meetings. Branches have the responsibility to ensure that all members are able to exercise this right and that by so doing is a positive experience.

12.2.2 All meetings should be informal with members being encouraged to take an active part in discussion.

12.2.3 Efforts should be made to ensure that discussion and debate takes place in an atmosphere that is not aggressive or overly procedural. Standing orders should be used to aid the organisation, not as a tool to exclude or patronise those with less traditional experience.

12.2.4 Meetings, where possible, should be held in pleasant surroundings which:

- i. provide access for people with disabilities,
- ii. Are in areas that are well-lit and supplied by acceptable levels of public transport,
- iii. take proper account of members' views particularly if held on premises where alcohol is being consumed.

12.3 CONSTITUENCY/ WORK GROUP MEETINGS

12.3.1 Branches are expected to ensure that a range of regular membership meetings takes place to provide all members with the opportunity to take part in the activities of the union.

12.3.2 The essential basis of membership meetings will be the work group or Representatives constituency meeting, based on occupational groups, workplaces and/or geographical areas (that is, members employed in the same, or broadly similar, jobs in one or more workplace). These will be the most effective means of providing easy access to the union in a relevant and meaningful way.

12.3.3 The Branch and its membership together should strive to achieve a representative in each work group/ constituency.

12.4 PROCEDURES

12.4.1 The following should apply to all work group meetings.

- i. all members should have the opportunity to attend a bi-monthly meeting with their Representative(s) and work group,
- ii. dates, times and venues for work group meetings should be agreed by the Organising Committee in advance, and should be subject to as little alteration as possible,
- iii. The Branch Secretary, Convenors and Senior Stewards are entitled to attend.
- iv. other Branch Committee members are entitled to attend by invitation,
- v. the paid official responsible for the branch is also entitled to attend,
- vi. where possible, agreement should be reached by consensus; otherwise decisions will be made by a show of hands with a simple majority of those voting.

12.5 SECTORAL, SECTIONAL, OCCUPATIONAL AND ISSUE BASED MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

12.5.1 It is probable that sectoral, sectional, occupational or issue-based membership meetings will be appropriate on either an ad hoc or regular basis. Any or all of the following may be relevant and issues for consideration.

- i. Meetings of members employed in the same or broadly similar, occupations across the Branch,
- ii. Meetings of members within one workplace, department or group of workplaces
- iii. Meetings of members within a specific geographic area.

12.5.2 The terms of reference and procedures for sectoral, sectional, occupational and issue-based membership meetings shall be determined by the branch committee, and will be dependent on the nature and frequency of the meetings. However, the general principles of openness, participation and accountability should apply.

12.6 BRANCH MEETINGS AND AGGREGATE BRANCH MEETINGS

12.6.1 The UNISON Rule Book requires that meetings of the membership shall be held at least once annually.

12.6.2 The Branch may, if it wishes, hold more regular branch meetings. However, it should consider carefully whether this is the most effective means of encouraging membership participation and involvement.

12.6.3 The Branch has the facility to organise Branch meetings as 'aggregate' membership meetings if it so wishes. These would be a series of meetings at different times and in different areas to suit the size, geographic spread and occupational composition of the Branch, the decisions of which are then combined or aggregated to determine Branch policy and decision making.

12.6.4 It is essential that branch decision-making procedures are clear, easily understood and not open to manipulation. This is particularly true if aggregated meetings are held.

12.7 BRANCH MEETING PROCEDURE

12.7.1 The following sets out the basic framework within which branch meetings should be organised.

- i. all members should receive proper notice of the meeting;
- ii. all members are entitled to attend Branch meetings and have the right to speak and vote;
- iii. all members are entitled to submit motions through the appropriate branch body and if the motion gains majority support in that branch body these shall be submitted for consideration by the Branch meeting, (see section 13.11 on policy and decision making);
- iv. the quorum shall be 150 members or 5% of the full membership whichever figure is lower.
- v. all votes will be taken by a show of hands, unless otherwise determined;
- vi. all decisions will be reached by a simple majority of the votes cast, unless specified otherwise in these rules;
- vii. motions and issues for branch-wide discussion should be available to members not later than one week before the meeting;
- viii. Branch officers are encouraged to attend;

- ix. the employed official responsible for the Branch should also be encouraged to attend;

12.8 AGGREGATE BRANCH MEETING PROCEDURE

12.8.1 If aggregated Branch meetings are held, it will be necessary to ensure the following.

- i. all members shall receive proper notice of forthcoming aggregate meetings, and shall be invited to submit motions for discussion, (in line with the process outline below at 13.11)
- ii. all members shall be entitled to attend one aggregate meeting of their choice, in the cycle of aggregate meetings
- iii. where the branch organises a number of meetings and wishes to aggregate the decisions of these meetings then those meetings shall be regarded as the cycle of aggregate meetings i.e. a number of meetings held with the same agenda and reports and items of business, at different times dates and locations with the decisions and votes of these individual meetings in any one cycle aggregated together into one,
- iv. the quorum for aggregate meetings in any one cycle of such meetings should be no less than 150 members or 5% of the full membership whichever figure is the lower.
- v. all decisions will be reached by a simple majority of the combined votes taken at all aggregate meetings in the cycle,
- vi. the deadline for submission of motions at an aggregate meeting will be no less than 6 weeks prior to the first aggregate meeting in that cycle,
- vii. a preliminary agenda will be circulated, giving members an opportunity to submit amendments to published motions,
- viii. amendments to motions and issues for branch-wide discussion should be submitted to the Branch Secretary not less than 7 days before the first aggregate meeting,
- ix. in order to ensure continuity, branch officers should attend each aggregate meeting,
- x. all members shall have the right to speak and vote but only at one aggregate meeting,
- xi. Branch officers and proposers and seconders of motions or amendments to motions have the right to vote at only one aggregate meeting, but branch officers have the right to speak at all aggregate meetings and proposers and seconders of motions or amendments to motions have the right to speak to their motion or amendment at all meetings,
- xii. decisions reached following aggregate meetings will be made available to all members within two weeks of the last meeting,
- xiii. the employed official responsible for the branch should be encouraged to attend all aggregate meetings.

12.9 BRANCH MEETING AGENDA

12.9.1 The Branch Secretary will establish its own standing orders and agendas for meetings. These will be built around placing members' concerns and interests at the top of the agenda, rather than at the end as 'any other business if we have time'.

12.10 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

12.10.1 In addition to the above, the agenda for the annual general meeting will include:

- i. confirmation of election of Branch Officers for the coming year, including any job share arrangements,
- ii. confirmation of election Branch Representatives to other levels of the union and to external bodies,
- iii. reports from the Branch Committee incorporating the work of the other Branch Committees and Sub Committees.

12.10.2 SPECIAL BRANCH MEETINGS

- 12.10.3 Special meetings may be held when called by the Branch Committee, or at the request of 150 full members or 5% of the full membership whichever figure is the lowest. The issue for consideration must be clearly specified when the meeting is called for.
- 12.10.4 Special meetings are subject to the same procedures as the Annual Branch meeting(s). Members will be informed of the subject(s) for discussion when notified of the meeting arrangements.

12.11 POLICY AND DECISION MAKING

- 12.11.1 Members have the right to an input into the policy-making processes of the branch. Members may submit motions to their appropriate Constituency or Work group meeting for consideration. The motion must be circulated around all constituency or work group members together with the date, time and place of the constituency/ work group meeting at least two days prior to the meeting. Members should be allowed the opportunity to discuss and if they wish amend the motion from the floor at the meeting provided proper notice of the meeting as outlined has been given.
- 12 11 2 If the motion gains the support of a majority of the members present at the meeting it shall then be forwarded onto the Branch Secretary together with details of the date of the meeting, the members present at the meeting and the numbers voting for and against the motion. The Branch Secretary who will refer it to the appropriate Committee or sub committee dependant on the subject matter. The representative will be expected to represent the views of the work group on the motion before any committee.
- 12.11.3 This will mean that a motion on an issue of members terms and conditions of employment should be referred to the Sector Committee and then if appropriate and supported by a majority onto the appropriate Branch Committee. If the motion concerns for example the Branch Finances it would be referred to that committee etc.
- 12.11.4 Where the motion is intended for the Branch AGM or another General meeting of the Branch it must be submitted within the appropriate timescales and the constituency or workgroup may choose, from among their number, the person who shall move the motion on their behalf at the Branch meeting.
- 12.11.5 The Branch Committee shall also have the right to send motions or amendments to the AGM or General meetings of the branch and other committees of the branch shall also have the right to send motions to the Branch Committee for consideration, if the Branch agrees any such motion will then be submitted in their name to the AGM or General Meeting.
- 12.11.6 This process is designed to ensure that the policy and decision making within the branch is representative and maximises participation of the membership in this process.

- 12.11.7 Work groups will also have the right, and responsibility, to raise concerns, issues and problems relating to the group. The Representative should then raise these concerns with the Lead Representative discuss how to progress the issues.
- 12.11.8 If the issues are likely to affect a wider or larger group of members than the constituency or group where they are raised the issues should be raised at the appropriate Organising Committee. It is essential; however, that there is proper communication with the branch secretary to ensure, as far as possible, that the concerns are dealt with appropriately and the outcome does not have a detrimental affect on other membership groups.

SECTION 13

13 THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCESS FOR THE POSTS OF LEAD STEWARD

- 13.1 Each person seeking nomination to the post of Lead Steward shall, in addition to meeting the criteria above, be required to be nominated by a minimum of 3 stewards or Branch Officers within their Organising Committee, alternatively, if the sector has less than 3 stewards in total, any nominee must have at least 1 nomination from a steward in their sector.
- 13.1.1 The Branch Secretary shall be responsible for validating the nominations and reporting the outcome to the Branch Committee. Where an individual who has been nominated but after the validation exercise does not appear to meet the minimum criteria for the role, they will be so informed and given a period of 5 days to provide further information or evidence to support their nomination.
- 13.1.2 The Branch Committee will then consider the validation report and any further evidence submitted from the individual(s) and determine whether or not the nomination are valid.
- 13.1.3 If after the nomination process is completed there is more than 1 validated nomination for a particular post, there will be an election by the stewards within the particular Organising Committee covered by the post.
- 13.1.4 The timing and process for any election(s) will be determined and overseen by the Branch Committee in line with the provisions of these rules and subject to the interim arrangements referred to below.

SECTION 14

14 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT LOCAL LEVEL

- 14.1 UNISON'S rule book (Rule J) sets out the basis of political organisation in UNISON. Branch Funds are general funds and as such cannot be spent on political activities.
- 14.1.1 If there is any doubt advice should be sought from the Regional Political Officer, who may instruct the branch as to the appropriate course of action.

SECTION 15

15 FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

15.1 TREASURER

- 15.1.1 The Branch shall appoint a Treasurer on an annual basis, to be responsible for the maintenance of the Branch Financial records and the control of ALL Branch Funds.
- 15.1.2 The Branch Treasurer shall provide for inspection a financial report at each Annual General Meeting and at any time as instructed by the Branch Committee.
- 15.1.3 The Branch Treasurer will also be responsible for advising the Branch Committee and Branch Officers in respect of matters relating to financial management and approximate expenditure.
- 15.1.4 The Branch will work with the new Regional Branch Financial Guidelines.

15.2 AUDITOR

- 15.2.1 The Branch will appoint at least one, preferably two, Auditor/s on an annual basis, to monitor the Branch Financial systems and validate Branch accounts, carrying out an audit of the Annual Accounts presented to each Annual General Meeting. If it is not possible to elect such an Auditor from the membership, the Branch may approach UNISON Auditors to perform this function.

15.3 BANK ACCOUNT/S

The Branch shall have **four** signatories to any Bank Account in which Branch Funds are kept, and each account will require two signatures to any cheque. The Branch Treasurer and Branch Secretary, Branch Chair will be three of the signatures.

15.4 AUTHORISING AND MONITORING EXPENDITURE

- 15.4.1 All expenditure from Branch funds will be approved by the Branch Finance Sub-Committee. A schedule of accounts to be paid will be presented to each meeting of the Branch Finance Sub-Committee for approval. An estimate of income and expenditure to date will be presented to each meeting of the Branch Finance Sub-Committee to inform Officers and budget holders of the budgetary position.
- 15.4.2 Should it be required, the Branch Finance Sub-Committee can ask for further information regarding expenditure, and in extreme circumstances refuse any expenditure if it is felt to be inappropriate or against Branch or National Rules.

15.5 REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

- 15.5.1 It is the intention of the Branch that no Branch representative be out of pocket as a result of their Union activity.
- 15.5.2 All representatives of the Branch incurring expenses as a result of legitimate Union activity are required to submit a monthly expenses claim for any legitimate expenses incurred whilst engaged on Union business.
- 15.5.3 Expense claims must be supported by receipts where necessary and failure to supply receipts may result in payment being withheld.
- 15.5.4 All expenses allowances will be paid on rates based on the UNISON Yorkshire and Humberside Region's Lay Members expenses scheme, which is updated periodically, and in some instances National UNISON rates will apply.

SECTION 16

16.1. HEALTH & SAFETY

16.1.1 Promoting health and safety at work is one of the functions of the branch.

16.1.2 Ensuring that employment does not cause death, injury or ill health is a trade union issue and not something which can be left to management, even though employers have clear duties set out in law.

16.2 BRANCH RESPONSIBILITIES

16.2.1 The Branch should ensure that:

- i. arrangements are made for Safety Representatives to meet together with the Branch Health and Safety Officer.
- ii. lines of communication exist between such meetings and other meetings within the Branch.
- iii. all Branch Officers and representatives are aware of the Health and Safety work of the Branch and issues of concern to members.
- iv. members can be kept informed.
- v. procedures are in place for raising issues with management and for involving Branch Health and Safety Officer in negotiations.
- vi. Safety Representatives are trained.
- vii. Branch resources are allocated to the Branch Health and Safety Officer and Safety Representatives.
- viii. Health and Safety is used to recruit members.
- ix. more members are encouraged to take on active roles in Health and Safety.

16.3 BRANCH HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER

16.3.1 The UNISON Rule Book establishes the post of Branch Health and Safety Officer. The job description for this Officer is contained in Section 10: Branch Officers.

