



the public service union

Manchester Community and Mental Health Branch

BRANCH RULES

1. Branch Name

The Branch shall be called '**Manchester Community and Mental Health**' 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.

Membership of the Branch is open to anyone employed in organisations providing health services, particularly community health or mental health services, whether in the public, private or voluntary sector, within the geographical boundary of the city of Manchester, who are not covered by other branches within Manchester. *[In 2016, these include: Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust (MMH&SCT); GP practices; any other employers which are substantially funded by the NHS and based in Manchester, or providing a health service for the NHS within Manchester, health staff working for private health service agencies, hospitals, nursing homes or health related voluntary or charitable organisations. Successor organisations to any of these employers will be covered by the Branch.]*

4. Branch Structure

- a) There will be an Annual General Meeting of the Branch, held between January and March, 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 one meeting or a series of aggregate meetings based on sections or 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.
- d) The quorum for a general branch meeting will be 40 members, whether through a single meeting or aggregate meetings.
- e) Other meetings of members will be held on a geographical and/or occupational basis as appropriate, and can be convened by members, stewards or branch officers. Such meetings cannot make decisions to set or change branch policy, but can make recommendations to the branch committee or to a general meeting on branch policy issues.
- f) The branch committee will comprise all branch officers (see rule 5 below), and 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.

5. Branch Officers

- a)** The Branch shall elect the following officers annually in accordance with rule 5c: Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Co-ordinator, Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator, Equality Officer(s), Health and Safety Officer, Communications Officer, International Officer, Membership Officer, Young Members' Officer, Welfare Officer, Labour Link Officer (elected by the members who pay the APF political levy), Retired Members' Secretary (elected by the retired members), and others to be determined as necessary for the effective operation of the Branch. All officer posts may be shared, within or across sections in the Branch.
- b)** Each section within the Branch shall elect a convenor / senior steward from amongst the stewards in that section in accordance with rule 5d.
- c)** 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 retired members.
 - ii. nominations will be invited 12 weeks before the AGM and nomination forms will be available from the Branch Secretary. All nominations must be received in writing at least 7 weeks before the AGM.
 - iii. each nominee will be notified and given the right to withdraw not later than 6 weeks before the AGM.
 - iv. if there is more than one candidate, a vote will be held.
 - v. the vote will be conducted by postal ballot in accordance with the procedure and timescales contained in the Code of Good Branch Practice.
 - 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.
- d)** Election of convenors / senior stewards
 - i. the process for nomination and election shall be as in (c) save that the nomination may be by the section committee or any two members employed in that section, and only members employed in the relevant section may participate in the election.

6 Branch Committee

- a)** Representation on the branch committee will be agreed by the AGM and will include:
 - Branch officers
 - Representatives of self-organised groups
 - The convenors for each section
 - All stewards. Any group of members (such as an occupational group or members working within the same workplace/department/service) is entitled to elect a Steward to represent their interests. The Branch will have one steward for every 40 members. All Stewards are entitled to attend meetings of the branch committee.
- 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 sections 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 section.
- e)** The branch committee will establish arrangements for the individual representation of members.
- f)** The branch committee shall normally meet monthly. Special branch committee meetings may be convened to deal with specific items of business.

7. Sections

- a) Sections comprise all members within the relevant service group and/or bargaining group and will have autonomy within the Branch in respect of collective bargaining with their employer(s) only, subject to the policies and any guidelines and procedures of the Branch, region and national union.
- b) Sections will be led by a convenor elected in accordance with rule 6d and who will be the senior accredited representative within the section, and a committee of all accredited representatives within the section.
- c) The Branch has two main sections, reflecting the major employers covered by the Branch: 'Community' and 'Mental Health'. 'Community' consists of members employed by GP practices, nursing homes, and public, private and voluntary sector health service employers and agencies, or any of their successor organisations. 'Mental Health' consists of members employed by Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, or any successor organisation. These sections will provide for the participation and representation of members in that section.

8. Self Organised Groups:

The Branch will recognise groups of: black members, disabled members, lesbian gay bisexual transgender (LGBT) members, women members.

Such groups may:

- a) elect a representative to the branch committee.
 - b) formulate proposals, motions and other initiatives for the branch committee or branch meetings to consider.
 - c) receive financial support from the Branch in accordance with UNISON's guidelines.
- and shall:
- d) report on their activities to the AGM, including accounting for any financial support.

9. 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, all members will be notified in writing at least 12 weeks before the meeting (or first aggregate meeting).
- c) The procedures to be used at the meeting will be explained clearly.
- d) The Branch will maintain records of all meetings and other appropriate records to enable the Branch to function.

10. Media communications

Communications to the media on behalf of the Branch shall be made only by officers or stewards authorised by the branch committee.

11. Affiliations

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

12. Finance

The Branch shall keep a bank/building society account in the name of the Branch and will maintain a financial record of all assets and transactions in accordance with UNISON guidelines

13. Donations

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.

14. Expenses

Rates of expenses for members attending meetings or carrying out other activities on behalf of the Branch shall be agreed by the AGM in accordance with the Scheme for Branch Expenses contained in the Branch Finances Handbook. (*Available from Branch Secretary or Branch Treasurer*)

15. Branch staff

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.

16. 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.