

Branch Rules 2018

1. Branch Name

The branch shall be called East of England Ambulance Branch of UNISON and is referred throughout the rules as “the branch”.

2. Aims of the branch

- a. to support and pursue the Aims and Objectives contained in the UNISON Rule Book, and the objectives agreed by UNISON’s National Executive Committee annually, and in particular
- b. :to achieve the aims and targets set annually through the branch assessment.

3. Membership

Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the Rules of the union.

4. Branch Structure

- a. There will be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the branch to confirm the election by ballot of branch officers and members of the branch committee, to receive the branch accounts and report on branch development from the branch committee. The AGM may comprise of one meeting or a series of aggregate meetings based on geographical areas in order to maximise the active participation of members.
- b. The AGM will determine the basis of representation in the branch and the number of stewards and other representatives to be elected in each work group or workplace.
- c. 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. NB **In the case of this branch it would be the 5% rule that would apply.*
- d. The quorum for any general meeting, including the annual meeting is 20 members at a single meeting or through aggregate meetings. This will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- e. The branch committee will comprise all branch officers (see rule 6 below), and County Leads (stewards) and will be responsible for the general organisation and development of the branch and for policy and decision making on matters affecting all members within the branch between general meetings.
- f. The Branch committee will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the branch. The triumvirate may agree minor expenditure between branch committee meetings in accordance with the decisions and authority delegated by the branch committee. The triumvirate’s membership and role is as described in rule 7 below.

5. Branch Officers

- a. The branch shall elect the following officers annually.
 - Chairperson

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- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Education co-ordinator
- Lifelong Learning co-ordinator
- Equality officer(s)
- Health and safety officer
- Communications officer
- Environmental Officer
- International officer
- Membership officer
- Young members officer
- Labour link officer (elected by the members who pay the political levy only)
- Retired members' secretary (elected by the retired members)

Others to be determined as necessary for the effective operation of the branch including

- Convenor
- County leads
- Non-Emergency Services
- Information Communication Technology
- Womens officer

b. County Lead Senior Steward

Each County within the branch shall elect a County Lead (senior steward) from amongst the stewards in that county in accordance with rule 5d.

c. County Lead Health and Safety

Each County within the branch shall elect a County Lead (Senior Health and Safety) from amongst the Health and Safety representatives in that county in accordance with rule 5d.

d. Election of branch officers

- i. branch officers may be nominated by the branch committee or any two members, with the exception of the Labour Link officer who will be elected by the APF members only and the retired members' secretary who will be elected by the retired members only.
- ii. nominations will be invited 12 weeks before the date of the first (if there is more than one) AGM and nomination forms will be made available through the branch web-site.
- iii. all nominations must be received in writing at least 7 weeks before the date of the first (if there is more than one) AGM
- iv. each nominee will be notified and given the right to withdraw not later than 6 weeks before the date of the first (if there is more than one) AGM.
if there is more than one candidate who are not prepared to share a vote will be held.
- v. the vote will be conducted by a postal/electronic ballot of all appropriate membership prior to the branch first (if there is more than one) AGM
- vi. where no valid nomination has been received before the deadline, nominations may be called for and candidate elected at the AGM, or endorsed by the branch committee subject to ratification by the next general meeting.

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- e. election of county leads

the process for nomination and election shall be as in (5d) save that the nomination will be by any two members employed in that county, and only members employed in the relevant county may participate in the election.

6. Branch Committee

- a. Representation on the branch committee will be agreed by the AGM and will include:
 - i. Branch officers
 - ii. Representatives of self-organised groups
 - iii. The County Lead (Steward) of each area. .
- b. The branch committee shall administer branch business in accordance with UNISON rules and guidance.
- c. The quorum for the branch committee shall be 33% (one third) of the members of the committee.
- d. The branch committee shall ensure that areas within the branch are appropriately and equitably resourced to ensure the effective participation of members, recruitment and organisation, representation, and collective bargaining and campaigning on behalf of members in each area.
- e. The branch committee will establish arrangements for the individual representation of members, which will be via the branch case work co-ordinator.
- f. The branch committee shall meet monthly.

7. Triumvirate

- a. The triumvirate shall comprise of the branch secretary, branch chairperson and branch treasurer,
- b. The triumvirate will operate in accordance with rule 17c below.

8. Conduct of meetings

- a. All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner.
- b. All meetings will be advertised widely as far in advance as possible. In the case of the AGM 12 weeks in advance
- c. The procedures to be used at the meeting will be explained clearly
- d. The branches will maintain records of all meetings and other appropriate records to enable the branch to function. All branch officers will submit a report to the branch executive (committee) on the first calendar day of each month

9. Media communications

Communications to the media on behalf of the branch shall be made only by the branch Secretary as authorised by the committee.

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10. Affiliations

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

11. Finance

- a. The branch shall keep a Unity Trust bank account in the name of the branch and will maintain a financial record of all assets and transactions in accordance with UNISON guidelines.
- b. All branch officers will submit a formal budget when requested by the branch treasurer at the beginning of the financial year.

12. Expenses

All expenses will be claimed in line with the current National Members Guidelines for Claiming Expenses which can be found on the branch website. The national expenses we're adopting does not include loss of earnings or imprest.

13. Approval/alteration to branch rules

- a. Branch rules must be agreed by two thirds of members present and voting at a quorate branch meeting.
- b. Branch rules must be approved in accordance with UNISON's procedures.
- c. Any changes to branch rules must be agreed and approved in the same way.

14. Branch Rules

The Branch will maintain a virtual copy, but with hard copies to be made available on request.

- a. Branch executive (committee) to review rules on an annual basis and present any proposed amendments and/or additions to the membership 28-days in advance of the Annual General Meeting.
- b. The Branch will store the communication policy, as agreed by the Branch executive, along with the terms of reference for the Staff Partnership Forum (SPF) on the Branch website, which contains full details of the arrangements for the full time officer posts. Any future changes to the communication policy, or the arrangements for the full time officer posts must be agreed by the Branch Executive, communicated to the membership at least 28 days prior to the AGM, and accepted by members at the AGM.
- c. The Branch will store the current rules document and any other documents as appropriate within an administration specific page on the Branch website alongside other current documentation such as:
 - Current branch structure diagram
 - Branch expenses claim forms
 - Unison Accident Benefit claim forms

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- Membership Case forms
- Representative nomination and election guidance
- Post outlines (where applicable)
- A link to the Unison Rule Book
- A link to the Unison Code of Good Branch Practice
- A link to Branch members expenses document
- A link to Branch Finances Handbook

All these documents can be downloaded but hard copies can be provided upon request.

15. Branch Administration

- a. Branch Structure - branch executive (committee) to review the current structure as and when required and present any proposed changes to the membership in accordance with 28-day period,prior to the annual general meeting
- b. Branch development and organising toolkit (A nationally produced 'healthcheck' document that has to be completed each year with the Branch Regional Organiser) - branch executive (committee) to review the current plan on an annual basis and agree objectives for the coming year.

16. Communications

The Communications Officer will produce and issue a monthly newsletter for distribution to workplaces and sites within branch and inclusive of all employers within this branch. The Branch will fund additional newsletter runs as required in order to ensure good communication between the branch and its membership is maintained.

17. Financial Strategies

a. Treasurer

Every member of the branch executive (committee) has a collective responsibility for the finances of the branch. The Treasurer will operate the Branch finances in line with current UNISON and HMRC rules and guidance and will produce monthly reports to the Branch executive (committee) and an annual report to the membership at the AGM

b. Branch Audit

The Branch will appoint 2 auditors who will undertake the "End of Year" accounts audit. If there are no auditors appointed or they do not have the capacity to carry out the audit then the Branch will send the accounts to national for the (End of Year) audit to be completed by them. .

c. Decisions relating to financial requests.

Between meetings of the branch executive (committee) minor financial requests can be considered by the triumvirate who can agree to support the requests on behalf of the committee. All requests and outcomes will be documented and then formally recorded within the minutes of the next meeting of the branch executive (committee). An exception to this is if it relates to a UNISON welfare payment which are authorised by UNISON National welfare paid from branch funds and them reimbursed from national funds.

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18. Retired Members

a. Lifetime Membership

Unison offers its retiring members the opportunity to continue their membership for a fixed, one-off fee of £15.00 which enables these members to have continued access to most membership benefits as well as legal and financial assistance. Eligibility for lifetime membership is as per the current Unison rules book. This branch will cover the cost of the individual's lifetime membership fee if they apply for lifetime membership within 2 years of their retirement. Members outside of this rule will be personally liable for the membership fee.

b) Retirement Gifts

Members who are retiring from their current employment currently receive a gift from the branch up to the value of £50. Wherever possible, the requirement is for the branch's Retired Members Officer to be notified of the retirement in advance, or as soon after the event as is possible in order to organise the purchase and delivery of the gift or, the member may purchase their own gift and submit a receipt to the Retired Members Officer for reimbursement. The retired members' officer will notify the membership officer of these changes to a member's membership status so that their record can be amended.

19. Funeral Flowers

The current branch allowance for flowers or charitable donations in lieu of flowers in the event of a death in service is £50. As with all financial and benefit related arrangements, Unison's 4-week membership rule will apply.

20. Medical reports

The branch currently supports requests for financial assistance from members wishing to obtain medical reports in the event of Ill-Health Retirement applications and/or appeals. Each case will be considered on an individual basis but a "cap" of £150 per report will be applied and, as with all financial and benefit related arrangements, Unison's 4-week membership rule will apply. Decisions will normally be made by the branch executive at the regular committee meetings. However, urgent decisions outside of committee meetings will be made by the triumvirate (as per rule 17c).

21. Charitable and/or other donation requests

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.

The branch sets aside a small budget for such requests with a maximum "cap" of £50 per request. As with all financial requests, decisions will normally be made by the branch executive at the regular committee meetings. However, urgent decisions outside of committee meetings will be made by the triumvirate (as per rule 17c).