

Please find below an outline of the responsibilities of the core Branch Officer posts.

BRANCH SECRETARY

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 provide strategic leadership to the branch committee on implementing campaigning and lobbying activity on branch and wider UNISON objectives.
- to convene and attend all meetings of the branch and branch committee
- to arrange for the minutes of meetings to be kept in a proper manner and circulated to all branch officers.
- 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.
- 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 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 any branch employed staff.

CHAIRPERSON

Tasks relating to the office of branch chairperson:

- to preside at all meetings of the branch and branch committee
- to agree the agenda for meetings with the secretary
- 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.

TREASURER

Tasks relating to the office of branch 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
- to provide a detailed financial report for the annual branch meeting(s)
- 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.

EQUALITY OFFICER

The branch equality officer has a number of important functions. It is not expected that the office holder will be the font of all knowledge on every equality issue, nor carry sole responsibility for the branch's equality work. Everyone shares responsibility for tackling prejudice and discrimination and promoting equality. The role of the branch equality officer is to co-ordinate and monitor this shared responsibility.

Tasks relating to the office of equality officer:

- to be the identified and well publicised point 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 "equal opportunities" 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
- 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 co-ordinate motions and support to delegates attending self-organised group conferences.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER

Tasks relating to the post of 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 health and safety representatives to exchange information and consider priorities
- to 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.

WELFARE OFFICER

Tasks relating to the post of branch 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.

EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR

Tasks relating to the post of branch education officer:

- to make sure all new stewards and safety representatives receive initial information and guidance about their duties, e.g. stewards hand book, 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 on to 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.

LABOUR LINK OFFICER

Tasks relating to the post of 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.

LIFELONG LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR

A branch with a number of learning representatives working as a team, led by a co-ordinator, can ensure that learning representatives are accountable and involved in the branch, that learning is high on the branch's agenda and linked into its organising, bargaining and equalities work, and can provide a clear progression route for learning representatives who want to become more involved in other aspects of branch activity.

Tasks relating to the post of branch lifelong learning co-ordinator

- to work closely with the branch education Co-ordinator (the same person may take on both roles)
- to co-ordinate the activity of learning representatives in the branch education team
- to work with colleagues to recruit new learning representatives
- to be closely involved in negotiating around learning with the employer
- 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

RETIRED MEMBERS' SECRETARY

The role of the retired members' secretary is to enable retired members of the branch to continue to be active in the union through the branch's retired members' section.

Tasks relating to the post of 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

