

## **General Duties of Officers and Convenors:**

- To adhere to the 'Working Together in UNISON' guidelines
- To work within National and Branch UNISON Rules and the Code of Good Branch Practice
- To attend Branch Committees and Branch Officers Meetings, providing regular reports
- To provide regular material for Branch Newsletter and Website
- To adhere to agreed Surrey County UNISON Office protocols
- To work towards agreed Surrey County UNISON aims and objectives
- To keep records of working time/activities whilst on UNISON secondment
- To work towards a maximum 50% of any agreed facility time to be spent on individual casework
- To actively recruit members and stewards to Surrey County UNISON
- To support, advise and mentor new and existing stewards

## **Surrey County UNISON Role Profiles (agreed in 2009, convenor/senior steward role updated in 2020)**

**(in accordance with the UNISON National Code of Good Branch Practice)**

### **CHAIR/S**

Tasks relating to the office of branch chairperson

- to preside at all meetings of the branch, branch executive and branch committee in accordance with UNISON rules and guidance.
- to prepare and agree the agenda for meetings with the secretary at least one week in advance
- to ensure that business is properly conducted
- to advise the branch officers and branch committee in respect of matters relating to procedure and interpretation of rules
- to ensure that all functions of the branch are carried out
- to work closely with the secretary to provide leadership to the branch
- to take the lead in investigating any complaints against branch activists, officers or staff
- to actively participate in the branch executive committee

### **SECRETARY**

The branch secretary is responsible for ensuring the proper completion of the following tasks. The branch secretary will not personally undertake all these functions but will act as the strategic lead officer and co-ordinator within the branch. The secretary will encourage partnership working within the branch committee and the development of new representatives, will be the manager of branch staff and will manage the delegation of work to other branch officers and branch staff as appropriate, whilst providing support and guidance.

Tasks relating to the office of branch secretary:

- to guide the branch's development through the preparation and implementation of a branch organisation and development plan
- to ensure the representation of members within the branch in accordance with national guidance and that case forms and applications for services forwarded to UNISON offices are properly completed and authorised
- to convene and attend all meetings of the branch, branch executive and branch committee.
- to arrange for the minutes of meetings to be kept in a proper manner and circulated to all branch officers and stewards
- to arrange for branch records to be kept in a proper manner

- to ensure the branch, speedily and accurately, processes applications for membership and maintains records in accordance with UNISON's systems
- to ensure regular communication with the members of the branch with news of campaigns, negotiations, issues, branch developments and activities
- to communicate with the union's regional and head offices on behalf of the branch
- to ensure that branch members are aware of opportunities to participate in the activities of the wider union, or within self-organisation if appropriate
- to support, mentor and encourage the stewards in the branch on an individual and collective basis. The branch secretary should seek to ensure that each steward has a one to-one meeting to discuss issues and workplace organisation, on a six-monthly basis
- to ensure that members and stewards are aware, and take advantage of, educational and training opportunities within UNISON
- to ensure that appropriate publicity activities are developed and co-ordinated by the branch
- to act as spokesperson for the branch when in contact with other levels of the union and external organisations
- to ensure that members receive the benefits, rights and services to which they are entitled
- to provide leadership and to co-ordinate all branch negotiations and industrial relations matters
- 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
- to ensure the proper management and direction of the branch employed staff

#### **DEPUTY BRANCH SECRETARY/IES**

- to deputise in all tasks for the branch secretary in their absence
- to work with and support the branch secretary in all tasks pertaining to the role of Branch Secretary
- to work with and support the branch secretary in providing leadership to branch officers, convenors and stewards
- to work with and support the branch secretary in the appropriate management and support of branch staff
- To provide specific support and advice to elected officers and convenors
- to actively participate in the branch executive committee

#### **TREASURER**

- to conduct the branch's financial business
- to keep accounts in accordance with the rules
- to provide reports on the financial position of the branch to the branch committee and/or branch executive
- to provide a detailed financial report for the annual branch meeting(s) (AGMs)
- to advise the branch officers and branch committee in respect of matters relating to financial management and appropriate expenditure
- to provide an audited annual return of branch income
- to actively participate in the branch executive committee

#### **EDUCATION OFFICER**

- to make sure all new stewards and safety representatives receive initial information and guidance about their duties, e.g. stewards handbook, rulebook, service conditions agreements, etc
- to publicise the range of educational and training opportunities available to members and activists

- to get untrained stewards, safety representatives and other branch officers onto appropriate training courses
- to co-ordinate and support the work of learning representatives
- to encourage branch members and activists to make use of the UNISON Open College courses, especially 'Return to Learn' and 'Women, Work and Society'
- to maintain contact with the regional education officer/regional education committee
- to establish a plan of training for activists and to produce an annual budget to meet its costs
- to keep records of what training has been undertaken and by whom within the branch
- to make sure that activists get paid time off for training where appropriate.

### **LIFELONG LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR**

- to work closely with the branch education co-ordinator
- to co-ordinate the activity of learning representatives in the branch education team
- to work with colleagues to recruit new learning representatives
- to act as the lead and be closely involved in negotiating around learning with employers
- to co-ordinate and disseminate information on learning opportunities in the branch
- to ensure that the work of learning representatives is fully integrated into the branch.

### **EQUALITIES COORDINATOR/S**

- to be the identified and well publicised point/s of contact in the branch for equality issues
- to collect and share information on equalities issues, including information from the regional and national self-organised groups
- to make sure other branch officers and the branch committee consider the equalities dimension of everything they do
- to make sure "equality, inclusion and diversity" is being raised in all collective bargaining – not just in bargaining on 'pure' equalities issues
- to encourage and support the development of branch self-organised groups on behalf of the branch committee
- to have a co-ordinating role among the self-organised groups, and between the self-organised groups and the rest of the branch. Self-Organised Group (SOG) officers to include:

**BLACK MEMBERS OFFICER**

**DISABLED MEMBERS OFFICER**

**WOMENS OFFICER**

**LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER + (LGBT+) OFFICER**

**Although not a SOG, also the YOUNG MEMBERS OFFICER**

- Specific SOG Officers will lead on the day to day activity and work of their relevant SOG.
- to make sure new recruits know about UNISON's commitment to equality and opportunities to participate in self-organisation
- to advise the branch officers and branch committee on the development and monitoring of the action plan to achieve proportionality and fair representation;
- to co-ordinate the development and training of members from under-represented groups.
- to coordinate motions and support to delegates attending self-organised group conferences.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER**

- to increase the awareness of members, health and safety representatives and branch officers of health and safety issues
- to organise the information held by the branch on health and safety
- to co-ordinate the activity of health and safety representatives and to organise regular meetings of health & safety representatives to exchange information and consider priorities

- to act as the lead and be closely involved in all negotiations with the employer on matters related to health and safety
- to advise the branch committee on health and safety issues arising in the branch and to recommend policies and priorities
- 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
- to maintain contact with the region and regional service groups, for example via the regional health and safety committee.

### **COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER**

- to explain UNISON's policies and to provide the information members need to play an active role in their union
- to assist with efforts to recruit new members
- to help support UNISON's national and regional campaigns
- to help create a positive image for the branch among members, potential members and the public
- to produce news-sheets or bulletins for distribution to branch members.
- to lead on the development of electronic communication with members – email, website, etc
- to ensure branch communications are in the accessible formats members need – audit for any particular requirements such as large print/ Braille etc
- to ensure that nationally and regionally produced publicity and campaign materials are distributed, as appropriate, to stewards and onward to members and non-members
- to monitor local media for stories which affect the branch and take appropriate action
- to help ensure that the branch makes effective contact with the media whenever necessary by:
  - creating and maintaining mailing lists to media outlets and contacts
  - writing press releases agreed with the Branch Secretary and in accordance with Branch and National policy & rules
- ensuring that appropriate individuals within the branch are available for comments, interviews, etc
- writing 'letters to the editor'.

### **MEMBERSHIP OFFICER**

- to work with the Branch Secretary, Regional Office and Branch staff to map the branch's membership in order to identify membership density and steward coverage
- to monitor the branch's recruitment, and also leavers rate
- to work with the branch committee to develop and implement its organisation and development plan
- to make recommendations to the branch committee on recruitment activities, targets, resources, budgets, etc.

### **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICER**

- to co-ordinate the branch's work on international relations
- to ensure that branch members are informed of national policy on international matters
- to receive and distribute relevant information
- to encourage members to be aware of the importance of international solidarity issues within the context of the overall work of the union
- to liaise where appropriate with regional international structures and to ensure that the views of the branch on international activities are reported appropriately

- to liaise with other branch officers concerning publicity and education on international issues
- to liaise with the solidarity organisations and campaigns that UNISON is affiliated to
- to encourage members of the branch to take action and participate in international solidarity activities organised nationally or regionally
- to ensure that information on branch activity is shared at regional and national level
- to seek to develop an international perspective among members, stewards and branch officers.

### **YOUNG MEMBERS' OFFICER**

- to recruit new members and to encourage existing young members to become active in the branch
- to make sure issues of concern to young workers are raised by the branch
- to act as a focal point for all young workers in the branch and workplaces
- to receive and distribute UNISON young members information
- to encourage involvement in UNISON young members campaigns
- to build branch young members organisation and to ensure there are potential new young members' officers in the future.
- Other branch officers will assist in these tasks.
- Branch young members' officer must be under 27 years of age for the whole of their term of office.

### **GREEN/CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER**

- To be advised
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### **LABOUR LINK OFFICER**

- 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
- to receive correspondence and information on Labour Link matters from national and regional levels and from the Labour Party
- to circulate information to Labour Link members in the branch and convene meetings of members as necessary
- to attend the UNISON branch committee and agree appropriate means of promoting UNISON policy in the party
- 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
- to liaise with the Labour Link regional political officer
- to promote political education and policy discussions
- to strengthen links with local Labour Parties by affiliating to constituencies and electing delegates to attend meetings
- to communicate with Labour Party members within the branch and encourage individual membership of the Labour Party
- to build campaigning work around key issues and co-ordinate campaigns with the Labour Party in council, Westminster, Scotland, Wales and European elections.

### **RETIRED MEMBERS' SECRETARY**

- to ensure that those members approaching retirement have the opportunity to become retired members
- to organise meetings of the branch retired members

- to encourage the participation of retired members in branch activities as appropriate
- to establish links with other retirement organisations in the area
- to attend meetings of the branch committee
- to submit a budget to the branch committee to fund retired member activities
- to ensure that the retired members' section functions in accordance with UNISON Rule and any branch standing orders and procedures.
- 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](http://unison.org.uk/acrobat/15817.pdf).

## **WELFARE OFFICER**

- to ensure that branch officers, stewards and workplace representatives, and also employers, have regular up-to date-information about UNISON Welfare and its range of services
- to ensure that members seeking welfare assistance receive a prompt, supportive and effective response
- to liaise and co-ordinate with regional and national levels to ensure that UNISON Welfare support is provided effectively
- to undertake training and seek advice from UNISON Welfare where necessary
- to develop and implement local welfare activity
- to develop links with local charities and sources of support such as Citizen's Advice Bureau and women's refuges.

## **AUDITORS**

A candidate for the post of auditor cannot be a member of the branch committee.

- to oversee the financial records of the branch
- to undertake an annual audit of the branch financial records
- to provide a written report of the annual audit to the annual general meeting
- to report any financial irregularities to UNISON's internal audit department.

### **Convenor & Senior Steward Role**

Convenors & Senior Stewards will be elected from and by the stewards in directorates and larger employers at the first meeting of stewards following the AGM and can be elected/re-elected at any properly convened and advertised stewards meeting. The Convenor's role is to lead branch organisation at that level. Only existing stewards can become Convenors/Senior Stewards. As a UNISON Rep we expect you will be ERA accredited and already have some experience. Some of the key issues you will already been involved with: -

- recruiting members into the union and organising them around workplace issues
- talking to members about workplace issues, offering advice and keeping them informed of the latest developments
- representing members who have problems
- branch work and the wider union

One of the key differences between the Reps role and the Convenor/ Senior Steward roles are that you will now be expected to:-

- Attend regular strategic Director meetings (DJCC / JCC). Each meeting has agreed Terms of Reference, so please make sure you are aware of these.
- Convenors/ Senior Stewards should remember that when attending these meetings you are representing UNISON and should always conduct yourself in a professional manner at all

times. We are not there to argue but have a constructive dialogue and to represent the views of members.

- Convenors/ Senior Steward should ensure they are aware of relevant SCC Policy and Procedures before attending DJCC/JCC meetings. These policies and procedures will formulate discussion so a good knowledge is of great benefit.
- A Convenor/ Senior Steward can't do everything on their own and should request help and guidance from other Officers within the Branch who might have more expertise.
- Convenor's need to work together with the Reps as a team, supporting each other.
- The Convenor is the main person within any directorate who will communicate with members, letting the members know what they are doing and why. This doesn't necessarily involve speeches at big meetings. The best way is through day-to-day conversation or a Newsletter. You will also be required to feedback each month to the Branch Committee.
- Publicise UNISON successes in negotiating with management and representing members in individual cases. Everyone in the workplace will be interested, it will help to retain support from members and open the door to recruit new ones.
- The best way to approach any issue is to approach management in the first instance to seek an informal solution to problems, although we do not do 'deals' with employers behind the backs of members.
- With any work related problem the Convenor/ Senior Steward should be able to offer constructive advice to the Reps however, if required, contact someone with more experience from the Branch who can help resolve the issue and ensure that a problem isn't made worse.
- Apply collective thinking to representation work. Some issues arising from an individual case often turn out to be 'collective' in the sense that they affect a number of other people, not just the person who brought the problem forward in the first place. In this scenario ensure you have Branch Committee approval before raising a collective dispute