

**UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch AGM 2010
10 Feb 2010, 6pm Assembly Rooms George Street
Edinburgh**

RULE CHANGES AND POLICY MOTIONS

Brief Guide to Meetings (See full standing orders at www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk)

We hope you enjoy the AGM and that you will feel able to take part in setting our branch's policies at this very important time.

Meetings can seem quite formal but with so many people there, it is important to have rules to:-

- ensure a well ordered meeting.
- make sure as many people as possible have their say without the meeting being abused.

The Chair is there to keep order and make sure that things are run within your rules.

Motions: Motions create policy that mandates the Branch. They are introduced by the mover named on the agenda. The seconder can then speak after or later in the debate.

Amendments: Can add, change or delete bits of motions but they cannot merely contradict a motion.
Speaking: The mover of a motion gets up to 7 minutes to speak and other speakers get 3. Then any member can speak and should start by giving their name and department. They must keep to the issue and can speak only once.

How do I get to speak?: Just come forward. The Chairperson decides the order of speakers, usually alternating for and against.

Right of Reply: The mover gets another chance at the end but new material cannot be raised.

Voting: Normally voting is by show of hands but elections for branch officers will be by ballot. The Chair will rule on whether a motion is carried or not. If in doubt he/she will call for a count.

Ending a debate: Normally a debate goes on until everyone who wants to speak has spoken. But, after five speakers, anyone who has not spoken in the debate can move that "The Question Be Put". The meeting will immediately vote on this and, if carried, we go straight to the right of reply and the vote.

Agenda Item 9. Rule Changes

1. Role of Treasurer

Proposed by Kevin Duguid (Finance) Tam McKirdy (Services for Communities)

Section E - 7

PARA 7.D Add new sentence "This will be done at a minimum of once every 3 Months from the start of the UNISON Financial Year."

(NOTE: The current rule requires the Treasurer to "regularly inform the Branch Committee of the current financial position of the Branch". This rule change would firm this up to three-monthly.)

Agenda Item 10. Policy Motions

In line with practice since the inauguration of the branch, motions have been prioritised under the following headings. In addition, they are prioritised on whether they are urgent, instruct the branch to act on an issue within its remit, and need a branch meeting decision. Where there is no clear priority, they are in the order in which they were received.

- Council Budget, Cuts, Redundancies (local action)
- Service Conditions Issues (issues like pay and conditions)
- Health & Safety
- Pensions and Superannuation
- UNISON Services and Structure
- Policy and Campaigning
- Economic Policy
- International
- Miscellaneous

Any motions not dealt with will be remitted to the Branch Committee.

EMERGENCY MOTIONS

Must be urgent, unable to be submitted within the timescales and relevant. They require a two-thirds majority to be heard.

Because of rapidly changing developments re the Budget, Single Status, Alternative Business Models etc, negotiators will wish to submit emergencies on these.

Council Budget, Cuts, Redundancies (local action)

1. Facing the challenges of 2010

*Proposed by John Stevenson (Children and Families)
and John Ross (Services for Communities)*

This Branch recognises that 2010 will bring the biggest challenges its members have ever faced. These include:-

- The possible imposition of an unfair 'Modernising Pay' scheme which will see thousands of members losing out, many of them women in lower paid jobs - exactly the opposite of what it was intended to do. This Branch deplores the fact that many groups of members will be among the lowest paid local authority staff in Scotland, with all that will mean for recruitment, workloads and safety, particularly in services like social care.
- The possible outsourcing or privatisation of key local services, based on cost rather than quality.
- Possible redundancies.
- Attacks on pay in the Council and the spin-off for the Voluntary and Associated Sectors.
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This Branch recognises that the legal complexities of equal pay and the financial reality of shortfalls in central government funding mean that traditional or single-tactic responses from the union and its members will not be enough to defend pay, jobs and services. It also recognises that the union cannot hope to defend members through these crises unless it is strong and has a sound membership base. Only that strength will bring the power to resist the attacks.

Accordingly, this Branch resolves to:-

1. Mount an immediate and far-reaching recruitment campaign, enlisting the support of Scottish and UK structures to further build on our membership. Each steward should target the signing up of at least 10 members before the end of March.

On 'Modernising Pay', this Branch resolves to

2. Continue to reject the proposals as they stand.

3. Continue the strategy of trying to negotiate the best deal possible with the best protection possible, recognising that the complex legal restraints may lead to the Branch being unable to ballot on any final proposals.

4. Continue the strategy of trying to separate conditions changes from job evaluation and seek further legal advice on whether we can ballot on the conditions aspects alone.

5. If the Council imposes, draw up a strategy of action for targeted groups to resist the worst excesses of the scheme.

On outsourcing and privatisation, this Branch

6. Agrees to continue engagement with the Council on any genuine attempts to seek real efficiencies and keep services in-house.

7. Resist all attempts to outsource or privatise and fight to ensure services remain democratically

accountable to the people of Edinburgh, keeping jobs in Edinburgh and benefiting the local economy.

8. Ensure that any comparisons are based on 'like for like' including clear quality, service delivery and workforce rights (like pay, equality, health and safety and pensions) indicators.

On pay, this Branch resolves to

i) Oppose any reductions in pay and conditions. It notes that media campaigns against the public sector use only selective comparators with the private sector. Public service workers do not get huge bonuses or cheap mortgages. The media does not take into account the previous years where local government pay not only fell well behind the private sector, but also other parts of the public sector.

ii) Oppose any attacks on public sector pensions. These pensions are deferred pay, they are not 'gilt-edged' and the campaign should be for fairer pensions in the private sector rather than attacking local government's contributory scheme.

iii) Campaign to ensure that low paid public service workers do not pay the price for the failings of rich bankers.

iv) Seek a joint campaign with the Council to demand that Holyrood and Westminster fund local government at a level that will allow it to build local economies out of the recession.

In following this strategy, the Branch will develop a range of responses, including:-

- Lobbying, campaigning, demonstrations, joint campaigns with users and community groups, along with a planned media strategy
- Direct action, within UNISON's procedures, including various forms of industrial action that can be sustained and effective. This Branch recognises that any successful action will bring a response from the employer(s) and therefore it needs to be underpinned by a willingness from the beginning to take all-out strike action if necessary.
- Reiterating its position to ballot all members in the event of compulsory redundancies.

Service Conditions Issues (pay and conditions)

2. Professional Representation and Fitness To Practice

*Proposed by John Stevenson (Children and Families),
John Ross (Services for Communities)*

This Branch notes that increasing numbers of our members require to be registered with bodies like the Scottish Social Services Council, Health Professionals Council etc. and will soon require to be registered under 'Check to Protect'.

This Branch recognises that registration bodies have a duty to protect the public and have codes governing professional conduct, standards of competency and health requirements.

However, this Branch also recognises that increasing registration brings a new dimension to representing members. Removal from registration means the loss

of livelihood and is an employment issue. Even interim removal, with no case yet proven against a member, can result in the member being unable to work. This Branch notes that UNISON has responded by developing a Professional Services Unit, protocols and guidance, but it believes that new skills and organisation are needed in Regions and Branches to manage the workload and ensure that members receive the best representation possible.

This Branch Meeting therefore instructs Branch Officers to present a motion to National Delegate Conference 2010 to develop:-

1. Organisational strategies
2. Training and support for activists
3. Early access to specialist advice

3. Domestic Abuse/Violence - Workplace Agreements

*Proposed by Elaine Wishart (Corporate Services),
Catriona Grant (Health & Social Care)*

This Branch adopts the following as policy and agrees to forward the motion to National Delegate Conference.

Conference recognises that Domestic Abuse/Violence is a complex issue that will often need complex solutions. Conference also recognises that Domestic Abuse/Violence is a workplace issue that requires effective and progressive workplace policies and procedures if it is to be recognised by employers as a real workplace issue.

Domestic Abuse/Violence is a workplace issue that affects all genders either as victims or perpetrators and its affects can be far reaching. Home and work issues cannot always be easily separated and domestic abuse/violence can have a huge impact on job performance, which often results in disciplinary action, can threaten job prospects, career development and security. Conference recognises that we must be committed to supporting members who are affected by domestic abuse/violence and the most effective way of doing this, is by negotiating a workplace agreement.

Conference notes that the most up to date Home Office Statistics show that 14% of all violent incidents are for domestic abuse/violence. That victims of domestic abuse suffer repeat violent crime more than any other victim of violent crime, 66%, and that 21% of victims will be assaulted more than three times. Conference further notes that in the most recent Scottish Crime Survey one in three women admitted to being abused or frightened by their current or previous partner. Conference recognises that many of these women will be UNISON members and that inevitably UNISON members will be perpetrators

Conference welcomes the model workplace agreement available from UNISON, however given current research and improving practice believes that workplace agreements need to include provisions on how to deal with employees who are perpetrators.

Conference welcomes the work of Refuge and Respect, national charities working with both victims

and perpetrators of domestic abuse/violence, and recognises that their toolkit for employers for dealing with domestic abuse/violence is the most progressive and inclusive available in the UK to date.

Conference instructs the NEC to:

- 1) Adopt the Refuge and Respect Toolkit and guidance in working towards updating the Model Workplace Agreement.
- 2) Lobby the government to make workplace agreements a statutory requirement for all public sector employers in line with their gender equality duty.

4. See Me Campaign

*Proposed by John Ross (Services for Communities),
Irene Stout (Services for Communities)*

The Branch notes that one of the biggest causes of absence in the Council and associated bodies is stress, anxiety and depression.

Statistically one in four people will suffer from mental illness at some point in their life and the purpose of the See Me Campaign is to eradicate the associated stigma. It offers education programmes and support to sufferers and families alike.

This meeting supports these objectives and commits the branch to giving full support to the campaign through sponsorship and profiling these aims wherever possible.

The Branch meeting instructs branch officers to forward the terms of this motion - amended as required - to UNISON Scotland.

UNISON Services and Structure

Proposed by Kevin Duguid (Finance), Walter Weir (Services for Communities)

This Meeting notes with concern that UNISON subscription rates, when reviewed and calculated for individuals, continue to include non contractual payments such as voluntary overtime when clearly the Rule Book states they should not be included. This has resulted in Members rates, unjustifiably, changing meaning that they then have a larger deduction made from their wage than they should.

Furthermore this meeting believes that it is not acceptable to change a members Subscription Band without prior notice. A notification to members would allow a period of time to resolve any issue, about how a Subscription Band was calculated, to be resolved prior to implementation of the change.

This meeting instructs Branch Officers to:

- 1) Draft an appropriate Rule Change or changes to be submitted to National Delegates Conference in 2010.
- 2) Engage with both the Local Authority and UNISON (nationally) to try to establish, once again, if the method of calculation for subscriptions can be altered to avoid the above scenario.

6. Self Organisation

*Proposed by John Ross (Services for Communities),
Irene Stout (Services for Communities)*

This meeting is concerned at the lack of membership involvement in self organisation and calls for the union at all levels to carry out reviews which would stimulate higher participation. These reviews should be carried out without undue delay.

This Branch Meeting instructs branch officers to forward a motion in these terms to Scottish Council and National Delegate Conference.

Policy and Campaigning

7. Response to economic and environmental crises - Putting People First

*Proposed by Matthew Crighton (Associated Bodies),
Paul Clarke (Services for Communities)*

In 2009 we have seen that the world's dominant economic powers and institutions are incapable of resolving satisfactorily the economic and environmental crises facing us. The G20 has offered only an attempt to restore 'business as usual' on the back of massive commitment of public funds.

Current policies seek to make working people pay for government's measures to keep the financial system afloat and bail out the banks - through spending cuts, attacks on wages, reduced pension rights; while allowing banks to continue to make profits and pay out massive bonuses. The failure of the Copenhagen talks on climate change shows that the governments

of the richest countries are not willing to take the steps needed to protect our peoples and our planet. We understand that solutions to economic and environmental crises must be integrated - two crises, one solution. Both require radical shifts away from the liberalizing 'Washington consensus' towards democratic control of national and international economies. Just as neo-liberal economic measures will sabotage attempts to control climate change, in the long run climate change will do immense economic damage, not to mention the environmental disasters for millions across the world.

In order to protect members and services, as well as through industrial struggles trade unions need to build the largest possible alliances to articulate a popular consensus around these positions - at international, national and local levels.

In this regard we note the success of the Put People First coalition in assembling a platform of policies supported by UNISON and mobilizing 35,000 on the march before G20 meeting; also that this provided a framework for further initiatives e.g. the People's Summit at the G20 Finance Ministers' meeting in St Andrews in November. We also applaud the involvement of this branch and UNISON Scotland in the Edinburgh World Justice Festival and the Stop Climate Chaos coalition.

As the impacts of the recession unravel and as the consequences of climate change impoverish and dispossess more and more people, such alliances will become more important. UNISON, at local, national and international levels, should seek to lead efforts to

sustain and extend these alliances locally, especially to include more trade unions.

We call on UNISON and UNISON Scotland to review the experience of involvement in these coalitions and propose measures for continuing this work, and if possible resourcing it on a more permanent basis. Consideration should also be given to replicating this way of working at international levels.

*To be forwarded to Scottish Council and NDC;
revised if necessary to take account of
circumstances.*

8. Uniting Against Fascism

*Proposed by Services for Communities Shop Stewards
Committee*

This union notes:

1. That the election of two members of the fascist British National Party to the European parliament marked a turning point in British politics. This is the biggest electoral breakthrough for a fascist party in the UK. Their election threatens to normalise the presence of the BNP in mainstream politics.
2. That the BNP is dedicated to an all-white Britain, the destruction of trade unions and the elimination of basic democratic rights. The BNP mobilises on the basis of racism, seeking to divide society. Its politics of hate and division threaten the freedoms and safety of those the party would see annihilated - Jews, black people, trade unionists, Muslims and all ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, disabled people and anybody who stands for a democratic society.

3. That the BBC had Nick Griffin, leader of the fascist BNP and a man with a criminal conviction for denying Hitler's Holocaust, on its flagship Question Time programme. Unfortunately this invitation helped further legitimise the BNP and its politics of race hate.

This union believes:

1. That racism divides workers and has no place within the trade union movement.
2. That at a time of deepening recession, the BNP's policies of hatred and division offer no solution.
3. That trades union organisations which have expelled fascists from their membership are to be congratulated.
4. That, as a matter of urgency, we must unite to build the broadest possible opposition to the BNP.

This union resolves:

1. To affiliate to Unite Against Fascism
2. To call on the union nationally to campaign for the removal of BNP members in public services.
3. To circulate Unite Against Fascism leaflets and other materials and cooperate with other trades unions and organisations in providing resources and support
4. To send this motion to UNISON Scottish Council.

9. Affiliation to Stonewall

*Proposed by John Ross (Services for Communities),
Irene Stout (Services for Communities)*

This meeting agrees the Branch should affiliate to the organisation called Stonewall which provides support and advice on LGBT issues.

10. Election 2010

*Proposed by John Stevenson (Children and Families)
and John Ross (Services for Communities)*

This Branch meeting notes that there will be a UK General Election in 2010.

It calls on the UNISON LabourLink to use all of its influence to ensure that the Labour Party campaigns on progressive policies, in particular a manifesto based on UNISON's Million Voices campaign call for:

- quality public services - no more privatisation.
Increased investment in accountable public services.
- good jobs - environmentally sustainable and socially useful jobs, with decent pay and pensions and a strong union voice
- social justice - help for those facing redundancy, repossessions and poverty - not bonuses and tax cuts for millionaires

This Branch meeting recalls the unprecedented attacks by the previous Conservative Government on public services, working people and communities. It

also notes the Conservative Party's ideological opposition to in-house public services and its stated intention to attack public sector pay and pensions.

While there have been many reasons to welcome the record of Labour in Government - for example, the minimum wage, record investment in Health, ground-breaking progress on developing countries' debt - there are also many reasons to challenge and oppose the Government over its record on illegal wars and privatisation. However, this Branch believes that the alternative to Labour at UK level would be disastrous for public services.

Accordingly we believe that the re-election of a Labour Government at UK level - with UNISON's LabourLink campaigning for progressive policies - would be the best available option for public services and public service workers.
