

LINCOLNSHIRE UNISON (L.Gov.)

Branch number 2235

BRANCH RULES

**Note: The text in this document included in box surround is quoted from
UNISON Guide of Good Branch Practice for information.**

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1. BRANCH NAME

The Branch shall be called *Lincolnshire UNISON (L.Gov.)* and may also be referred to as *Lincolnshire County UNISON* or *Lincolnshire County Branch of UNISON*. The UNISON branch number is 2235.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO UNISON NATIONAL ORGANISATION

All Lincolnshire UNISON branch rules shall be in accordance with all UNISON national rules, UNISON Rule Book, and decisions of the National Delegates Conference and the National Executive Council (NEC).

The UNISON organising approach is one that:

- involves members in identifying issues, finding solutions and dealing with problems
- recruits, trains, and supports more active and confident representatives from among every work group and workplace
- takes a “what can we do about it” approach, rather than “leave it with me to sort out”
- resolves most problems locally and speedily because they are identified sooner
- builds confidence among members about what they can do with our support and guidance
- reaches out to and inspires non-members to join UNISON
- leaves members feeling good about the union and ready to recruit others
- means trades unionism that has a political consciousness and is grounded in collective action, not individual and/or legal action
- ensures a legacy of organised workplaces

These branch rules are in accordance with the UNISON Rule Book. In any circumstances these are deemed to contradict, the contents of the UNISON Rule Book will take precedent.

Any member may have a copy of the current UNISON Rule Book, on request from the Branch. The latest version of the branch rules will be available on the Lincolnshire UNISON website.

The Branch shall make an audited annual return of branch income, expenditure, assets and liabilities as prescribed by the *NEC* and in accordance with the UNISON Rule Book.

UNISON is a member led union in which members have guaranteed rights. These rights underpin all branch activities. All members must be able to exercise their rights as set out in the UNISON Rule Book.

3. AIMS OF THE BRANCH

Lincolnshire UNISON seeks to support and pursue the Aims and Objectives contained in the UNISON Rule Book, and the objectives agreed annually by the *NEC*.

The branch:

- effectively “administers”, facilitates, encourages and supports UNISON’s local organisation at employer level
- provides the means by which members or their workplace representatives can come together
- provides a network of support to representatives, ensuring their training, and devolves resources, especially to aid the activity of those supporting members in “smaller” employers
- provides a means for members to participate in the wider union
- leads national campaigns, supports local campaigning and collective bargaining with the employers, and provides leadership, advice and support to stewards and other branch officers at employer level
- acts as the interface between members and the regional and national organisation
- represents UNISON within the community
- is the route through which national policies are put into practice locally

Lincolnshire UNISON is committed to fair representation and proportionality at all levels within the union.

Lincolnshire UNISON encourages active participation in the belief that collective involvement is essential to the creation of efficient and effective local UNISON organisation.

Lincolnshire UNISON aims to promote Health and Safety at work.

Lincolnshire UNISON aims to promote and support *Self Organised Groups (SOG's)*.

Lincolnshire UNISON will appropriately use the branch resources, whether financial or physical, to achieve the above stated aims.

Lincolnshire UNISON strives to achieve the aims and targets set annually through the *Branch Organising Framework* processes.

The branch has responsibility to:

- ensure that members are aware of and know how to access the broad range of support, assistance, advice and opportunities to participate in their union
- recruit, retain and organise members and local representatives
- advise members about how to resolve grievance or disciplinary issues
- represent members in grievance, disciplinary and like matters
- bargain and negotiate with local employers on conditions of service, pay, employment changes, etc
- respond to consultations from employers
- represent members on health and safety matters
- promote UNISON's aims and values
- campaign locally in accordance with UNISON policy
- regularly communicate and consult with members
- provide opportunities for the education of members and development of activists

4. MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the UNISON Rule Book; and may include employees of:

- Lincolnshire County Council
- West Lindsey, East Lindsey, North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland District Council,
- Boston Borough Council
- Town and parish councils in Lincolnshire
- Further Education and Higher Education Colleges in Lincolnshire
- Voluntary or private sector employers in Lincolnshire, with clear links to local government by virtue of history or service.

UNISON membership takes effect from the date at which the completed application forms are received, either by the branch, or at Regional or National, level in accordance with the UNISON Rule Book.

Any member must have been in membership of the union for at least 4 weeks prior to the incident or occurrence that leads them seeking legal assistance (including advice and/or representation) from UNISON.

A meeting of the *Branch Committee* may decide not to support a membership application, but such a decision must be consistent with the UNISON Rule Book, branch rules and statute. Such a decision must be explained to the applicant in writing, together with their rights of appeal.

All members must comply with the rules.

Membership of UNISON may be terminated in accordance with the UNISON Rule Book.

Resignation must be received in writing to the Branch Office.

Members must:

- ensure that their subscription is paid to the union on the date on which it is due
- observe UNISON rules, policies and procedures
- elect stewards and health and safety representatives to represent their workplace
- advise their branch of changes in name, workplace, job, home address etc. so that records can be accurate
- attend branch and workplace meetings so that decisions made are democratic and representative
- bring matters of concern to the attention of their representative as soon as possible
- co-operate with their representative when dealing with casework
- treat others with courtesy and respect
- abide by democratic decisions
- work collectively with other members and their representatives

4.1 NEW MEMBERS

New members will receive a welcome written communication from the branch which will include:

- a temporary membership card
- link to UNISON Rule Book on UNISON National Office website
- information on benefits and services available
- a list of branch *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)* and *Branch Officers*

UNISON National Office will issue a 'New Member Pack' which will include an official membership card.

4.2 ALL MEMBERS

National Information

All members will receive a copy of the UNISON journal and may elect to receive further electronic communications as appropriate.

Branch Information

All members will receive a copy of the regular Branch Newsletter. The Branch Newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis.

The branch will provide regular written information on local issues. The information will be received in good time to allow members to participate in discussion and debate before decisions are made.

This information may be provided electronically; either by email, social media, or published on the branch websites.

Advice to Members

Members may contact *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)*, *Branch Officers* and *Branch Support Officers* for advice, assistance and representation as appropriate. Where a response cannot be made immediately one will be offered as soon as practicable and the Branch Office will institute administrative procedures to that end.

A member has the right to receive advice from a *Branch Officer*, *Workplace Representative (Steward)* or paid officer of UNISON of their own race, gender or sexuality where appropriate and possible.

Confidentiality and Respect

All members have the right for any matter raised with their UNISON *Workplace Representative (Steward)* to be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Branch representatives will respect members' rights to confidentiality and treat members in a considerate and courteous manner.

Members' Complaints

Any UNISON member who feels that they have been treated in an unacceptable way or have not received their rights and benefits, as specified in the UNISON Rule Book and Branch Rules, will have the right to refer their complaint to the UNISON Regional Secretary and ultimately the UNISON General Secretary.

Members' Involvement

All UNISON members are actively encouraged to meet and discuss matters of interest and concern. Paid Officers, *Branch Officers*, *Branch Support Officers* and *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)* will give encouragement, guidance, support, help and advice as required.

Workplace meetings will be arranged when appropriate and be conducted in such a way as to achieve maximum participation from members. Non-members may be permitted to attend these meetings at the discretion of the organiser, however will not be allowed to be present for any vote.

Members should use every opportunity to widen debate.

Members' Responsibilities

Members are responsible for ensuring that their subscriptions are paid.

Members are responsible for advising the branch if they change their name, address, email, telephone number, employer, workplace, occupation, job title or any other relevant information.

Members are responsible for supplying information to their *Workplace Representative (Steward)* or the branch regarding any problems or issues that occur at their workplace.

Members shall return their membership card to the branch on resignation.

All members will treat all fellow UNISON members with tolerance and respect regardless of gender, race, sexuality, disability, religious beliefs, status or age and they will adhere to the collective principles of trade unionism.

5. PROPORTIONALITY AND FAIR REPRESENTATION

The branch is responsible for ensuring that *proportionality* and *fair representation* are achieved at local level. A truly member led union must ensure that its power and influence is shared equally between all members.

Lincolnshire UNISON recognises *proportionality* to mean:

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

Lincolnshire UNISON recognises *fair representation* to mean:

“the broad balance of representation of members of the electorate, taking into account such factors as age and low pay, the balance between full time and part time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations, skills, race, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity.”

6. BRANCH REPRESENTATION

It is branch policy to secure the election of Workplace Representatives (Stewards) by branch members to represent the members in decision making within the branch.

Members may not be represented on matters arising prior to membership, in accordance with the principles contained in the UNISON Rule Book.

7. BRANCH STRUCTURE

The Branch will be structured in such a way as to be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the membership.

7.1 BRANCH OFFICERS

The Branch will elect the following *Branch Officers*:

Branch Chairperson
Branch Secretary
Treasurer
Membership Officer
Communications Officer
Welfare Officer
Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator
Branch Auditor(s)
Environmental Officer
Equalities Co-ordinator

Vice Chairperson
Assistant Branch Secretary
Assistant Treasurer
Education Co-ordinator(s)
Health and Safety Officer
Women's Officer
Retired Members Secretary
Labour Link Officer
International Officer
Young Members' Officer

Note:

- Offices in bold are core branch officers defined in the UNISON Rule Book.
- Women's Officer must be a woman.
- The Young Members' Officer must be under 27 years of age for the whole of their term of office.
- A member shall hold only one of the Branch Secretary, Branch chair or Branch Treasurer posts at any one time

The following *Branch Officers* will be elected by the relevant *Self Organised Groups (SOG's)*:

Women Members
Black Members
Disabled Members
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) members

Only members paying into the Affiliated Political fund will be entitled to elect the Labour Link Officer. The Labour Link Officer must be an individual member of the Labour Party.

Any eligible member of the branch will be able to be nominated to the aforementioned officer posts.

All *Branch Officers* are elected into post for twelve months, commencing at the *AGM* (in March).

All posts are open to job share.

Each member of the branch will receive the appropriate nomination form. All nominations must be supported by two signatures of branch members. All nominations must be received seven weeks before the *AGM*. Nominees have the right to withdraw their candidacy before the *AGM*.

A description of the duties of each post is available from the branch, and appropriate training will be provided.

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In the event of more than one nomination for any of the posts, a postal ballot of the membership will be held. This ballot will be organised by UNISON Regional Office.

Where no valid nomination has been received before the deadline, nominations may be called for and candidate elected at the *AGM*, or endorsed by the *Branch Committee* subject to ratification at the next *General Meeting*.

7.2 WORKPLACE REPRESENTATIVES (STEWARDS)

Any member of the Branch will be able to be nominated for election as a *Workplace Representative* or *Steward*.

Each member of the branch will receive the appropriate nomination form. All nominations must be supported by two signatures of branch members in their workplace. All nominations must be received seven weeks before the *AGM*. Nominees have the right to withdraw their candidacy before the *AGM*.

All *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)* will normally serve in post for twelve months, commencing at the *AGM* (in March), but may be nominated throughout the year.

If in the view of the *Branch Committee* there is over-representation of nominees in any given workplace, section or work area, the *Branch Committee* will determine arrangements for a ballot of the members represented.

7.3 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Lincolnshire UNISON branch *Annual General Meeting (AGM)* will be held annually in March each year.

The *AGM* will be open to all members who shall receive an invitation a minimum of twelve weeks' in advance of the meeting.

The purpose of the *AGM* is to bring the branch committee and its officers to account:

- to report on the branch's finances
- to report on the branch's activity during the past year and the implementation of the actions agreed arising from the previous year's annual assessment
- to receive a report on the annual assessment and the branch committee's plan to meet the actions required during the following year
- to elect, or confirm the election if these took place by ballot, of 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 seek approval for any proposed honoraria payments to be made

Each member of the Branch will receive copies electronically of the *AGM* papers in advance, where possible. This will include the *AGM* agenda, *Branch Officer* reports and the list of nominated *Branch Officers* and *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)*. Paper copies will also be available from the Branch on request.

The audited accounts for the branch will be tabled at the meeting.

The *AGM* quorum will be the lowest of 50 members or 0.5% of the total branch membership.

7.4 GENERAL MEETING

A branch *General Meeting* open to all members shall be convened if:

Determined by the *Branch Committee* meeting

Determined by the *Leadership Team* meeting

Requested in writing to the branch by 20 or more branch members

There will be a minimum of one week's notice of a *General Meeting*.

7.5 BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETING

The *Branch Committee* (previously known as Branch Council) meeting will be the primary decision and policy making forum of the branch between the branch *AGM* or any branch *General Meeting*.

The *Branch Committee* will be the centre and driving force of the branch. It is responsible for:

- building UNISON strength and influence through developing and implementing the branch's development and organising plan
- ensuring the effective representation of members
- coordinating local negotiation and determining the branch's bargaining strategy
- sustaining effective working relationships with employers
- ensuring that the branch conducts itself according to UNISON rule, the Code of Good Branch Practice and in accordance with UNISON policies and procedures
- ensuring that the branch officers properly exercise their functions and ensure they have the training and assistance to do so
- maintaining an accurate record of membership
- ensuring that the branch carries out its representative functions by sending delegates to national and regional policy making bodies
- ensuring that the branch works in partnership with UNISON staff and other structures within the union.

The *Branch Committee* will normally meet twelve times a year, on a monthly basis. An additional meeting will be held when:

Called by the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson

Determined by the *Leadership Team* meeting

Requested in writing to the branch by 10 or more branch members

The *Branch Committee* will administer branch business in accordance with the UNISON Rule Book and these rules, and guidance and policies of UNISON.

The *Branch Committee* shall ensure that all sections within the Branch are appropriately and equitably resourced to ensure:

- the effective participation of members in the Branch
- recruitment of new members
- the organisation of members
- representation of members
- collective bargaining on behalf of members
- campaigning on behalf of members

The *Branch Committee* shall consist of elected *Branch Officers, Convenors* and *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)*.

The *Branch Committee* will ensure that records of meetings are maintained, financial records kept and that other appropriate records are preserved and available to enable the Branch to function properly.

The *Branch Committee* may establish further committees or working groups as appropriate to the needs of the Branch, and it may allow co-option. The *Branch Committee* will approve the Terms of Reference of such groups. The *Branch Committee* will take account of proportionality and fair representations on such groups at all times.

The *Branch Committee* will respond to consultations regarding workforce matters affecting the branch members, and for this purpose may be referred to as the *Branch Consultative Committee*. This may be delegated to a working group as above. For employers other than LCC this function may be delegated to the designated *Workplace Committee*, subject to the agreement of the *Convenor* and *Branch Committee*.

The *Branch Committee* will be the employer of all *Branch Employed Staff*. The *Branch Committee* may delegate the administration, organisation, recruitment, review etc. of the branch employed staff to the branch *Leadership Team Meeting*

The *Branch Committee* quorum will be the lowest of

- 10 members or,
- 0.2% of the total branch membership or,
- one third of the *Branch Officers*,

providing that the attendance broadly reflects the requirements of proportionality and fair representation within the branch. In the event of the *Branch Committee* failing to be quorate any decisions taken can only be for guidance and not deemed as an accepted policy of the branch.

7.6 LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

The branch *Leadership Team Meeting* will be the secondary decision-making forum of the Branch between *Branch Committee* meetings. The meeting will have discretionary decision-making powers within existing policy.

This meeting will be primarily concerned with the day-to-day operation of the branch, including responsibility for:

- Ensuring that decisions of the Branch Committee are carried out
- On-going financial matters and expenditure
- Keeping a bank/building society account in the name of the Branch
- Ensuring the effective organisation of staff employed by the Branch
- Management and performance of branch employed staff

The *Leadership Team Meeting* will administer branch business in accordance with the rules, guidance and policies of UNISON.

The *Leadership Team Meeting* may delegate the day-to-day management of *Branch Employed Staff* to the *Branch Secretary* or an individual *Branch Officer* as appropriate.

The *Leadership Team* will be the branch arbiter over matters of representation. Should any Officer, Representative or Member query the right of any member to be represented, the matter will be referred to this meeting for resolution. Any member refused representation will have the right to put her/his case to this meeting.

The *Leadership Team* shall consist of the senior *Branch Officers*, including Chair, Vice-chair, Branch Secretary, Assistant Branch Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer.

The *Leadership Team* shall include an additional representative for LCC, for the District Councils and for all other employers; if these are not represented by the *Branch Officers* listed above.

The *Leadership Team* shall include other *Branch Officers* or *Convenors* as determined by this group.

The *Leadership Team* will normally meet twelve times a year. An additional meeting will be held when called by the Branch Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Branch Secretary or Branch Treasurer.

The *Leadership Team* quorum will be 4 one of whom will be the Branch Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Branch Secretary or Branch Treasurer.

7.7 LOCAL AREA MEETINGS

The Branch may arrange a *Local Area Meeting*, which shall be open to all members living or working in any given geographical area of Lincolnshire.

Local Area Meetings may be called by:

- The *Branch Committee* meeting
- The *Leadership Team* meeting
- 5 members in any locality

Local Area Meetings shall be entitled to put motions to the Branch *AGM* and to elect their own *Convenor*.

7.8 SELF ORGANISED GROUPS (SOG's) MEETINGS

The branch will promote and facilitate separate meetings for each of the following *Self Organised Groups (SOG's)* within its membership:-

- Women Members
- Black Members
- Disabled Members
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members

Each *Self Organised Group* shall elect a Branch Officer as above.

Each *Self Organised Group* shall be responsible for determining its own constitution.

The branch will provide resources and support for these groups, including finance.

7.9 WORKPLACE COMMITTEES

A *Workplace Committee* will consist of the elected Workplace Representatives (Stewards) within an employer, organisation, section or work area base.

The *Workplace Committee* will elect a *Convenor* (or *Lead Representative*) at their first meeting following the branch *AGM*. It is expected that a *Convenor* will be elected for:

- each LCC directorate
- each District Council
- other external organisations as appropriate

Workplace Committees will be responsible to ensure that consultations are undertaken with the associated membership and that the views of these members are represented.

In areas where formal dialogue between management and UNISON exists (such as Joint Consultative Committees) the *Workplace Committee* will pursue service condition issues and elect representatives to these arrangements.

The *Convenor* will lead in the organisation of *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)* and members in the area, and chair meetings of the *Workplace Committee*. The *Convenor* will be the primary contact for the employer for UNISON matters in the area represented, and be responsible for negotiation and bargaining with the employer.

The frequency of meetings and quorum will be determined by the *Workplace Committee*.

7.8 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The branch *Health and Safety Committee* will consist of the elected branch Health and Safety Officer and Health and Safety Stewards.

The *Health and Safety Committee* will be responsible for the co-ordination and response to Health and Safety issues, and draw such matters to the attention of the members through the *Branch Committee* and *Workplace Committees*.

The *Health and Safety Committee* will be chaired by the Health and Safety Officer.

The *Health and Safety Committee* will appoint representatives to employer Safety Committees.

The frequency of meetings and quorum will be determined by the *Health and Safety Committee*.

7.9 EQUALITIES AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEES

Each committee will consist of elected *Branch Officers* and *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)* elected at the first *Branch Committee* following the *AGM*.

Each committee will be responsible for the co-ordination and response to appropriate issues and draw such matters to the attention of the membership through the *Branch Committee* and *Workplace Committees*.

The committee will be chaired by the appropriate *Branch Officer*.

The frequency of meetings and quorum will be determined by the committee.

7.10 LABOUR LINK MEETING (APF)

All members contributing to the Affiliated Political Fund shall be invited to at least one meeting *Labour Link Meeting* per annum and shall elect the branch Labour Link Officer.

APF contributors shall be responsible for their further organisation within the national rules of the APF.

8. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

All meetings will be conducted in a fair, friendly and proper manner and all those present will afford respect to speakers even if they may not agree with what is said. No sexist, racist or otherwise offensive language will be used.

All meetings will be arranged as far in advance as possible and notification of such meetings will be sent to members with sufficient time to enable as many as possible to attend.

The use of electronic ‘virtual’ meetings, using online meeting technology, is permitted by the Branch.

- The meeting Chair will be responsible for determining the appropriate form of ‘traditional’ or ‘virtual’ meeting with the aim of securing the greatest possible participation and selecting the necessary arrangements to facilitate this.
- It is recognised that not all members will necessarily have access to all technologies, and therefore care will be taken when planning a ‘virtual’ meeting to ensure that all members can participate as far as practicable.
- Assistance for members to participate in electronic ‘virtual’ meetings will be provided by the branch where appropriate.
- In considering the use of electronic ‘virtual’ meetings, due consideration should be given to the geographical nature of the county; virtual meetings may improve members’ ability to participate in meetings and must be considered where attendees would have to otherwise travel unreasonably in order to attend.

The procedures to be used at meetings will be explained clearly beforehand.

The applicable quorum for all meetings is included in these rules.

Meetings of members convened in the name of the branch must take into account:

- geographical considerations
- employer interests
- workgroup interests

All ‘traditional’ physical meetings of the branch should be held where there is free and easy access for all members.

Due consideration will be given to the location and timing of meetings.

There will be a no smoking policy at all branch meetings.

Special facilities (such as a signer or papers in Braille) will be made available where needed and possible.

Carer’s expenses for attendance at representatives’ meetings will be paid.

No branch meeting shall exceed two and a half hours in length, unless this rule is suspended by a majority vote.

9. RULES OF DEBATE

Motions to any meeting shall be circulated at least one week in advance, unless the meeting decides by a majority decision to omit any motion to its agenda.

All motions must bear the name of a proposer and seconder.

Amendments to motions may be put at the time the motion is debated. Such amendments will be debated separately.

The proposer of a motion or amendment will move the motion or amendment and will be entitled to the right of reply at the end of the debate. The proposer will also be allowed to answer questions of clarity.

All other contributors to a debate will only be entitled to speak once. Any amendment must be proposed and seconded and no further amendment taken until an outstanding amendment has been decided upon.

At the end of a debate the motion if carried, will be implemented. If a motion is lost the subject matter will not be debated again until the expiration of twelve months.

10. MOTIONS AND DELEGATES TO CONFERENCES (AND SIMILAR)

All motions, amendments to motions and amendments to rules submitted to UNISON National and Regional Conferences, Councils, Committees and outside bodies in the name of the branch will be in accordance with branch policy and will be submitted in advance to *Branch Committee* for approval.

All branch delegates attending UNISON National and Regional Conferences, Councils and Committees shall be elected by the *Branch Committee* and shall take account of proportionality and fair representation. Any delegation of more than one must consist of a minimum of 50% women, if possible.

11. EXPENSES AND HONORARIA

Where *Branch Officers, Workplace Representatives (Stewards)* or members incur personal expenses (including travel costs and subsistence) whilst performing duties on behalf of the branch, such expenses must be claimed on the appropriate form.

Carer's Allowance, including facilitators' expenses, will be paid.

Rates of expenses for members will be paid in accordance with UNISON's Branch Member Expenses Scheme.

Any member, officer or representative requiring the use of taxis or wishing to claim for room hire etc. must obtain the prior permission of the Branch Treasurer.

Items of equipment and stationery will be supplied by the branch.

Authorised expenses for conferences etc. will be paid at the rates prior agreed by the *Branch Committee* meeting.

Other expenses, allowances and purchases not covered within these rules will be subject to prior approval by the *Leadership Team Meeting*.

Any honorarium paid to a branch officer will only be made in accordance with the UNISON national guidance for honoraria payments.

Payment and value of honoraria paid to branch officers will be agreed annually by the *AGM*, dependent on receipt of an annual report by the stated deadline.

Expenses should be claimed on a monthly basis and the claim submitted within a calendar month period of the calendar month of the expense being incurred.

12. COMMUNICATION

The branch will undertake to communicate with the membership through quarterly Branch Newsletters and regular information updates, and also through *Workplace Representatives (Stewards)* or other identified contacts.

Formal branch communications will be through written letters or emails as appropriate.

The branch Communications Officer will act as primary contact for all media communications and will be responsible for organising:

- newsletters and information updates
- social media posts and the like
- press releases
- media interviews
- other publicity as necessary

'Write' access to branch social media accounts will be limited to the following officers:

Branch Secretary	Assistant Branch Secretary
Branch Chair	Branch Vice chair
Communication Officer	

Any officer or member may request for a social media post to be placed on behalf of the branch, though any of the above designated branch officers. If a request is deemed inappropriate, the proposer will be notified of this and the reason for the rejection.

Communication to, interviews and the like for, the media on behalf of the branch shall be made only by *Branch Officers* authorised to do so by the *Branch Committee*.

Any written statement issued on behalf of UNISON must be on appropriately headed paper, and with contact details given.

All branch communications must only promote accepted UNISON and branch aims objectives, policies, and rules, and individuals must not seek to endorse other personal views or beliefs as being those of UNISON.

13. AFFILIATIONS / DONATIONS

Any affiliations and donations shall be in accordance with the UNISON Rule Book. The organisations must be broadly aligned to the aims and objectives of the branch, and any affiliation or donation shall be determined by the Branch Committee. A list of affiliations and donations is available on request from the branch.

14. BRANCH EMPLOYED STAFF

The *Branch Committee* is ultimately responsible for the employment of any staff employed by the branch consistent with employment law, current good practice and trade union principles.

The branch will:

- give reasonable notice to staff for requests of assistance, advice and information, and alert their regional organiser to potential problems
- facilitate the attendance of organising staff at meetings of the branch and branch committee
- ensure there are regular meetings and communication with organising staff to develop strategy, branch organisation, support, encouragement, motivation and expertise
- provide prompt responses to requests for information from staff
- expect a prompt response from organising staff to queries and requests for advice, and regular attendance at branch meetings
- establish a practice of working in partnership with staff
- treat UNISON staff with courtesy and respect, and expect the same in return

The routine day-to-day management, direction and supervision of any staff employed by the branch will be undertaken by the Branch Secretary. The Branch Secretary may delegate these responsibilities to a named *Branch Officer* with the agreement of the *Leadership Team Meeting* and the *Branch Employed Staff*.

In the event of any disciplinary or grievance matters, the *Leadership Team Meeting* will select a *Branch Officer* to undertake a factual investigation and two further *Branch Officers* to convene a hearing into the matter. Any appeal arising from a grievance or disciplinary hearing will be heard by either the Branch Secretary or Branch Chair joined by another *Branch Officer* selected by the *Leadership Team Meeting*. The *Leadership Team Meeting* will be responsible for resolving any conflicts of interest arising.

The most important administration functions include:

- processing membership applications speedily so that new members join us as soon as possible and subscriptions can be collected
- maintaining accurate membership records – we must know who and where our members are if we want to involve them in our activity
- accrediting newly elected stewards so they can be placed on the national and regional mailing lists and employers notified
- providing proper notice and timetabling for branch meetings and branch elections to encourage maximum participation
- ensuring meetings and documentation meet members' access requirements
- ensuring full representation to regional council, national conferences and other bodies in order to be fully involved in the democratic processes of the union
- maintaining proper financial records to ensure sufficient funds for branch activity
- managing individual and collective casework to ensure that members receive the support that they need, and maintain files confidentially with a central register
- ensuring UNISON circulars and correspondence are speedily referred to the appropriate branch officer(s) or committee
- ensure that the branch annual return or requests for information from the branch are dealt with on time
- ensure the branch operates to a plan based upon achieving UNISON's objectives and priorities.

The outcome of any disciplinary or grievance hearing will remain confidential and the outcome only will be reported to the *Branch Committee* on its conclusion.

15. DATA PROTECTION

Branch employed staff and branch officers must exercise care and respect for all data and files about, or kept on behalf of, a member or potential member.

Key points for to note are:

- member details should only be extracted from RMS/WARMS for a specific purpose.
- lists of member details should not be kept once they have been used for a task
- membership records should not be disclosed to third parties
- data on RMS, or data received or obtained for recruitment and organising purposes, must be obtained from a legitimate source and must be kept accurate
- branch computers or files must be secure from unauthorised access
- lists of members' details should always be destroyed securely
- there should be no need to print a member's complete record from RMS
- remember that written or electronic documents containing information or opinions about an individual may be viewed by that individual at some stage under DPA rules
- branches must pass any requests for information under the DPA to the regional office as quickly as possible, and should not send any information to the individual unless requested to do so by the region or Data Protection Officer.

16. APPROVAL OR ALTERATION OF BRANCH RULES

The branch rules must be agreed at the *AGM* or a *General Meeting*.

Any changes to branch rules must be agreed and approved in the same manner.

All changes to branch rules must be sanctioned by UNISON Regional office, to ensure changes are both appropriate and comply with the relevant financial regulations.