

## **BRANCH MODEL CONSTITUTION**

### **1. NAME**

*The Branch of the Communication Workers Union shall be known as the.....Branch*

### **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. *In addition the Branch shall strive for proportionality on external representations, forums and conferences.*
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
10. *Where reasonably practical all Branch meeting venues should be accessible without prior request from members with disabilities. Timing and location of meetings will take into account the needs of all Branch members – and where reasonably practical no groups of members should be disadvantaged.*

#### **4.4 Branch Organisation**

1. Each Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> 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*
  - d. *Equality Officer*
  - e. *Women's Officer*
  - f. *BAME Officer*
  - g. *Youth Officer*
  - h. *Political Officer*
  - i. *Eight 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.
6. Branches are responsible for promoting the interests of their retired members and for engaging with their retired members to actively involve them in dealing with these issues, accordingly Branches shall establish a Retired Members Section to ensure that the interests of their retired members are protected and promoted.

The Retired Members Section shall be entitled to elect a Section Committee which shall be responsible for engaging positively with members of the section to actively involve them in pursuing their interests and issues.

One position on the Branch Committee will be reserved for a representative from the retired members section, elected by and from the members of that section. That individual shall be entitled to attend Branch Committee meetings to ensure that retired members' issues are raised and discussed at this level. Such a representative shall not be entitled to vote on any industrial/occupational issues at these meetings."

**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.**

**Retired Members are not entitled or eligible to stand for election or be able to vote in the above elections:- a, b, d, e, f, g and i**

**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. *All Officership Elections in Branches shall be held as individual membership ballots which may only be undertaken via the post, email and workplaces.*

#### **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 General 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.