

BRANCH MODEL CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

This Branch of the Communication Workers Union shall be known as the
XXXXXXXXXX

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of each Branch shall be to:

1. Locally organise, recruit and maximise membership levels and to maintain accurate branch membership records.
2. Protect and promote the interests of members in accordance with the objectives as expressed in the National Rules and policies of the union.
3. Keep members informed on local, regional and national matters.
4. Effectively consult members on local issues affecting their work.
5. Implement the policies and directives of the NEC, Industrial Executives and conferences of the union.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1. General

Branches shall ensure that;

1. All applications for membership are dealt with in accordance with national rules
2. All members are aware of their entitlements and obligations as defined in the national rules

3.2. Branch Membership

The membership of the Branch shall include:

1. All relevant persons in the communications, financial services, information technology and related industries and in all businesses where the Union has recognition.
2. Retired Members
3. Other groups or persons agreed between the Branch and CWU Headquarters.

4. BRANCH MANAGEMENT

4.1. Branch Constitution, Branch Rules and Standing Orders

1. Branches shall operate according to the Branch Model Constitution agreed by the NEC and the Branch Officers and Branch Committee shall ensure the terms of the Branch Model constitution are complied with.
2. Branches may also adopt and operate local Branch Rules and Standing Orders to govern any areas not specifically covered by the Branch Model Constitution, which shall be subject to the agreement of the Branch and approval by the NEC.

4.2. Management

The affairs of the Branch shall be governed by General Meetings of, which there shall be an AGM and minimum of one other. In the intervals between General Meetings the affairs of the Branch shall be directed by the Branch Officers and Branch Committee

4.3. Minimum Standards

The CWU is committed to ensuring that all branches provide effective and professional representation to all members. To achieve this it is a requirement that all branches ensure that the following minimum standards are adhered to:

1. All members and representatives will act in strict accordance with the rules and policies of the CWU at all times.
2. The Branch fully supports the CWU aim of providing all members with equality of opportunity, dignity and respect. Therefore members and representatives of the Branch will be encouraged, and where appropriate supported, in participating in such events that support these aims. This includes attendance at CWU

organised/supported events such as; the various Equality & Diversity Conferences, Retired Members and Youth events.

3. The Branch will attend and take an active part in all national, regional and local meetings that affect the Branch membership.
4. All representatives of the branch have a responsibility to ensure that all issues are dealt with promptly and efficiently.
5. The Branch Committee will put in place effective communication channels throughout the branch area and ensure that members are kept fully informed on all relevant matters.
6. The Branch Officers & Branch Committee shall ensure that priority treatment is given to the recruitment and organising of new members throughout the branch area and that this important issue is properly funded and sufficiently resourced.
7. Each Branch within its area shall ensure fair representation of all members, in terms of race, creed, religion, age, political affiliation, disability, marital status, sex or sexual or gender orientation.
8. Each Branch shall strive to ensure proportionality in Branch organisation and leadership.
9. The Branch Office shall - **as a minimum** – contain the following basic items of essential equipment and it shall be the responsibility of the principle Branch Officers to ensure that they are operational/functioning at all times:
 - Secure filing and storage facilities
 - Telephone (including 24 hour answer phone facility)
 - Fax
 - Computer
 - Branch email address

4.4 Branch Organisation

1. Each Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting by no later than 31st March of each year. Not less than 28 days notice shall be given to members of the Annual General Meeting and branches shall be

responsible for publishing the agenda and timetable for the submitting of motions and amendments etc.

2. Each Branch shall elect a Branch Committee, which shall include as a **minimum** the following elected Branch Officers and members:
 - a. Chair
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer/Financial Secretary
 - d. Equality Officer
 - e. Political Officer
 - f. Six other Branch Committee members
3. Branches may also elect other branch officers and branch committee members as required and agreed by the Branch.
4. The precise composition of the branch committee and the duties of the branch officers shall be detailed in the branch rules or attached as an appendix to the model branch constitution.
5. Where a Branch has members in more than one Constituency of the union it shall establish Constituency Sections.

Note: No Branch Officer holding a position of (a), (b) or (c) may hold another post of (a), (b) or (c). Different people must hold each of the three posts.

All candidates for the post of Political Officer must pay the political levy and with the exception of Northern Ireland members they must also be members of the Labour Party.

4.5 Branch Election Procedures

Branches shall establish rules governing the conduct of the elections to ensure equality of treatment for all candidates. These shall be incorporated into the branch constitution/branch rules and shall be published to the membership.

5. BRANCH FINANCES

1. All Branches shall ensure that the finances of the branch are conducted in strict accordance with the rules and policies of the union.

2. Every Branch shall produce a financial plan for the following year.
3. The rules governing all Branch financial matters shall be detailed in the Branch rules or attached as an appendix to the branch constitution.
4. Lay Branch Auditors

a) The Branch AGM shall elect two lay Branch Auditors who shall not be Branch Officers or Branch Committee members. Their names shall be circulated to members and notified to CWU HQ Finance Dept upon their election.

- b) The lay Branch Auditors shall examine and audit all Branch Accounts to ensure accuracy and shall have the right to examine and question the Branch Finances, financial policy, income and expenditure on behalf of the lay membership. All vouchers, receipts, bank statements, documents, accounts books, remittance forms and ledgers shall be examined to verify accuracy or otherwise. Lay Branch Auditors shall also verify all cash at the Bank and shall satisfy themselves that all Branch income and expenditure is accounted for.
- c) The lay Branch Auditors shall produce a signed statement to Branch members and copy it to CWU HQ Finance Dept declaring they have executed their responsibilities.

6. DELEGATION TO CONFERENCE

1. All Conference delegations shall normally include the Branch Secretary.
2. The Branch Committee must ensure that all constituency/business interests are represented.
3. Each Branch shall strive to ensure proportionality in its delegations

7. AFFILIATIONS & LOCAL DELEGATIONS

1. The Branch may affiliate to organisations in accordance with National Rules.

2. Local delegations shall normally be appointed by and from members of the Branch Committee and whenever possible the Branch Secretary shall lead the delegation.
3. Each Branch shall strive to ensure proportionality in its delegations.

8. MEMBERS APPROACHING UNION HEADQUARTERS

The normal channel for communication between lay members and CWU Headquarters is via the Branch Secretary.

9. INTERPRETATIONS OF RULES

Should any point arise on which these Rules are vague or silent, such points shall be decided by the Chair and submitted to the next General Meeting. Should any dispute arise between any member or group of members of the Branch, such disputes should be considered by the Branch Committee and report made to the next General Meeting.

10. INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The procedures to be followed must be in accordance with the prevailing National Rule and relevant legislation.

11. DISCIPLINE

All matters of a disciplinary nature arising from the rules and regulations of the Union effecting Union members shall be dealt with in accordance with the prevailing National rule.

12. ALTERATIONS TO BRANCH RULES & STANDING ORDERS

1. No Branch Rule or Standing Order shall be amended without the consent of a majority of those present at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General meeting called on the instruction of the National Organising Secretary, at which any proposed amendments have been duly and properly notified.
2. Any amendments carried shall not be implemented until submitted to and approved by the NEC.

Appendix one: Precise composition of Branch Committee

The Branch Committee will be made up as follows elected in accordance to rule 4.5 & appendix three.

- a. Chair
- b. Secretary
- c. Treasurer/Financial Secretary
- d. Equality Officer
- e. Political Office
- f. Women's officer
- g. Assistant Secretary
- h. Legal Services Secretary
- i. Parcel force secretary
- j. POL secretary
- k. RM Area Delivery Rep
- l. RM Area Distribution Rep
- m. RM Area Processing Rep
- n. RM Area Health & Safety Rep

Appendix two: Duties of Branch Officers

4.7 Duties of Branch Officer's

Chair

- a) The Chair shall preside and be responsible for the conduct of all Branch meetings and shall sign all minutes of Branch meetings and through the Secretary, order Special Meetings when necessary.
- b) The Chair must ensure that the Branch has proper organised procedures to cater for Branch ballots.
- c) To be a member of the Branch Finance Committee

Secretary

- a) To keep a record containing necessary particulars of members in conjunction with the Branch Treasurer.
- b) To conduct the general business of the Branch.

- c) To convene the meetings of the Branch Committee in consultation with the Branch Chair and to provide a report to each meeting.
- d) To prepare all documents ordered by a General Meeting of the members or by Branch Committee and to forward, publish or present them in accordance with instructions by the same authorities.
- e) To furnish the NEC and CWU Field Officers with such details, statistics or reports regarding the Branch or its members as may be required and to submit details of any amendments to Branch Rules and Standing Orders which have been carried at the Branch AGM to the National Organising Secretary.
- f) To ensure that those responsible within the Branch keep the members informed of any agreements, negotiations and decisions that affect them.
- g) To collect and keep readily available all information and data likely to be of service to the Branch.
- h) To forward to the General Secretary by such dates as are provided for by the NEC, any proposition which the Branch intends to lay before the Annual Conference, after such motion has received the approval of a duly constituted Branch meeting.
- i) To report briefly to General Meetings, the proceedings of the Branch Committee.
- j) To prepare and present to the membership an Annual Report of the work of the Branch, such report to be supplied to the membership seven days before the AGM.
- k) To be a member of the finance committee, where they exist and any sub-committee.
- l) To arrange the preparation, under the direction of the Branch Chair, any ballot papers required for Branch Elections and ensure that these are provided to the election officer.
- m) To ensure that autonomous sections within the Branch are working effectively.
- n) To ensure all new reps receive training within six months of their election.

Treasurer/Financial Secretary

- a) To keep separate accounts for each fund of the Branch.
- b) To control the collection of subscriptions and levies.
- c) To receive all monies collected on behalf of the Branch.
- d) To remit to the Senior Deputy General Secretary any monies due to Union Headquarters by National Rule or by a decision of a Conference.
- e) To deposit all funds in a Unity Trust Bank or as otherwise determined by CWU Headquarters.
- f) To pay all proper claims on the Branch as they become due.
- g) To present an audited balance sheet at the Branch Annual General Meeting for each account held by the Branch.
- h) To exhibit to the members a copy of the balance sheets and audited accounts not less than 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- i) To have cash, bank statements and account books available at each Branch Committee Meeting.
- j) To retain all financial vouchers for at least two years from the date of the annual audit.
- k) To keep all statements of accounts and balance sheets for a period of seven years.
- l) To ensure that the Branch accounts are submitted to CWU Headquarters by the advertised date.
- m) To attend the monthly finance committee meetings, where they exist and to provide all relevant documentation to the committee.

Political Officer

- a) To ensure that the Branch is affiliated to all Constituency Labour Parties within its geographic boundaries and to regularly liaise with the Branch delegates to the CLP
- b) To recruit as many CWU members as possible to the Labour Party.

- c) To liaise and communicate with CWU Regional Political Committees, CLP Secretaries, Trade Union Liaison Officers and the Regional Labour Party Office over election and CLP campaigns, local CWU campaigns and general political activity. Assist in the distribution of Labour Party literature to the membership.
- d) To prepare an Annual Report for presentation to the membership.
- e) To provide and maintain a local Branch Political Bulletin which will inform Branch members of political issues and activities of interest to them.
- f) To assist in the political training and education of the Branch membership.
- g) To co-ordinate any CWU political campaign throughout the Branch membership.

Equality Officer

- a) To ensure the Branch promotes the Equal Opportunities statements and policies agreed from time to time by the Union at Annual Conference and within the Branch.
- b) To establish a liaison with properly constituted local groups within the geographical area.
- c) To advise other Union Officers on any Equal Opportunities issue arising in negotiations and representations.
- d) To prepare reports to the Branch covering Equal Opportunities work and on issues the Officer wishes to bring to the attention of the Branch.
- e) To prepare an Annual Report for presentation to the membership.

Women's Officer

- a) To attend the North East Women's Regional Committee.
- b) To attend the National Women's Conference.
- c) To establish and run a Women's section.
- d) To prepare an Annual Report for presentation to the membership.

Assistant Secretary

- a) To substitute for any Branch Official during any periods of absence fulfilling all roles proper to that position.
- b) To assist the Branch Secretary at any other time as determined by the Branch Committee.

Legal Services

- a) To be responsible for coordinating all legal services offered by CWU to its members.
- b) To be responsible for publicising all legal services offered by CWU to its members.

Appendix three: Branch Election Procedure

1. Voting Procedures

No member shall be elected to any office without first having been nominated in writing by two members of the Branch, one as a proposer, and the other as a seconder, and with the candidate's written consent to the nomination.

Such written nomination papers shall be sent to the Branch Secretary or other designated Branch Officer, as determined by the Branch Committee, which shall be shown in the notice inviting nominations. The notice shall also clearly state the closing date by which they shall be received, which date must allow members 21 clear days in which to propose nominations.

Members who consent to being nominated for election must on request furnish biographical details with a written statement of no more than 150 words outlining their reasons, intentions and commitment to the branch.

Name; Grade; employed at; nominated for; CWU activity; CWU education; Public service activity; political affiliation;

These details shall be included with the ballot paper.

2. Positions Becoming Vacant Between AGMs

Any vacancies, which may arise between elections, shall be filled under the procedures detailed above.

3. All successful candidates will hold the position for two years or until the next round of two yearly elections whichever is sooner.

Appendix four: Branch Finance General Rules

1. Every year each Branch shall produce a financial plan for the following year, which shall:
 - a) be agreed by the Branch Committee, published to members and lodged as a record at CWU HQ Finance Dept.;
 - b) show expected income based on membership figures at the time the plan is agreed by the Branch;
 - c) include detailed planned expenditure, following the principle that such expenditure shall not exceed income;
 - d) identify the purpose of any annual surplus and the intention to use it on behalf of the members;
 - e) be reported on, against performance to date, to each Branch Committee meeting.
2. Separate and distinct accounts shall be kept for each scheme or fund for which the Branch is responsible e.g. General Account, Welfare Fund, Political Fund, etc.
3. Each Branch shall keep proper accounting records compatible with CWU HQ Finance Dept systems.
4. Each Branch shall maintain a register of property and equipment showing cost and date of purchase, and retain all receipts for such until disposal of the property or equipment. All property purchased through the use of membership subscriptions shall remain the property of the CWU.
5. At least two signatures shall be required for withdrawals from any account held in the Branch name.
6. A current statement of Branch accounts, including all relevant books and supporting vouchers, shall be presented for inspection and approval at each Branch Committee meeting and shall then be signed by the Branch Chair and Secretary.

7. CWU HQ Finance Dept, on the advice of the CWU national chartered accountants, shall be responsible for and fund the annual auditing of as many Branch accounts as is deemed necessary.
8. Branches shall not use chartered accountants unless authorized in writing by the SDGS; such accountants shall be appointed by CWU HQ Finance Dept.
9. The SDGS or appointed representative shall have the right to examine, on demand, all records of accounts and bank statements and attend Branch meetings to take part in any debate or discussion on the Branch Accounts.
10. To ensure reimbursement Branch claims due to be met by CWU HQ must be forwarded within 3 months of the activity. CWU HQ shall notify all Branches of the year-end cut-off date for such claims.
11. When a Branch is closed all funds and financial documents shall be forwarded to the SDGS. All assets shall become the property of CWU HQ administered by the SDGS and no party shall have any claim on them unless determined by the NEC.
12. Each Branch shall make provision in it's constitution to ensure compliance with these Rules.

6. Financial Administration

(a) Trustees

- a) There shall be three trustees, Branch Chair, Branch Secretary and Branch Treasurer/Financial Secretary.
- b) All Branch property including money, securities, equipment etc. shall be vested in the Trustees.
- c) The trustees shall be empowered to sign cheques on behalf of the Branch, any two of three signatures being required on each cheque prior to issue.
- d) The trustees shall meet monthly prior to each Branch Committee meeting.
- e) The trustees shall provide each Branch Committee meeting with a written report.

- f) The trustees must satisfy themselves that all Branch accounts are correct on a monthly basis by reference to bank statements, ledgers, receipts, and cheque and deposit books.

7. Financial Year

- a) The Branch Financial year shall commence on 1st January and close on 31st December each year.
- b) All documentation pertaining to all Branch accounts including CWU HQ forms must be submitted to CWU Headquarters by the advertised date.

Procedures

- a) The Branch shall hold only two accounts (General and Political Fund)
- b) All payments to individual members, Officer's and representatives must be made by cheque.
- c) Trustees must not, under any circumstances, sign blank cheques.
- d) Cash withdrawals must be kept to an absolute minimum and only in accordance with limits agreed with CWU Headquarters.
- e) Proper arrangements must be made to ensure that all expenses are paid promptly including Death Benefit to nominees (As an exception the Death Grant may be paid in cash provided a receipt is obtained). These arrangements must preclude the holding of petty cash anywhere other than the Branch Office. Petty cash held at the Branch Office must be suitably secured.

Appendix five: Branch by laws

- 2. The Branch Committee shall meet monthly.
- 3. There shall be a retired members section which will be entitled to elect a Section Committee to deal with retired members' problems. The Branch Committee shall seek a willing volunteer to service the retired members' section.
- 4. A member cannot hold a unit/Branch position if temporary/permanently promoted to a management role.

5. Special General Meetings may be convened on the authority of the Branch Committee or by written requisition to the Branch Chair signed by not less than XX fully paid up members of the Branch. A requisition for a Special General Meeting shall state fully and clearly in the form of a Motion, the specific purpose for which the meeting is desired. The only business to be considered at a Special General Meeting shall be that for which it is convened and as stated in the notices convening the meeting.
6. The quorum for a Branch General Meeting shall be XX members present not including the Branch Officers.