



UNISON

the public service union



BRANCH RULES

MARCH 2021

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1. Branch Name

The branch shall be called Derbyshire Branch of UNISON and is referred throughout the rules as “the branch”.

2. Conduct of Meetings

- a) All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner. UNISON believes that everyone should be treated with courtesy and respect and our meetings will be conducted with this in mind. Anyone not acting within UNISON's accepted behavioural guidelines, will be asked to leave the meeting and subject to further investigation by the Senior Leadership Team.
- b) All meetings will be advertised widely as far in advance as possible (in the case of the Annual General Meeting, all members will be notified in writing at least 8 weeks before the meeting (or first aggregate meeting, which will be physically, virtually or a combination of the two).
- c) The procedures to be used at the meeting will be explained clearly.
- d) The branch will maintain records of all meetings and other appropriate records to enable the branch to function, including action notes from the Branch Committee and Branch Leadership Group.

3. Aims of the Branch

- a) to support and pursue the Aims and Objectives contained in the UNISON Rule Book, and the Objectives agreed by UNISON's National Executive Committee annually, and in particular:
- b) to achieve the aims and targets set annually through the branch assessment.

4. Membership

Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the Rules of the union.

5. Branch Structure

- a) There will be an Annual General Meeting of the branch to confirm the election by ballot of branch officers and members of the branch committee, to receive the branch accounts and report on branch development from the branch committee. The Annual General Meeting may comprise one meeting or a series of aggregate meetings based on sections or geographical areas in order to maximise the active participation of members. These meetings will be held physically, virtually or a combination of both.
- b) The Annual General Meeting will determine the basis of representation in the branch and the number of stewards and other representatives to be elected in each work group or workplace.
- c) Other general meetings may be called by the branch committee or by the Branch Leadership Group, or by 3% of the membership.
- d) The quorum for any general meeting, including the annual meeting is 3% of the branch at a single meeting or through aggregate meetings.
- e) The following sections will be established for each bargaining group covered by the branch to provide for the participation and representation of members in that section, other sections may be developed over time;

Each Department of Derbyshire County Council

The Community, Voluntary, Independent and Private Sector

The Further Education Sector

Each relevant local authority.

- f) The Branch Committee will comprise;

All Branch Officers (listed in rule 6 below)

1 Representative from each Self Organised Group (led by the Equality Co-ordinator)

Representatives from each of the sections outlined at 5(e) Two Delegates from each Section, the convenor to be one of those delegates.

Representation from all of the above must comply with proportionality and fair representation in accordance with UNISON's code of Good Branch Practice.

The Branch Committee will be responsible for the general organisation and development of the branch.

- g) The Branch Leadership Group will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the branch. Its membership and role is as described in Rule 8 below and should act as an Executive Committee.
- h) A Service Conditions Committee will meet monthly to co-ordinate collective bargaining and member consultation across all the sectors. It will be made up of the convenor of each department, the Branch Secretary and the Service Conditions Officer. The Chair of this Committee will be elected at its first meeting after the AGM.
- i) A Regional Organiser, or other regional staff, are able to attend any meetings or offices of the branch or where the branch is represented.

6. Branch Officers

a) the branch shall elect the following officers annually in accordance with rule 6c:

Chairperson (who will assume responsibility for the Branch in the unforeseen absence of the Branch Secretary)

Secretary

Service Conditions Officer (desirable – not in National Rules)

Treasurer

Education Co-ordinator

Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator

Equality Co-ordinator

Health and Safety Officer

Communications Officer

International Officer

Membership Officer

Young Members' Officer

Welfare Officer

Women's Officer

***Labour Link Officer** (elected by the members who pay the political levy only)

***Retired Members' Secretary** (elected by the retired members)

Two Branch Auditors (who should not be members of the Branch Committee).

Others to be determined as necessary for the effective operation of the branch with the agreement of the Annual General Meeting.

The Branch Secretary will automatically become part of the Trade Union CJC Group.

b) each section within the branch shall annually elect a convenor (senior steward) from amongst the members in that section in accordance with rule 5d.

c) **Election of Branch Officers:**

i. branch officers may be nominated by the Branch Committee or any two members, with the exception of the Labour Link Officer who will be elected by the Affiliated Political Fund members only.

ii. nominations will be invited 8 weeks before the Annual General Meeting and nomination forms will be made available through the branch web-site. All nominations must be received in writing at least 8 weeks before the Annual General Meeting.

iii. each nominee will be notified and given the right to withdraw not later than 6 weeks

before the Annual General Meeting.

iv. if there is more than one candidate, a vote will be held.

v. the vote will be conducted by postal ballot/electronic means in accordance with the procedure and timescales contained in the Code of Good Branch Practice.

vi. where no valid nomination has been received before the deadline, nominations may be called for and candidates elected at a quorate Annual General Meeting, or elected by the Branch Committee subject to ratification by the next general meeting.

d) Election of Convenors

i. the process for nomination and election shall be as in (c) save that the nomination may be by the section committee or any two members employed in that section, and only stewards (DCC) and Stewards/members from other local authorities with relevant experience, employed in the relevant section may participate in the election.

7. Branch Committee

a) Representation on the Branch Committee will be agreed by the Annual General Meeting and will include:

Branch Officers

4 Representatives of Self-Organised Groups (1 per group)

Representation from each sector as described above.

b) The Branch Committee shall administer branch business in accordance with UNISON rules and guidance.

c) The quorum for the Branch Committee shall be 33% (one third) of the members of the committee.

d) The Branch Committee shall ensure that sections within the branch are appropriately and equitably resourced to ensure the effective participation of members, recruitment and organisation, representation, and collective bargaining and campaigning on behalf of members in each section.

e) The Branch Committee will establish arrangements for the individual representation of members.

f) The Branch Committee shall meet quarterly for 2 hours and will receive written reports from branch officers. These meetings could be held physically, virtually or a combination of both.

8. Branch Leadership Group

- a) The Branch Leadership Group shall comprise the Branch Secretary, Branch Chair, Branch Treasurer, section convenors and Convenors from the other local authorities, a Community Voluntary Independent and Private sector representative, the Equalities Co-ordinator, Communications Officer, Education Officer and representatives from the other local authorities.
- b) The Branch Leadership Group will meet regularly for 2 hours to ensure the effective day to day management of the branch within the branch budget and UNISON policies. These meetings to be held physically, virtually or a combination of both. If the Branch Leadership Group commit to any expenditure outside of the branch budget, or any affiliation that has not been previously agreed by the Branch Committee, these must be referred to the Branch Treasurer, Branch Secretary or Branch Committee for approval. All the policies of the branch shall be in accordance with UNISON's rulebook and guidance. The wider UNISON membership will be regularly involved and consulted over bargaining issues that affect them.

9. Sections/Departments

Sections/departments will be led by a convenor elected in accordance with rule 6d and who will be the senior accredited representative within that section/departement.

10. Media communications

Communications to the media on behalf of the branch shall be made only by the Branch Secretary or those delegated to act on their behalf.

11. Affiliations

- a) Affiliations to relevant constituency Labour Parties will be decided by the Affiliated Political Fund membership.
- b) Affiliations to trade councils shall be determined by the Annual General Meeting or Branch Committee.

12. Finance

The branch shall keep a bank account in the name of the branch and will maintain a financial record of all assets and transactions in accordance with UNISON guidelines.

13. Donations

Donations shall be agreed by the Annual General Meeting, Branch Committee or Branch Leadership Group in accordance with the union's policies and objectives and subject to provisions of national rule.

14. Expenses for Branch Members

Rates of expenses for members attending meetings or carrying out other activities/duties on behalf of the branch shall be paid in accordance with the Scheme for Branch Expenses contained in the Branch Finances Handbook.

15. Branch staff

- a) The Branch Secretary will be responsible for the employment, direction and supervision of any staff employed by the branch consistent with employment law and current good practice.
- b) In the event of any first stage hearings of staff disciplinary or grievance matters, the Branch Secretary will be joined by another senior branch official other than the Branch Chair.
- c) Any appeal arising from a first stage grievance or disciplinary hearing will be heard by the Branch Chair and another senior branch official not involved at the first stage hearing.
- d) The outcome of any disciplinary or grievance hearing will remain confidential.

16. Approval/Alteration to Branch Rules

- a) New Branch rules or any changes/amendments to branch rules must be agreed by two thirds of members present and voting at a quorate general meeting, or by a postal /electronic ballot of all members including retired members.
- b) Branch rules must be approved in accordance with UNISON's procedures.