

# UNISON ABERDEEN CITY BRANCH

## BRANCH RULES

### 1. Branch Name

The branch shall be called UNISON Aberdeen City Branch herein after referred to as “The Branch”.

### 2. Relationship to National Organisation

- (a) Branch rules shall be in accordance with National Rules and decisions of the National Delegate Conference and the NEC
- (b) Any member may have a copy of the National and Branch Rules
- (c) The Branch shall make an audited annual return of branch income, expenditure, assets and liabilities as prescribed by the NEC and in accordance with National Rules.

### 3. Aims and Objectives of the Branch

- (a) The aims of the branch shall be in accordance with the aims and values of UNISON as set out in the rulebook.
- (b) The objectives of the branch shall be:
  - i) To organise all public sector workers within Local Government, the Community and Voluntary Sector, FE Colleges, Housing Associations and appropriate employers with workplaces In Aberdeen and to engage in bona fide trade union activities on their behalf.
  - ii) To advance and protect the interests of its members
  - iii) To make representations to the Scottish Regional Council, Scottish Committees and the Scottish Local Government Committee on matters relevant to the membership.
  - iv) To submit motions through appropriate UNISON structures
  - v) To observe the principles of proportionality and fair representation and to comply with the guidelines as directed by the National Executive Council (NEC).
  - vi) To actively ensure that all members irrespective of personal commitments, sex, age, disability, sexuality and ethnicity can participate in the life of the Branch.
  - vii) To encourage the development of self-organised groups.
  - viii) To promote Lifelong Learning and encourage the participation of Life Long Learning Advisors

#### **4. Membership**

- (a) Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the rules of the union.
- (b) Membership takes effect from the date at which completed forms are received by the branch or at Regional/National level and the first contribution is made.
- (c) A meeting of the Branch or Branch Committee may decide not to support a membership application but a decision must be consistent with the Rules and with Statute. Such a decision must be explained to the individual in writing, together with their rights of appeal.
- (d) Potential members who wish to join because of an existing problem shall only receive advice and representation from within the branch. It will be explained to them that they have no entitlement to legal advice and representation until they have thirteen weeks continuous membership as per National Rules.
- (e) All members must comply with the rules.
- (f) The NEC may terminate an individual's membership in accordance with the rules.

#### **5. Branch Structure**

There shall be four formal elements to the Branch Structure:

- (a) Stewards Committees
- (b) Branch Committee
- (c) Annual/Special General Meetings

#### **6. Stewards Constituencies/Stewards Committees**

- (a) The Branch shall develop a constituency approach to workplace organisation in line with the recommendations of the Code of Good Branch Practice. The scheme of representation and the designation of constituencies (taking into account shift working) shall be in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Branch Committee. The aims of the scheme are to have:
  - i) one steward for each workplace or department
  - ii) one steward for each occupational group within any workplace or department
  - iii) at least one steward for each voluntary, community and/or private sector employer
- (b) Workplace or occupational stewards are to be nominated by those members within a particular workplace or occupational group
- (c) In the event of more than one nomination being received, an election will be held. Only those members within the constituency in question shall have the right to vote.
- (d) Stewards positions are open to job sharing
- (e) Stewards Committees shall be established as determined by the Branch Committee. Membership of Stewards Committees shall consist of:
  - i) Stewards employed by the relevant employer(s) within the locus of the committee.
  - ii) Branch Officers may attend in a non-voting capacity. Other officials may attend in a non-voting capacity if invited.

- (f) Stewards Committees shall be charged with:
- i) Considering and acting upon any matters of conditions of service, health and safety and other relations with the employer(s) within its determined locus of responsibility.
  - ii) Advising the branch of any proposals or actions that may have a consequential effect on other areas of branch organisation.
  - iii) Taking minutes of the discussions and forwarding these to the Branch Secretary.
- (f) The Stewards Committee shall elect from their number a Convenor. The Convenor shall co-ordinate the activities of stewards and shall be responsible for convening the meetings.

## **7. Branch Officers**

- (a) The branch shall elect the following officers annually:
- Branch Chairperson
  - Branch Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Equality Officer
  - Health & Safety Officer
  - Education Co-ordinator
  - Communications Officer
  - Service Conditions Officer(s)
  - Recruitment and Organisation Officer
  - Membership Services Officer
  - Welfare Officer
  - International Officer
  - Minute Secretary
  - Young Members' Officer
  - Labour Link Officer
  - Social – Sports Secretary
  - Others determined as necessary by the Annual General Meeting for the effective operation of the branch.
- (b) In order to ensure proportionality and fair representation amongst the Branch Officer positions the branch will allow job sharing between two or more members for each position.
- (c) Branch Officers may be nominated by the Branch Committee or any two members, with the exception of the Labour Link Officer who can be nominated/elected by Labour Link.
- (d) All nominations must be received in writing at least 30 days before the AGM.
- (e) Each nominee will be notified and given the right to withdraw not later than 10 days before the AGM.
- (f) If there is more than one candidate an election will be held. Each candidate may provide an election address of not more than 500 words. The election address must be submitted at least 15 days prior to the AGM for circulation with the Agenda, motions etc. in accordance with Rule 10(e).

- (g) The vote will ordinarily be by paper ballot at the AGM.
- (h) In the event of a ballot, official papers will be supplied and each member of the branch shall be entitled to one vote in respect of each post to be filled. If a majority at the AGM decides, a postal ballot will be held. If a postal ballot is necessary papers will be issued within 21 days of the AGM.

**8. Branch Committee**

- (a) Representation on the Branch Committee will be agreed by the AGM and will include:
  - i) All Branch Officers
  - ii) One representative of each self-organised group operating within the branch.
  - iii) One or more stewards from each work group or work place taking into account proportionately and fair representation (see separate schedule to be determined by the branch committee).
  - iv) One representative from the Retired Members section who may attend but cannot vote on pay and conditions matters.
  - v) One representative from the Young Members section.
- (b) Other branch members who hold office at Scottish or UK level are entitled to attend but not to vote at the Branch Committee unless they are entitled to attend from one of the above 6 categories.
- (c) The Branch Committee should reflect occupational and employer groups (fair representation) and gender proportionality.
- (d) The quorum for the Branch Committee shall be 33% (one third) of the members of the Committee.
- (e) The Branch Committee may establish Sub Committees to assist with its functions as may be required from time to time.
- (f) The Branch Committee shall:
  - i) Meet monthly
  - ii) Ensure the branch observes union rules, policy and procedures.
  - iii) Consider and act upon all matters of administration of the branch within any guidance issued by the NEC
  - iv) Ensure the development and implementation of the branch development and organisation plan.
  - v) Sustain effective working relationships with employers.
  - vi) Ensure effective membership participation.
  - vii) Receive reports from other Branch Committees, Officers and representatives on other bodies both internal and external and co-ordinate local negotiations.
  - viii) Determine branch policy in the absence of a decision of an Annual or Special General Meeting.
  - ix) Elect representatives to other bodies internal and external to the union.
  - x) Fill vacant Branch Officer positions remitted from the AGM
  - xi) Ensure that all branch delegations comprise, as a minimum, fifty-percent women.

## **9. Annual/Special General Meetings**

- (a) There will be an Annual General Meeting of the branch to be held between 1 January and 31 March.
- (b) The quorum for a General Meeting is 50 members.
- (c) At least 30 days notice of an Annual General Meeting shall be given.
- (d) Motions for submission to the Annual General Meeting must be submitted to the Branch Secretary at least 14 days before the meeting.
- (e) An agenda, including motions received, must be circulated at least 14 days before the meeting.
- (f) Amendments to motions must be received at least 7 days before the meeting.
- (g) Special General Meetings may be called by the Branch Committee or in writing by 50 members of the branch or 5% of the membership whichever is the greater. Members should receive at least 14 days notice of Special General Meetings.
- (h) The AGM agenda must include:
  - i) Election of Branch Officers
  - ii) Election of two Auditors
  - iii) Ratification of the election of stewards
  - iv) Election of branch representatives to other UNISON bodies and appropriate external organisations.
  - v) Reports from Branch Officers including a summary of Branch Development and Organisation Plan outcomes.
  - vi) Treasurer's report and presentation of the financial accounts for the previous year, including recommendations or any honoraria to be paid to Branch Officers for the same period.
- (i) If there are no nominations for Branch Officer positions then nominations can be taken from the floor of the meeting. If there are still no nominations then the matter will be remitted to the Branch Committee.

## **10. Conduct of Meetings**

- (a) All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner. They will be accessible and welcoming to encourage participation.
- (b) All meetings should be advertised widely and with notice. An annual calendar of meetings will be agreed at the first Branch Committee following the AGM.
- (c) The Chairperson of any meeting will explain clearly the procedures to be used during the meeting.
- (d) The Branch through the Secretary or other appropriate officer must maintain a minute of meetings
- (e) With the exception of rule changes voting shall be by simple majority of those eligible to vote.

## **11. Finance**

- (a) The branch shall use Unity Trust plc as their bank.
- (b) The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping an account of branch income and expenditure.
- (c) The branch shall operate within financial guidelines that shall form part of the branch rules.

**12. Media Communication**

Communications to the media on behalf of the branch shall be only by officers authorised by the Branch Committee.

**13. Branch Prize Draw**

A prize draw scheme will be operated, open to members within Aberdeen City Council. Such a scheme shall be subject to arrangements which shall be agreed by the AGM.

**14. Approval/Alteration to Branch Rules**

- (a) Approval of and alteration to Branch Rules is subject to the approval of two-thirds majority of those voting at a quorate Branch General Meeting.
- (b) Branch Rules must then be submitted to the Scottish Committee in accordance with UNISON procedures.

Amended 9.3.07 after decisions taken at AGM on 7.3.07