

1. BRANCH NAME

The branch shall be called Aberdeenshire UNISON.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL ORGANISATION

- (a) Branch rules shall be in accordance with national rules, decisions of the Annual Delegate Conference and the NEC.
- (b) Any member may have a copy of the current Rule Book
- (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. For this purpose the branch committee shall annually appoint two members (not to be members of the committee) as Branch Auditors or an external auditor.

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: to achieve the aims and targets set annually through the branch assessment.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the Rules of the union.
- (b) Applications for membership take effect from the date at which completed forms are received by the branch or at regional/national level.
- (c) UNISON will not provide representative support in respect to issues that occur within the first four weeks of membership or which pre-date the member joining. The only exception to this will be an equal pay claim or being part of UNISON's mass litigation process.
- (d) All members must comply with the Rules.
- (e) The NEC may terminate an individual's membership in accordance with the Rules.

5. BRANCH STRUCTURE

- (a) There shall be an Annual General Meeting, held before 31 March annually for the branch to elect branch officers and members of the branch committee, to receive branch accounts and report on branch development from the branch committee.

The AGM may comprise of one meeting or a series of aggregate meetings based on sections or geographical areas in order to maximise the active participation of members.
- (b) Other general meetings may be called by the branch committee or by 50 members of the branch.
- (c) The quorum for General Meetings of the branch shall be 50 members.
- (d) The AGM will determine the basis of representation in the branch and the number of stewards to be elected in each work group or work place.
- (e) The branch will organise:

- i) employees of Aberdeenshire Council
 - ii) employees of other public, voluntary sector and private organisations consistent with National Rules as providing services to the public.
- (f) The branch will form intermediate structures e.g. Sections and/or Sector Committees as considered necessary in the interests of the members. These could be based on employer, work sector or geographical division.

Sections will be established for each bargaining group covered by the branch to provide for the participation and representation of members in that section in accordance with rule 8 below.

The branch committee will comprise all branch officers (see rule 6 below), and stewards, and will be responsible for the general organisation and development of the branch and for policy and decision making on matters affecting all members within the branch between general meetings.

The core officers group will be responsible for the day to day management of the branch in accordance with the decisions and authority delegated by the branch committee. Its membership and role is as described in rule 7 below.

- (g) Delegates to represent the branch at Regional or National level shall be elected by the branch committee from its membership. Appointments within the Affiliated Political Fund shall be restricted to APF payers.
- (h) The branch shall keep a bank account in the name of the branch with Unity Trust Bank plc.

6. BRANCH OFFICERS

- (a) The branch shall elect the following officers annually:
 Chairperson
 Vice-Chairperson
 Secretary
 Assistant Secretary
 Assistant Secretary (Service Conditions)
 Treasurer
 Education Co-ordinator
 Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator
 Equality Co-ordinator
 Health and Safety Officer
 Communications Officer
 Magazine Editor
 International Officer
 Membership Officer
 Young Members Officer
 Welfare Officer
 Branch Development Co-ordinator
 Retired Members Secretary
 Labour Link Officer
- (b) In order to ensure proportionality and fair representation amongst the Branch Officer positions, the branch will monitor the composition of the Officer team and consider job-sharing, annual rotation between genders, and additional positions to address any imbalance whether of gender or employment group.
- (c) Branch officers may be nominated by the branch committee or any two members with the exception of the APF officer who will be elected by APF members only.
- (d) **No member can be nominated to more than one of the Core Branch Officer posts (See Rule 7(f) below)**

- (e) All nominations must be received in writing **at least four weeks** before the AGM.
- (f) Each nominee will be notified and given the right to withdraw not later **than three weeks** before the AGM.
- (g) If there is more than one candidate a vote will be held. **The election process will be overseen by an independent scrutineer nominated by the Branch, usually the Regional Organiser.**
- (h) **The vote will be conducted by a ballot at the AGM and by a postal ballot which will be available on request for members unable to attend the AGM.**
- (i) **In the event of an election, official papers will be supplied at the AGM and each full member of the branch present shall be entitled to one vote in respect of each post to be filled.**
- (j) **Members will be notified with their final AGM papers of their right to request a postal ballot, details of how to get one and the closing date for the postal ballot. Postal ballots received after the closing date will not be counted.**
- (k) **All ballot papers will be counted at the AGM by independent UNISON staff after votes have been cast by those present. Postal ballots will be held in secure boxes and taken to the AGM to be included in the count.**
- (l) **The result will be announced by the presiding officer.**
- (k) If there are any posts for which no nominations have been received, the filling of these shall be remitted to the branch committee.

7. **BRANCH COMMITTEE**

- (a) Representation on the branch committee will be agreed by the AGM and will include:
 - branch officers
 - representatives of self organised group
 - from Aberdeenshire Council, all stewards
 - 1 steward for Meat Hygiene Service
 - 3 stewards for Inspire (at least 2 women)
 - 3 stewards for Cornerstone (at least 2 women)
 - 1 steward representing members from other employers
- (b) The branch committee shall administer branch business in accordance with the National 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.
The branch committee will establish arrangements for individual representation of members.
The branch committee shall meet *monthly*.
- (e) The branch committee shall fill casual vacancies occurring between AGMs.
- (f) **The Core Officers Group** shall comprise the branch secretary, assistant branch secretaries, branch chair, branch treasurer, (and others as appropriate)

The Core Officers Group will meet at least monthly to ensure the effective day to day management of the branch within the parameters of the decisions and guidance issued by the branch committee. The Core Officers Group may commit to no expenditure, policy decision or affiliation that has not been previously agreed by the branch committee.

8. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- (a) All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner.
- (b) All meetings should be advertised widely as far in advance as possible.
- (c) The procedures to be used at the meeting will be explained clearly.
- (d) Branches must maintain records of meetings, financial records, books of accounts and other appropriate records to enable the branch to function.

9. MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Communications to the media on behalf of the branch shall be made only by those officers authorised by the branch committee.

10. AFFILIATIONS

- (a) Affiliations to relevant constituency Labour Parties will be decided by the APF membership.
- (b) Affiliations to trade union councils shall be determined by the branch committee.
- (c) Other affiliations shall be determined by the branch committee or AGM in accordance with branch policies.

11. DONATIONS

Donations shall be agreed by the AGM or branch committee in accordance with the union's policies and objectives and subject to provisions of National Rule.

12. FINANCE

- (i) The Treasurer will advise the branch on all financial matters, keep full records and receipts of income and expenditure.
- (ii) The Treasurer will provide regular reports to the branch committee and an audited set of accounts to the branch AGM.
- (iii) Rates of expenses for all activities on behalf of the branch will be drawn up by the Treasurer, be approved by the branch committee and submitted each year to the AGM. These will be set in accordance with the scheme for expenses contained in the branch finances handbook.

Any honorarium paid to a branch officer will only be made in accordance with the Scheme for Honoraria Payments in Branches contained in the Branch Finances Handbook.

Each year the Branch Committee must submit its honoraria proposals to the AGM of the Branch.

If approved (by a quorate meeting) the branch will submit details to Head Office on the form issued for that purpose.

13. APPROVAL/ALTERATIONS TO BRANCH RULES

- (a) Branch rules must be agreed by two-thirds of members present and voting at a quorate branch meeting.
- (b) Branch rules, and any approved amendments to branch rules must be submitted to the Scottish Committee for endorsement and approval in accordance with UNISON procedures.