

LAST UPDATED AGM 2023

1) BRANCH NAME

- a. The branch shall be called UNISON Oxfordshire Health Services Branch.

2) RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL ORGANISATION

- a. Branch rules shall be in accordance with national rules, decisions of the Annual Delegate Conference and the NEC.
- b. Any member may have a copy of the current Rule Book.
- c. The branch shall make an audited annual return of branch income, expenditure, assets and liabilities as prescribed by the NEC in accordance with national rules.

3) AIMS OF THE BRANCH

- a. The aims of the branch shall be in accordance with the aims and values of UNISON as set out in the Rule Book.
- b. In particular, the branch will endeavour to ensure UNISON's aim of proportionality and fair representation is met in its structures.

4) MEMBERSHIP

- a. Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the Rules of the union.
- b. Applications for membership take effect from the date at which completed forms are received by the branch or at regional/national level and the first contribution is

made.

- c. A meeting of the branch or branch committee may decide not to support a membership application but such decision must be consistent with the Rules and with Statute. Such a decision must be explained to the individual in writing, together with their rights of appeal.
- d. All members must comply with the Rules.
- e. The NEC may terminate an individual's membership in accordance with the Rules.

5) BRANCH STRUCTURE

- a. There will be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the branch, to be held in the first quarter of each year.
- b. There will be at least 3 general meetings during the year.
- c. Branch Committee members' attendance record and a record of reports submitted will be sent out with nomination papers before the AGM.
- d. Other general meetings may be called by the branch committee, or by 20 members of the Branch, or 5% of the membership whichever is the greater.
- e. The branch will be organised in Constituencies (See Appendix A for details of the employers covered by each constituency).
- f. The grouping of members in Constituencies will be reviewed annually by the Branch Committee prior to the AGM in consultation with the reps' committees - if constituencies need to be revised and there are

no reps' committees affected that disagree with the new proposals then the new constituencies will be used at the following AGM. If there is a disagreement between the Branch Committee and any of the reps' committees affected, then the status quo remains and the issue must be referred to the AGM.

- g. Each constituency will set up a reps' committee comprising all the elected reps from within that constituency (Stewards, Health & Safety Reps and Learning Reps).
- h. The following positions will be elected in accordance with the national rules and branch rules (see appropriate section of these rules for details which apply to each group):
 - i. Branch Officers
 - ii. Self-Organised Group Reps
 - iii. Conveners
 - iv. Lead Stewards
 - v. Stewards
 - vi. Health and Safety Representatives
 - vii. Lifelong Learning Adviser/ Learning Reps.
- i. All of the above positions may be shared between two people but only one of them can vote (if the position has a vote).
- j. The branch shall keep bank accounts in the name of the branch.

6) BRANCH OFFICERS

- a. The following branch officers will be elected annually: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Education, Equality, Health and Safety, Membership and Recruitment,

Environment, Labour Link (APF), Communications, Retired Members, Welfare, Social Secretary, Young Members (age as per national rule), Women's Officer, International, Lifelong Learning coordinator and two auditors. No one may hold more than one branch officer position.

- b. Branch Officer positions which are still vacant following the AGM or which become vacant during the year must be advertised to all members within three months in the Branch newsletter. The Branch Committee may co-opt 'acting' branch officers who have a voice but no vote during this interim period.
- c. After 1 October in any year the Branch Committee will not advertise any vacant Branch Committee posts which occur but will co-opt a rep or officer to 'act up' until the AGM.
- d. Branch officers must be nominated by any two members, with the exception of the APF officer, who will be nominated and elected by APF members only, and the retired members' officer, who will be
- e. nominated and elected by retired members only.
- f. All members will receive notice of the Branch Officer positions annually prior to the AGM and will be invited to seek election, in accordance with the rules, to any of the posts for which they are eligible. All nominations must be received at the branch office at least 4 weeks before the AGM.
- g. Each nominee will be notified at least 2 weeks before the AGM and will have the right to withdraw.

- h. If there is more than one candidate nominated within time a vote will be held. The vote will be conducted by a postal ballot. In the event of a ballot, candidates will be invited to submit an election address of up to 500 words.
- i. Voting papers will be provided by the Branch and each member will be entitled to one vote in respect of each post which is contested. The branch will send out the election address from each candidate when the ballot paper is circulated. Candidates or their agents are entitled to be present at the count where envelopes will be opened and votes counted.

7) SELF ORGANISED AND OTHER GROUP REPS

- a. The branch recognises self-organised groups - according to national rule and also additional groups - each of which may nominate a representative annually from amongst their number to serve on the branch committee (with voice and vote). Black members, Disabled members, LGBT members,
- b. Womens group can self-organise but are represented at BC by Women's officer.
- c. The Equality Officer will facilitate an annual meeting of each group prior to the Branch AGM.

At the annual meeting members of each group will be entitled to elect from among their number, one representative to the Branch Committee for the year ahead (the rep will take up her / his position from the close of the AGM each

year). The rep will be entitled to speak and vote on the Branch Committee.

8) CONVENORS

- a. The members of each constituency will be entitled to elect a convener annually.
- b. Conveners must be nominated and seconded by members from within his/her constituency.
- c. Conveners will be responsible for coordinating the work of the elected stewards, convening regular reps' committees and ensuring the team of reps are consulting the membership effectively.
- d. Conveners will normally be the lead person in negotiations and discussions with their respective employer.
- e. Conveners are responsible for ensuring the Branch Committee gets regular reports of the activity of her/his team of stewards and that their concerns and suggestions are brought to the branch. Conveners will ensure that the reps committee gets reports of Branch Committee meetings.
- f. Conveners must be ERA accredited stewards and ideally experienced and are responsible for ensuring Stewards, H&S reps and Learning Reps elections are conducted fairly.
- g. All nominations for Conveners must be received in writing at the branch office at least 4 weeks before the AGM.
- h. Each nominee will be notified at least 2 weeks before the AGM and

will have the right to withdraw.

- i. If there is more than one candidate by close of nominations a vote will be held.
- j. The vote will be conducted by a postal ballot.
- k. In the event of a ballot, candidates will be invited to submit an election address of up to 500 words.
- l. Voting papers will be provided by the Branch and each constituency member will be entitled to one vote. The branch will send out the election address from each candidate when the numbered ballot papers are circulated.
- m. Candidates or their agents are entitled to be present at the count where envelopes will be opened and votes counted. Vacant conveners' positions must be advertised to all accredited stewards in the constituency. The Stewards Committee may elect an 'acting' convener in the meantime.
- n. After 1 October in any year vacancies will not be advertised and the Stewards' Committee (with the Branch Committee's approval) may ask a person 'acting up' to continue until the AGM.

9) LEAD STEWARDS

- a. Stewards' Committees may, by agreement, appoint from among their number, lead stewards. These Lead Stewards will have an agreed area of responsibility which may be a specific site or may be a specific group of staff eg Nurses. Their role will be to take a lead on issues specific to the site

or group of staff which they are responsible for and to liaise with and co-ordinate the activities of other stewards with members on that site or in that staff group.

10) STEWARDS

- a. Stewards will be nominated and elected annually by members in their respective constituencies (subject to AGM approval) on the basis of one steward per 20 members or part thereof.
- b. Elections to fill vacancies may take place throughout the year and will be organised by the Convener of the Constituency with guidance from the branch secretary (in the absence of a Convener in any Constituency the Branch Secretary will be responsible for making the arrangements.)

11) WORKPLACE CONTACTS

- a. Workplace contacts may be appointed by the Reps' Committee in each constituency in workplaces where there is no steward to distribute UNISON literature, to update notice boards, to encourage new staff to join UNISON and to notify the Convener (or in their absence, the Branch Secretary) of any member who leaves, is on long term absence or has any other change of circumstances.

12) HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

- a. Health and Safety Reps will be nominated and elected annually

by their respective constituencies. (subject to AGM approval).

- b. Elections to fill vacancies may take place throughout the year

13) LIFE LONG LEARNING ADVISORS/LEARNING REPRESENTATIVES

- a. Each constituency will be entitled to elect one or more Lifelong Learning Advisors/Learning representatives who will report to the Life-long Learning coordinator.

14) REPS COMMITTEES

- a. Each Constituency shall have a Reps' Committee which will comprise of the following:
The Convener, all the stewards and other reps from each workplace in the constituency
- b. The Reps' committee shall administer constituency business in accordance with national rules and guidance.
- c. The Convener for the Constituency will be responsible for arranging Reps' Committee meetings for the year (taking account as far as possible of the preferences of the members of that committee concerning their availability), and confirming details of the meetings to the members of the Committee, to the appropriate employer(s) (to ensure time off will be granted) and to the Branch Secretary.

- d. The Branch Secretary, Branch Chairperson and Branch Treasurer will be entitled to attend any meetings of any of the Stewards' Committees in the Branch. Other

Branch Officers may attend by agreement with the Constituency Convener.

- e. The Convener will be responsible for ensuring that notes are kept of all Constituency Committee meetings (this should include a list of stewards who attend each meeting and any decisions taken). A copy of each set of notes should be sent to the Branch Secretary.

- f. The Stewards' committee will establish arrangements for representation of members within the constituency in accordance with any guidance given by the Branch Committee and any difficulties will be referred to the Branch Committee in the first instance.

- g. Each Constituency will be subdivided into workgroup constituencies- the basis for these Workgroups will be determined by the Stewards' Committee and approved by the Branch Committee.
- h. The Branch Committee may allocate Reps' committees a budget. This money should be spent according to decisions of at least 50% of reps.

15) BRANCH COMMITTEE (BC)

- a. Composition:

- i. All branch officers except the auditors.
- ii. One representative per Reps' Committee who would normally be the Convener or if a Convener holds a branch officer position, then an alternative representative from the Reps' Committee (The committee should agree who their named representative to the BC will be,

immediately after the AGM and should notify the Branch.) They may agree an alternate rep to cover for absence.

- iii. One representative of each self-organised group and other group recognised by the Branch.
- b. Voting: where possible agreement should be reached by consensus but where this is not possible decisions will be made by a simple majority of the votes cast by members of the BC through a show of hands based on the voting arrangements set out below.

- i. Branch officers will be entitled to a single vote with the exception of the Social Secretary who will have no vote. The Retired Members' Officer shall be entitled to attend branch committee meetings but may only vote on issues not relating to pay and conditions of members in employment.

- ii. Self-organised and other group reps will each be entitled to a single vote.

- iii. Constituency representatives will be entitled to a single vote on the BC, except where they can show that they've had a reps' committee which has directed them to use a block vote in a particular manner on a specific issue.

- iv. Where a block vote is used the Constituency representative will have a vote for every 200 members or part thereof in her/his constituency. Membership numbers will be according to

the national database as at the previous Branch AGM.

- c. Administration of branch business

- i. The BC shall administer branch business in accordance with the national rules.
- ii. Disagreements among BC members will be referred to Region as a last resort.

- iii. The quorum for the BC shall be 33% (one third) of the current elected members.

- iv. The BC will ensure that Reps' Committees establish arrangements for representation of members and will give them guidance on this matter, in line with UNISON's national rules. Any difficulties will be referred to region as a final resort.

- v. Resolutions to the BC- these should be submitted to the branch office 2 weeks prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed. They must be moved by a BC member present at the meeting. They will be circulated in advance of the meeting. The branch may consider resolutions submitted after the date if the mover can justify the late submission.

- vi. The BC may fund branch officers so they may contribute to the working of the branch. They would be accountable to the BC.

- vii. The BC minutes and agenda will be available to all reps on request. Reps may also attend the BC from their rep's committees (one per 200 or part thereof) with voice but not

vote.

- viii. Meetings of the branch committee may take place either in person or by video conference, or a hybrid of both.

- ix. All committee members will be notified of the meeting arrangements and be provided with an agenda and other papers at least two weeks in advance.

- x. Steps must be taken to ensure the meeting is accessible and all members of the branch committee are enabled to participate fully. This applies both to meetings being held in person and those by video conference

- xi. The meeting quorum detailed in 15 c iii) will be the same whether the meeting takes place in person or by video conference.

d. BRANCH COMMITTEE DECISION MAKING

- i. All decisions of the branch committee will be decided by a simple majority vote.

- ii. Decisions can only be made at a meeting of the branch committee if that meeting is quorate as detailed in 15 c iii

- iii. Where there is an urgent deadline requiring a decision before the next meeting, or a branch committee meeting has been inquorate, a decision may be made by a digital vote.

- iv. Any digital votes will:

- a. Be sent to all committee members by email. (Where any member of the branch

committee does not have access to email, they will receive details by first class post together with a stamped addressed envelope and form to return their response)

- b. Provide committee members with a clear deadline to respond (decided by the Branch Sec and Chair, to be no less than 48 hours)

- c. Require the same quorum as a meeting of the branch committee (as detailed in xx)

- d. Have a clear audit trail of the responses received

- e. Have the decision ratified by, and recorded in, the minutes of the next branch committee meeting.

v). Clause 15 D iii) will not apply where there is a decision to be made that has rules superseding these, and which specifically require a decision of an in person or video conference branch committee meeting (for example, branch nominations for UNISON's national executive council).

16) REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

- a. The BC is responsible for electing delegates to UNISON regional and national bodies and to the Trades Council.

Where possible the BC will seek to involve the wider branch in the election process by inviting nominations at branch meetings. Delegates must be union reps (Conveners, Stewards, H&S or Learning reps) or branch officers

and they will be expected to consult and report to the BC.

- b. They will have a voice but no vote.

- c. Members wishing to stand for reserved/fair representation seats must, where relevant), provide the Secretary with evidence of her/his rate of pay or involvement on one of the branch self-organised groups.

17) CONDUCT OF BRANCH MEETINGS

- a. All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner.

- b. All meetings will be advertised widely, as far as possible in advance; a minimum of 7 days' notice will be given.

- c. The procedures to be used at the meeting will be explained clearly.

- d. The quorum for branch meetings shall be 5% of those eligible to attend or 100 whichever the lower figure.

18) ADMINISTRATION

- a. The branch will maintain records of meetings, financial records, books of accounts and other appropriate records to enable the branch to function.

- b. The branch may employ an Administration Assistant to carry out the day-to-day administration work for the Branch under the direction of the Branch Secretary (and in her/his absence, the Branch Chair). The branch may, from time to time, employ additional temporary assistants.

19) ORGANISATION

- a. The BC may appoint paid organisers to help build membership and organisation - failure to present a written report to the Branch Secretary may result in the secondment being ended.

20) MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Communications to the media on behalf of the branch shall be made by the Secretary, Chair or Communications Officer- who may ask reps to speak out on issues specific to particular groups of workers eg OUH may be delegated to the OUH Convenor.

21) AFFILIATIONS

- a. Affiliations to relevant constituency Labour Parties will be decided by the APF membership.
- b. Affiliations to other bodies such as trade councils shall be determined by the AGM or branch committee.

22) DONATIONS

- a. a) Donations shall be agreed by the AGM or branch committee in accordance with the union's policies and objectives and subject to provisions of national rule. One thousand pound in total per year, not including National Campaigns.

23) EXPENSES

- a. Rates of expenses for members attending meetings on behalf of the branch will be as per regional expense rates.

24) HONORARIA

- a. The Annual General Meeting must agree any Honoraria to be paid in recognition of services to the Branch in the preceding year, taking into consideration the UNISON Rules and the Branch financial situation.

25)

- a. Any member that is in arrears of subscriptions or who owes monies to the Branch will not be eligible to attend any event or conference on behalf of the Branch.
- b. Authorisation of expenditure over £50 not itemised in the Branch's budget, should relate to a clear minute of agreement to that expenditure by the branch committee prior to the expenditure being made. Expenditure over £50 must be in line with UNISON's Branch Procurement Guidance (<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/06/PoliciesBranch-Procurement-Guidance-Document-for-UNISON-Website-final3.pdf>) and UNISON's Code of Good Branch Practice. Any expenses paid must be in accordance with UNISON's Scheme for Branch Expenses contained in the Branch Finances Handbook.

26) APPROVAL/ALTERATIONS TO BRANCH RULES

- a. Branch rules must be agreed by two thirds of members present and voting at a quorate branch

meeting.

Branch rules must be approved in accordance with UNISON's procedures.

Appendix A Constituencies

1. OUH NHS trust and associated private contractors.
2. Oxford Health NHS Trust and associated private contractors.
3. Nursing Homes and other private sector employees
4. Oxfordshire CCG and associated private contractors.
5. NHS South, Central and West Commissioning Support Unit