

# BRANCH DETAILS



## Welcome to UNISON!

**You are now a member of UNISON's City of Edinburgh Local Government & Related Sectors Branch which represents over 8,000 staff working for the Council, other associated organisations and the Community and Voluntary Sector.**

**We represent members in all types of job - professional, admin, manual etc - except teachers.**

### THE BRANCH

The Branch has an office in Edinburgh staffed by a Senior Branch Support Officer and three Branch Support Assistants.

As at all levels of UNISON, the control lies with Lay Officers who are elected by the members. These Officers are unpaid and are employees of the Council or other Employers organised by an extensive professional full time structure.

The Branch Secretary is responsible for the day to day organisation of the Branch.

The Service Conditions Coordinator and a team of Conveners and Officers are responsible for Service Conditions matters.

### SHOP STEWARDS

Shop Stewards are the backbone of the Branch's organisation. Many issues can be best sorted out at local level by a steward who knows the workplace, knows the job and knows the people concerned.

We still suffer from the myth of the 'cloth cap and whistle' shop steward.

In reality, Shop Stewards are people interested in making their union work effectively for its members. They are the members' direct line into the resources of the union.

They are there to communicate issues to and from members and to represent them on local issues.

*The Branch Office details are:*

**UNISON**  
**City of Edinburgh Branch**  
**10 Infirmary Street**  
**EDINBURGH EH1 1LT**  
**Tel: 0131 558 7488**  
**Fax: 0131 558 7041**  
**UNISON Direct:**  
**0800 0857 857**

Please contact your **SHOP STEWARD** in the **FIRST** instance

Shop Stewards are eligible for time off for training and for trade union duties.

Shop Stewards are elected by their colleagues annually at a workplace level.

### HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

The Branch also appoints or elects Health & Safety Representatives who have a status in law.

Their job is to ensure that the Employer adheres to regulation and agreements to maintain a healthy

and safe working environment. They are supported by a Branch Health & Safety Officer and Committee. Representatives receive training.

### BRANCH STRUCTURE

The Branch is organised on a shop Stewards Committee basis. These Committees are Departmentally or Sector based.

A copy of Shop Stewards Committee contacts accompanies this bulletin.

### MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The Branch and the National Union try to provide as many fringe benefits as possible. These include special Insurance and Mortgage Rates, Free Wills, Free and discounted Legal Service, Discount Shopping and Travel discount via UNISON Travel.

Please contact UNISON Direct for more details.

**Legal advice:** For employment related advice you must contact the Branch Office. **(Please note that you must be a member for 4 weeks before Legal representation can be given).** For all other issues, use the **UNISON Law line on 0800 0 857 857.**

### WELFARE FUND

The Branch contributes to a National Welfare Fund but also has a local fund, financed by voluntary contributions by members. This has Charitable status and is used to support, advise and provide practical help to members facing particular difficulties.

## Branch Meetings

These are the supreme branch policy meetings and are open to all members.

## Departmental Meetings

Open to all members in each department or sector and can mandate Shop Stewards Committees. Members mandate their own stewards via **Workplace Meetings**.

## Branch Committee

Consists of about 60 members made up of branch officers, stewards elected from Departmental Committees and reps from self organised groups. Steward delegates are accountable to their Stewards' Committees. Structures ensure stewards outnumber officers.

The Committee meets monthly to deal with the running of the branch and oversees work of all other committees.

Delegations must meet proportionality (ie reflect the proportion of women in the membership) and fair representation.

## Shop Stewards Committees

Made up of all stewards in each department. These deal with issues in your department and most have a Joint Consultative Structure through which they meet management regularly. They represent your views through workplace or departmental meetings and elect delegates to the branch committee.

## Scottish Council

UNISON's Scottish forum of delegates from all branches. There are also specific structures for services like Local Government and Health.

## National Conference

UNISON's supreme policy making body made up of delegates from branches. Also Conferences for each individual service (eg Local Government).

## National Executive

Elected by ballot of all members on Regional constituencies (eg Scotland), and UK service constituencies like local government. Implements, interprets and sets policy between conferences. Members are lay officers who have jobs like the rest of us.

## Self Organised Groups

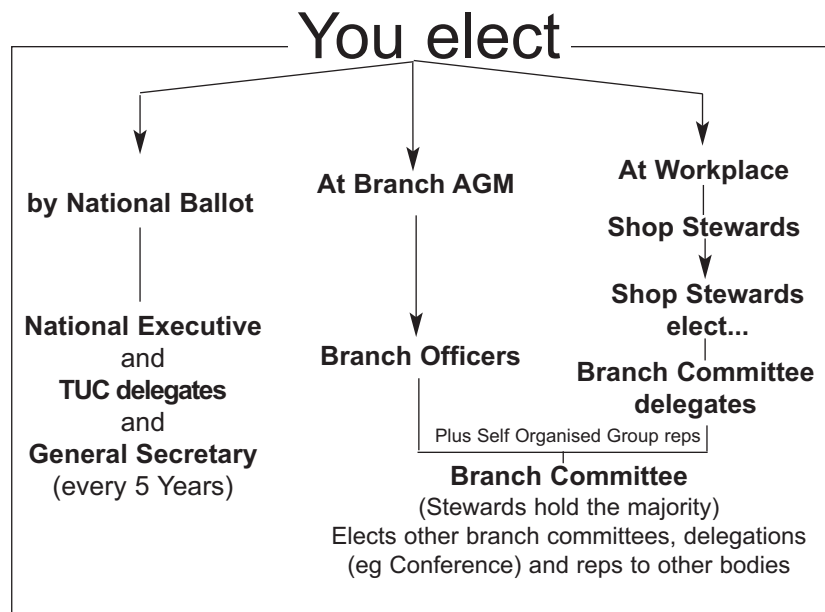
For structurally disadvantaged groups, eg Black Members, Disabled Members, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Members.

# Making your VOTE COUNT

Here we outline broadly the current framework and the UNISON structure in which the branch works.

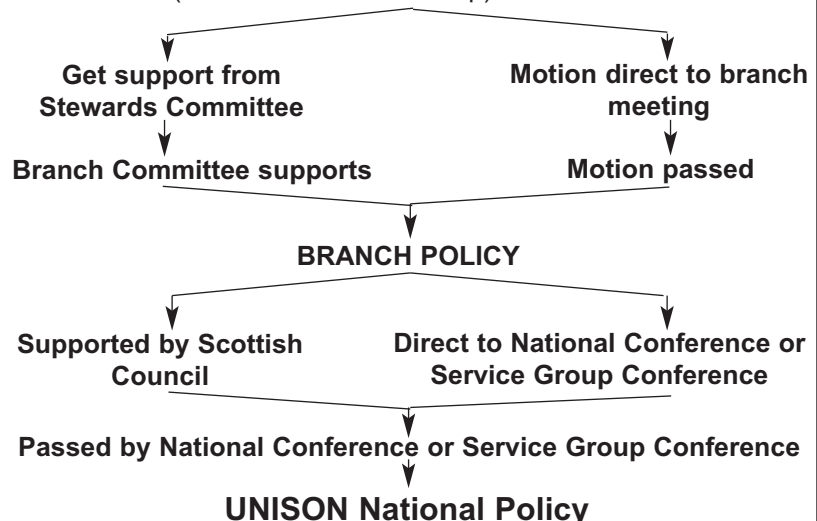
**UNISON is a lay member led union with democratic structures at all levels. But these structures are no good unless members themselves exercise their right to use them.**

The structures which branch members have set up will no doubt develop through experience to meet the branch's needs.



## How you can make UNISON Policy

For example, you want UNISON to campaign for more leave  
Discuss at your workplace, raise with your steward or draw up a motion (the branch office will help) and find a seconder.



How the Branch Works