

CORE BRANCH RULES,
CONSTITUTION AND STANDING
ORDERS

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SECTION 1 - BRANCH NAME

The Branch will be known as Nottingham City UNISON.

The Branch will hold a general bank account in the name of Nottingham City UNISON and a separate Hardship account. The general account will include a contingency redundancy fund. Whilst the Branch does not envisage a reduction of staffing, it is seen as good practice to set aside a fund for this purpose.

The Branch year will run from January 1 to December 31.

The Branch will endeavour to take full advantage of national funding criteria and ensure Branch funding is in accordance with membership.

SECTION 2 - BRANCH MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 The Branch membership will be comprised of UNISON members employed by Nottingham City Council plus associated independent, community, private and voluntary sector members.
- 2.2 Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the UNISON Rules.
- 2.3 Applications for membership takes effect from the date at which completed forms are received by the Branch.
- 2.4 In extreme cases a meeting of the Branch Committee may decide not to support a membership application but such a decision must be consistent with the Rules and with Statute. The decision must be explained to the individual in writing, together with their rights of appeal.
- 2.5 All members must comply with the Rules.
- 2.6 Disciplinary action may be taken against a member in accordance with Section I of the National Rules.
- 2.7 All members have guaranteed rights (Appendix 2).

SECTION 3 - BRANCH OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of UNISON are contained in Section B of the rule book.

3.2 The objects of the branch shall be:

- (a)** to organise within the Branch all staff employed in Nottingham City Council plus associated independent, community, private and voluntary sector members to engage in union activities and to ensure all members are represented in the Branch by aiming to have a UNISON steward and/or contact in each workplace/office.
- (b)** to advance and protect the interests of its members
- (c)** to stimulate and foster support to the objectives of UNISON
- (d)** to make representations to the East Midland Regional Council, Local Government Committee and appropriate Regional Committee on matters relevant to the objectives of UNISON.
- (e)** to submit motions through the Regional Council, or otherwise, for the consideration of the National Executive Council, or the National Local Government Service Group.
- (f)** The principles of fair representation and proportionality are central to the organisation of the Branch.

SECTION 4 - RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL ORGANISATION

4.1 Branch Rules will be in accordance with National Rules, decisions of the Annual Delegate Conference and the NEC.

4.2 Any member may have a copy of the current rule book.

4.3 The Branch shall make an audited return of Branch income, expenditure, assets and liabilities as prescribed by the NEC and in accordance with the National Rules.

SECTION 5 - FAIR REPRESENTATION AND PROPORTIONALITY

- 5.1** It is the policy of the Branch to secure the election of Branch Officers and Stewards as appropriate by Branch members, to ensure the widest possible participation of Branch members in meetings.
- 5.2** The Branch is totally committed to the principle of fair representation and proportionality. It is our belief that UNISON will be a more democratic organisation and that member's interests and aspirations will best be furthered by representatives who reflect the gender, occupations, grades, sexuality, ethnicity and disability of the membership.
- 5.3** Appendix 1 outlines the procedure which shall be followed to establish fair representation and proportionality.
- 5.4** The Branch shall encourage and facilitate the organisation of self-organised groups for:
- Women members
 - Black members
 - Disabled members
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender members
 - Young members (aged 26 or under)
 - Retired members
- 5.5** It is the policy of the Branch to encourage the election of representatives in all workplaces where membership exists.

SECTION 6 - BRANCH STRUCTURE

- 6.1** There will be Annual General Meeting of the Branch to elect Branch Officers and Stewards, who will make up the membership of the Branch Committee. All posts are open to job share.
- 6.2** Other General meetings may be called by the Branch Committee or by 5% of the membership.
- 6.3** The AGM will determine the basis of representation in the branch and the number of stewards to be elected in each work group or workplace.
- (a)** The Branch accepts the general principle of 1 Steward per 20 members or 1 Steward per work area whichever appropriate. Stewards will be elected by members within their work group annually.
 - (b)** Stewards will normally represent members within their own department. However, Stewards may represent members outside their own department when an experienced Steward within the department is unavailable.
- 6.4** Nottingham City UNISON Branch Structure is organised on a Departmental basis as follows:

- Childrens Services (excluding Schools)
- Childrens Services – Education
- Adult Services, Housing and Health Resources
- Community & Culture
- Environment and Regeneration
- Nottingham City Homes
- Housing Associations
- Voluntary & Private Sector Organisations

(For further information on Departmental Steward Meeting, Branch Structure and the role of a Steward, please see Appendix 4)

- 6.5** Departmental Stewards Meeting will be held monthly. At the first meeting following the AGM (normally April each year), the Stewards will elect a Convenor / Convenors (dependent upon the size of the department). The Branch Secretary should be invited to this meeting.

The Convenor will be the Senior UNISON Representative in the Department on all issues affecting UNISON members.

- 6.6** The AGM of Nottingham City UNISON will be held each March. The AGM's will

consist of two meetings (lunch time and early afternoon) and will be held in the City Centre. Caring responsibility expenses can be claimed from the Branch where members incur additional expenditure to attend the AGM. Each meeting will elect Branch Officers and Stewards, who will take up office from 1 April to 31 March the following year.

6.7 Nottingham City UNISON AGM will elect the following Branch Officers, all of which are open to job share

Branch Chair	Vice Chair
Branch Secretary	Assistant Branch Secretary
Service Conditions Officer	Central Panel Officer
Treasurer	Equalities Officer
Education Officer	Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator
Health and Safety Officer	International Relations Officer
Welfare Officer	APF Officer

SOG Officers below are nominated by eligible SOG members

- Black Members Officer
- Women's Officer
- LGBT Officer
- Disabled Members Officer
- Young Members Officer
- Retired Members Secretary

SECTION 7 - BRANCH COMMITTEE

The decision making body of Nottingham City UNISON will be the Branch Committee which will consist of all Stewards, Branch Officers and 2 representatives from each Self-Organised Group.

7.1 The Branch Committee will:-

- Meet monthly in the City Centre from 2.00 p.m.
- Have a quorum of 20.
- Notice of meetings, agendas and motions for discussion shall be circulated seven days prior to the meeting date.
- Voting shall be on a show of hands, unless otherwise decided, and decisions shall be reached by a simple majority of votes.
- Any two members of the Branch Committee (as Proposer and Seconder) may submit motions for consideration by the Branch Committee. These should be submitted to the Branch Secretary no later than 7 days before the meeting. Emergency motions will be allowed if the meeting so agrees.
- Other Officials and Officers of the Union may attend in a non-voting capacity with the agreement of the Branch.

7.2 The objectives of the Branch Committee shall be to:

- Administer Branch business in line with the Branch rules and guidelines issued by the National Executive Council.
- Co-ordinate local negotiations conducted by Stewards in the Branch.
- Provide the corporate voice of the union in negotiations with the Employers.
- Establish effective representation of members' interests by Stewards.
- Ensure Branch Officers are properly exercising their functions.
- Promote and monitor the effective implementation of Branch rules with regard to the operation of fair representation, proportionality and self organisation.
- Monitor the application of election procedures for all Representatives and Officers within the Branch and ratify the election of all such Officers and Representatives in between AGM'S.
- To receive the minutes of all bodies/committee meetings under the rules and constitution of the Branch.

- To provide the corporate voice of the Branch within UNISON at Regional and National levels.
- 7.3** The Branch must maintain records of meetings, financial records, books of accounts and other appropriate records to enable the Branch to function.
- 7.4** All Committees, Officers and Representatives of the Branch shall be accountable to the Branch Committee.
- 7.5** Nottingham City UNISON will have the following Sub Committees:
- (a) Finance and Administration Committee**
Branch Secretary, Assistant Branch Secretary, Chair, Vice-Chair, Equalities Officer, Service Conditions Officer, Treasurer, 1 Representative from each Department.
 - (b) Service Conditions Committee**
All Branch Officers, 1 Representative from each Stewards Committee + 1 Representative from each Self Organised Group.
 - (c) Health and Safety Committee**
Health and Safety Officer plus all Health and Safety Representatives
 - (d) Staffing and Branch Development Committee**
Branch Secretary, Chair, Treasurer and Service Conditions Officer.

The following committees will not meet on a regular basis but may be established if necessary.

Equal Opportunities Committee
Disputes Committee
Communications Committee
Welfare Committee
Social Committee
International Relations Committee
APF Committee
Staffing and Branch Development Committee

For further information on Branch Sub Committees see Appendix 5.

SECTION 8 - CONDUCT / ORGANISATION OF MEETINGS

8.1 General Meetings

- All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner.
- All meetings should be advertised widely as far in advance as possible.
- The procedures to be used at the meeting should be explained clearly.
- Voting shall be on a show of hands unless otherwise decided and decisions shall be reached by a simple majority of votes.
- Guidelines for organising meetings are attached as Appendix 3.

8.2 Annual General Meeting

- Branch Officers may be nominated by the Branch Committee or any two members, with the exception of the APF Officer who will be elected by APF members only.
- All nominations, motions etc., must be received in writing by the Branch Secretary at least 4 weeks before the AGM.
- Each nominee will be given the right to withdraw.
- If there is more than one nomination for the same post a vote will be held unless both nominees agree to job share.
- The vote may be conducted by a show of hands or by a ballot of those present at the AGM'S.
- In the event of a ballot, official papers will be supplied and each attendee (subject to 4 weeks membership) of the Branch shall be entitled to one vote in respect of each post to be filled.

SECTION 9 - MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Communications to the media on behalf of the Branch shall normally be made by the Branch Secretary or Branch Chair. Other Branch Officers may communicate with the media only after receiving authorisation from both the Branch Secretary and Branch Chair.

SECTION 10 - EXPENSES

Nottingham City UNISON is committed to encouraging full participation in trade union activities of all members.

The needs of the individuals who undertake activities on behalf of the Branch are important and no one should be excluded from participating in the Branch due to their individual circumstances.

- The Branch will reimburse Branch Officers, Convenors, Stewards, members of Branch Working Parties and Delegates to outside bodies, travelling and out-of-pocket expenses incurred whilst on Branch business. A principle of the Branch is that no member will be out of pocket undertaking UNISON activities.
- Reimbursement will be on the basis of additional expenditure incurred i.e. the difference between expenditure which would have been incurred had the claimant not been on UNISON business and expenditure actually incurred on UNISON business e.g. if the distance from home to work is six miles but you travel ten miles to attend a UNISON meeting, four miles should be claimed.
- Where representatives have needs to be facilitated which are not covered below the Finance and Administration Committee will consider all reasonable requests for other expenses.

Further details can be found in the Financial Regulations

10.1 Travelling

Reimbursement for travelling will be at the following rates;

- 40p per car mile with a supplement of 20% for accompanying passengers or 2nd class rail fare;
- Where appropriate the Branch will consider reasonable travel by air
- Actual bus fare;
- Bicycle rate 15p per mile;
- Motorcycle rate 20p per mile;
- Car parking to be paid if receipt attached

The Branch may authorise taxis where appropriate but authorisation must be sought in advance.

It is expected that where reasonably possible travelling costs will be minimised by taking advantage of special rail offers or by sharing a vehicle.

10.2 Subsistence

Reimbursement of subsistence can only be claimed for attendance on training courses or as a delegate to meetings and conferences where attendance has been authorised and no meals are provided. If the rates are felt to be inappropriate claims backed up with receipts will be considered by the F & A Sub Committee.

10.3 Childcare – General

If, to undertake activities on behalf of the Branch, a Steward or other representative requires a child minder to be paid for, the Branch will pay reimbursement at the rate of upto £3.50 per hour. Receipts will be required.

10.4 Telephone

The Branch will reimburse the cost of telephone calls made on behalf of the Branch where they could not have reasonably been made from the Representatives workplace or UNISON Office.

10.5 Overnight Expenditure / Attendance at Conferences

Accommodation will normally be booked by the Branch. The cost of accommodation will very dependent upon the location of the conference, however, the Branch will endeavour to book reasonably priced cost effective accommodation.

- Lunch will be reimbursed at the rate of £8 a day.
- Evening meals will be reimbursed at the rate of £15 a day.
- Out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed at £5 for each overnight stay.
- For individuals whose child(ren) accompanies them to conferences the Branch will pay for accommodation for the children.
- The Branch will also pay subsistence for children attending conferences with their parents at the following rates;

Where a crèche is provided	£10.00 per day per child
Where no crèche is provided	£20.00 per day per child

10.6 Dependent Care Costs

The following amounts are payable where extra dependent care costs are incurred:

- £24.70p for the first child and 20% for each subsequent child for day care.
- £12.35p for the first child and 20% for each subsequent child for overnight care.

Receipts for these costs should be provided. The Branch may reimburse at a higher rate than that given above, up to the national rates where a representative / delegate could reasonably expect to incur higher expenditure.

SECTION 11 - FACILITATION

The Branch will pay for reasonable facilitation costs, interpreters etc. Should delegates to conference need a facilitator, the Branch will pay for their accommodation and subsistence at the same rate as the delegates.

SECTION 12 - APPROVAL / AMEMDMENTS TO BRANCH RULES

Branch Rules must be agreed at a quorate Branch Meeting by two thirds of members present.

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

Any changes to Branch Rules must be agreed and approved in the same way.

SECTION 13 - AFFILIATIONS / DONATIONS

Affiliations to relevant constituency Labour Parties will be decided by the APF membership.

Affiliations to Trade Councils will be determined by the AGM's, Branch Committee or Finance and Admin Committee.

Donations and affiliations will be determined by the Finance and Admin Committee.

SECTION 14 - NEGOTIATING BODIES

14.1. JTUC

UNISON has 10 seats on this body which meets monthly. These seats are determined by the Branch Committee and normally include:

- Branch Secretary
- Service Conditions Officers
- Central Panel Officer
- Health and Safety Officer
- Convenors (6 seats)

The Convenor seats are elected at the Branch Committee with a view to encouraging fair representation and proportionality.

14.2. Secretary of Joint Trade Union Committee (JTUC)

This is a UNISON position which must be filled by one of the above 10.

The JTUC Secretary will be elected annually by the Branch Committee.

14.3. Central Panel

UNISON has 3 of the 5 Central Panel Seats. This body is involved in negotiations on a monthly basis with management.

These 3 representatives will be elected annually by the Branch Committee and must include the Joint Trade Union Committee Secretary. The remaining 2 representatives will normally be the Branch Secretary and Central Panel Officer.

SECTION 15 – BRANCH STAFF

The Branch Secretary will be responsible for the employment, direction and supervision of any staff employed by the branch consistent with employment law and current good practice.

In the event of any first stage hearings of staff disciplinary or grievance matters, the Branch Secretary will be joined by another Senior Branch Officer other than the Branch Chair.

Any appeal arising from a first stage grievance or disciplinary hearing will be heard by the Branch Chair and other Senior Branch Officers not involved at the first stage hearing.

The outcome of any disciplinary or grievance hearing will remain confidential and the outcome only will be reported to the Branch Committee on its conclusion.

ACHIEVING PROPORTIONALITY AND FAIR REPRESENTATION

1. RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for achieving these policies lies with the Branch Committee, assisted by the relevant Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee could include members as well as Officers and Stewards.

The Sub Committees will be set up as required and their work will be valued and given priority.

2. THE POLICIES

Proportionality: the representation of women and men in fair proportion to the number of female and male members within the Branch.

Fair Representation: the broad balance of representation of members within the Branch e.g.

- part-time and full time workers
- manual and non-manual workers
- different occupations, skills, qualifications and responsibilities,
- race, sexuality and disability

Greater membership involvement is key to achieving our policies of proportionality and fair representation.

3. BRANCH AUDIT AND ACTION PLAN

Each year the Branch will undertake an annual audit of its membership and representatives. This information allows the Branch to see what progress is being made to achieve the policies, and where further targeted action is needed. The Branch will use RMS to collect and hold relevant information about its members and representatives:-

Comparing the membership breakdown with that for Stewards and Activists will identify which groups of members are under represented.

MEMBERS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Members have rights to:

- Receive a membership card.
- Stand for election to any office open to them within the union rules.
- Hold an account of those representatives elected on their behalf.
- Participate in the development, change and implementation of policy.
- Raise questions about any matter and receive a considered reply within a reasonable time.
- Have any issue raised with a representative to be dealt with in the strictest confidence.
- Have access to a wide range of union services.
- Refer any complaint, which the member feels the Branch has not dealt with, to the Regional Secretary and/or ultimately the General Secretary.

2. Members responsibilities:

- To comply with UNISON's national and branch rules
- To notify the Branch Membership Officer of any change of home address, telephone number, employer, workplace, job or any other relevant information
- To notify the Branch Membership Officer immediately if their subscriptions cease to be deducted
- To supply information to their Steward and / or Health and Safety Representative on problems or issues in the workplace

3. New members should receive a new member's pack which will contain the following information:

- a membership card
- a welcome letter which includes details of Branch and Regional Officers, together with a member's information update form a recruit a friend leaflet
- names and contact telephone numbers and addresses of Branch Officers, Stewards, Health and Safety Representatives. the location of the Branch office
- information on local self organised groups and specialist officers who can be contacted direct for advice and support where appropriate
- a step by step guide on raising issues, specifying who is the first point of contact for problems at work and within the union, explaining Unison's aims and values
- benefits, services and education facilities available from the union and how to access them

- Health and Safety - its importance and members' responsibilities
UNISON's political funds
- Women in UNISON, our policies and goals

4. The Branch will endeavour to carry out the following:

Provide members with information about the union and its work on a regular basis, in language and design that is easily understood.

Ensure that members take part in appropriate meetings, discussions and educational activities arranged by the union to meet their trade union, working and domestic needs.

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING AND RUNNING MEETINGS

UNISON meetings should be accessible and welcoming to all members. In practical terms this means that:

- meeting places should be accessible to all, if possible on public transport routes
- meeting times and days should be varied to fit the needs of shift workers and part time workers
- meetings should be spread geographically to encourage attendance
- dates, places and times for meetings should be planned and advertised well in advance and not unnecessarily be altered.

Following consultation with stewards it was agreed that the Branch Committee meeting would take place in the City Centre at 2.00pm normally on the second Tuesday of each month.

New members should always be welcomed to their first meeting. A more experienced member should sit with the new member to help them understand the procedure. Where possible new members will be briefed on procedures prior to their first meeting.

It is the responsibility of the Chair and Secretary to ensure that the discussion at meetings is effective and not repetitive and that decisions are recorded.

Everyone at the meeting should have the opportunity to contribute.

The Chair should ensure that the meeting remains friendly and accessible for all members.

To assist this process they should:

- ask anyone who uses jargon, or sets of initials to explain what they mean in ordinary language
- make sure the procedure is explained clearly and actively encourage individuals to speak but refuse to allow only a few people to dominate

Racist, sexist or homophobic language must not be permitted. Nor must attacks on individuals be made in personal terms (as opposed to attacks on policies).

Action and tasks required at meetings should be shared and not left to the Secretary to action. This includes giving reports which should be shared among the Stewards / Convenors present.

When an action has been decided the Chair should ensure that everyone present is clear about what has been decided and who is responsible for actioning the point.

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING MEETINGS

UNISON's commitment to Fair Representation and Proportionality seeks to involve all members. The Branch shall seek to organise meetings that are user friendly for all members.

TIMING AND VENUE

Consider the best dates and times for your meeting. This will depend on the make up of who is attending the meeting such as shift workers, people with family responsibilities, transport arrangements and distance to the meeting.

Meeting times and dates should be varied to allow the fullest participation. Experience will be gained through contacting members who have not attended previous meetings.

Try to set the dates and times of meetings well in advance and advertise them well. Do not change the dates and times once agreed, unless you really have to.

Hold meetings in places which are familiar, on public transport routes and do not create difficulties for particular groups of members.

Move the meeting around the area or County to encourage attendance from all groups.

Buildings which are reasonably accessible during the daytime may present other difficulties after dark. Wherever possible buildings that are accessible to disabled members will be used.

Maps of location should be provided each time. Put up notices and arrows on doors/lifts to show people where to go. Offer lifts to and from the meeting if there are difficulties with public transport.

SETTING UP THE MEETING

Every meeting should be necessary and have a clearly defined purpose. If meetings of the Branch at whatever level are lacking purpose or are badly attended then the purpose of the meeting needs to be reviewed.

Meetings should not last longer than two hours.

Meetings should not be convened more frequently than needed.

Notice of the meeting should be sent out well in advance.

Facilitation should be provided to enable members to attend and participate in meetings. These facilities shall be advertised in all mailings pertaining to the meeting asking members to book their requirements.

AGENDA AND MINUTES

Each meeting within the Branch should have the same style of agenda and minutes so members can identify and know their way around the papers.

The agenda shall be brief but informative, giving people an idea of the main items for discussion so that they can prepare themselves.

Details of the discussion around each item are not usually included in the minutes, except where the main purpose of the meeting is to develop policy or give information so that keeping a record of the way ideas have developed is important. More generally, the point is to show what was decided and who is responsible for carrying it out. An action at the side of each page of minutes gives everyone a clear idea of who is responsible for actioning points.

Emergency resolutions should be allowed for cases where the matter could not have been foreseen. 'Any other business' should be kept strictly to minor matters of information or decision and not be used as an opportunity to bring up new matters unannounced.

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANISATION

Each department shall have a Departmental Stewards Committee.

The role of the Steward is in accordance with Section G (5) of the UNISON Rule Book and the Branch rules. Appendix 6 details their role in terms of recruiting new members.

Members based in employers outside Nottingham City Council e.g. community and voluntary sector and private contractors shall have a Steward system appropriate to the size of the membership.

The formulation and operation of each committee will be determined in line with the principles of fair representation and proportionality.

All Stewards shall be entitled to attend the appropriate Stewards Committee.

Branch Officers and other Officials and Officers of the Union may attend in a non-voting capacity.

The function and responsibilities of Departmental Stewards Committees are:

1. To elect Stewards to the appropriate negotiating bodies. This will be based on fair representation and proportionality, appendix 1 refers.
2. To elect a Representative to the Service Conditions Sub Committee.
3. To receive reports from Representatives on negotiating panels and from stewards.
4. To arrange consultations with members within the Department on issues relating solely to that Department.
5. To receive reports from Stewards on recruitment of new members.
6. To carry out Branch Committee policy in respect of negotiations/consultations.
7. Formulation of policy proposals to the Branch Committee.
7. Meetings of the Committee shall be held at appropriate times and locations to facilitate the fullest participation of Stewards. A Central Panel Rep or the Branch Chair should attend each meeting.

BRANCH SUB COMMITTEES

To ensure the effectiveness of the Branch in conducting its business the following Sub Committees shall be established to report to the Branch Committee:

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

To consider and recommend to the Branch Committee:–

- Member complaints on subscriptions
- Finance of the Branch - and recommendation to Branch Committee on donations, affiliations and subscriptions
- Staffing of the Branch Officials
- The establishment of administration procedures for the Branch Office
- To produce regular reports to the Branch Committee
- To consider occasional policy issues

SERVICE CONDITIONS SUB COMMITTEE

- To co-ordinate the Service Conditions negotiations on each panel of negotiating body
- To co-ordinate national and city wide conditions of service
- Report regularly to the Branch Committee and produce an annual report to the AGM.
- Help with management of authorised industrial action
- Membership of the Sub Committees shall be subject to the criteria set out in Appendix 1.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Oversee the work of Health and Safety Representatives throughout the City.
- To consider appropriate action for individual personal injury cases and monitor their progress

- Members of this committee shall include Health and Safety Officers, and Health and Safety Representatives
- To submit an annual report to the AGM.
- Elect Representatives as appropriate to the Health and Safety Negotiating structure.

A STEWARD'S ROLE IN RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

Why Recruitment, Retention and Organising is Essential

One of the most vital jobs of a steward is to recruit new members. Organised workplaces with a high density of union membership means UNISON will have much greater influence with local management and with employers. Members will have a stronger sense of confidence and ability to change things, together with much higher chances of winning recognition in non-recognised workplaces.

Such workplaces will have greater clout with other trade unions within the workplace. They will have more stewards, safety representatives and workplace contacts who run the union locally and ensure that the branch is truly representative.

All of this means that the union will have greater influence both locally and nationally, which helps UNISON campaign to improve public services, to stop discrimination, for equality of opportunity and for better pay and conditions of service.

The union will have greater stability. The more members we have locally, the greater income the branch has to provide support for stewards and members. Remember that it is particularly important to recruit young members if UNISON is to grow and be strong in the future.

'Nobody asked me!' -- that's the single biggest reason people give for not having joined a trade union. And the best people to recruit new members are the UNISON members working alongside them.

Successful recruiters can influence non-members to join when the union is seen to be active, has credibility, organises in a workplace and actively contacts potential members on a regular basis.

An organising approach to recruitment is more likely to succeed than telling members the benefits of joining, and promising a servicing role in which members expect stewards to solve their problems for them.

There are a number of specific techniques you can adopt to help you influence someone to take the step and join. There are many barriers in the way of people joining a union. Effective organisers aim to remove as many of these as possible.

Consider how you present yourself to the potential member and the language you use. You need to be assertive and clear in your arguments but not pushy. A good technique is to use inclusive language such as "our union" or "your union". Avoid union jargon as far as possible and illustrate your arguments with real-life examples of how the union has been effective in their workplace.

Consider which recruitment material to use and whether you need to produce your own to supplement the national, regional and branch materials.

The organising approach

- Listen and ask questions for at least 70% of the time when you meet a potential recruit
- Identify any concerns of the non-member; don't make promises but highlight that there may be hope
- Recognise that concerns about joining are real and acknowledge them. No large organisation is perfect - be honest about the union
- Speak to new employees as soon as you can. Make sure they know where you can be contacted
- Bear in mind that potential members are more likely to be recruited by colleagues they know and trust. We know that 'like recruits like'
- Approach recruitment and retention from the perspective that members need to get involved and understand that only by working together can their problems be resolved
- Use empathy - a powerful influencing technique can be to explain how you joined the union and became an active member, including your experience of the union and its achievements. Remember, UNISON is a member-led union and we want members involved

Be organised

- Keep a list of all members and potential members in your constituency
- Make sure that you are informed when new employees are starting
- Keep appropriate UNISON recruitment literature and supplies
- Display UNISON recruitment and other appropriate UNISON posters in the workplace
- Always carry membership application forms with you - you never know when you might need them