



**Rules and Standing Orders for the Online Branch
In accordance with Rule 16.2.1 of the Rules of the Union**

1 Establishment

1.1 Subject to the approval of the Equity Council, an Online Branch may be formed and maintained when, in the opinion of the Council, there are sufficient Equity members in benefit who:

- desire the establishment of such a Branch,
- sign a petition or individual request to that effect.

The Council may also establish an Online Branch of its own volition.

2 Objects and Duties

2.1 To provide a facility for the discussion of matters of concern to Equity members in their capacity as such.

2.2 To serve as a channel of communication between the membership and the elected Council, and vice versa.

2.3 To support and promote the Objects of Equity as set out in Rule 3 of the Rules of the Union, subject to the approval of the Council.

2.4 To carry out any Council instructions.

2.5 To submit motions for consideration by the Annual Representative Conference, Council and/or appropriate National, Industrial or Specialist Committee.

2.6 To consider reports of the proceedings of the Council.

2.7 With the prior consent of the Council, to seek to co-operate or establish formal links with any suitable organisation in the promotion of the Union's Objects.

3 Membership

3.1 Any member of Equity in benefit may register to be a member of the Branch. If registered, they shall have the right to participate in all debates and voting on the Branch.

3.2 Branch Register: Any Equity member may apply to the Branch Moderator or Equity office to be included on the Branch Register held by Equity.

3.3 Any paid-up Student Member of Equity may register as an observer to receive all postings made on the Branch and to make postings but shall not be enabled to vote.

3.4 The Committee of the Branch may invite members of Equity (who are not registered members of the Branch) and invited guests (who may be non-members) temporarily to participate in debates of the Branch as posting contributors. Such persons shall have no voting rights. Any such temporary membership of the Branch shall continue until the result of the vote on the particular debate with which they are concerned is announced. Their temporary membership shall then be terminated.

3.5 If a temporary member is invited by the Branch Committee to make a specialist posting as an expert on the subject under debate and/or to participate in an online question and answer session with registered members of the Branch, this will be announced at least a

week in advance by the currently serving Moderator who will also announce at that time the deadline by which such questions must be posted.

- 3.6 No person who applies for or is invited to take out registered or temporary membership of the Branch (including observers) shall be admitted into membership until they have affirmed that they will not (without the permission of the currently serving Moderator) reproduce elsewhere in whole or in part any postings made to the Branch.

4 Finance

- 4.1 The Branch shall not be involved in the raising or handling of funds.

5 Branch Committee

5.1 Composition

- 5.1.1 The registered members of the Branch shall elect annually a Branch Committee consisting of nine members. The Committee shall be in continuous session.

- 5.1.2 Any permanent vacancy occurring amongst the elected Branch Committee shall be filled by the next unsuccessful candidate. Where there is no unsuccessful candidate the Branch Committee may, with the prior approval of the Council, co-opt a registered member of the Branch to the Committee, but only for the duration of the current Committee's period of office.

5.2 Election

- 5.2.1 The Branch Committee shall be elected by an online ballot.
- 5.2.2 The first election shall commence within 28 days of the date of the inauguration of the Branch and be completed within another 28 days. Subsequent elections shall follow the timetable set out below.
- 5.2.3 Candidates for election to the Branch Committee shall be registered members of the Online Branch, who accept nomination and are proposed and seconded online by registered members of the Branch. Nomination Forms shall be circulated online to all registered members of the Branch not later than 28 days before the date of the anniversary of the Branch's inauguration.
- 5.2.4 Candidates may make an election statement of not more than 150 words, including details of any Equity offices they have held, which shall be posted online to all registered Branch members. Only ordinary type shall be used in candidates' election statements – i.e. no bold type, italics, block capitals, html, hypertext links, etc.
- 5.2.5 Electronic ballot papers shall be securely circulated to all registered members of the Branch not later than 14 days before the date of the anniversary of the Branch's inauguration and votes shall be securely registered with the Returning Officer by not later than noon on the Friday before the date of the anniversary of the Branch's inauguration. Votes received after the notified time of close of poll shall be void.
- 5.2.6 The General Secretary shall appoint an official of Equity to act as Returning Officer, who shall draw up a timetable for the election in consultation with the Branch Moderator, be responsible for the distribution of nomination forms and ballot papers, count the votes and declare the result of the ballot to the Branch Moderator. The Branch Moderator shall announce the result of the election online to the registered members of the Branch on the date of the anniversary of the Branch's inauguration.

5.3 Term of Office

The term of office of the Branch Committee shall end annually on the date of the anniversary of the Branch's inauguration.

5.4 Duties

The Committee shall conduct the business of the Branch. The Committee shall have power to appoint such Sub-Committees as it deems necessary and may invite any registered member of the Branch with the necessary qualifications to be a member of any Sub-Committee.

6 Branch Officers

- 6.1 The Branch Committee shall elect a Branch Moderator and a Public Relations Officer. The rest of the elected members of the Committee shall serve as Deputy Branch Moderators.
- 6.2 Election: The Branch Moderator and Public Relations Officer (PRO) shall be elected by the Branch Committee within a week of the date of the anniversary of the Branch's inauguration. Candidates for office shall be members of the Branch Committee, who accept nomination and are proposed and seconded online by members of the Branch Committee. The election shall be conducted by secret online ballot.
- 6.3 In the event of any permanent vacancy occurring for the position of Branch Moderator and/or PRO, all Committee members shall be notified of the vacancy online by one of their number and invited to submit nominations, and the Branch Committee shall elect a new Branch Moderator and/or PRO within a week of this notification in accordance with the electoral procedures contained in Rule 5.2 herein.
- 6.4 Only elected members of the Branch Committee may stand for office and take part in the election of the Branch Moderator and PRO.

7 Duties of the Branch Officers

- 7.1 The duties of the Branch Moderator shall be:
- 7.1.1 To administer the affairs of the Branch in accordance with these Rules and the Rules of the Union, and act under the instructions of the Branch Committee in consultation with the Organiser appointed by the General Secretary to liaise with the Online Branch.
- 7.1.2 To ensure that there is a permanent electronic record of all online debates and voting of the Branch, including the business of the Branch Committee, and to furnish an unedited paper copy (accompanied by a précis) of any such part of that record as required by the Organiser and/or the General Secretary.
- 7.1.3 To keep an up-to-date Branch Register, in accordance with Rule 3.2 herein, and inform the Equity office of all changes. On ceasing to hold office s/he shall hand over to her/his successor access to the Branch Register and the electronic record of all Branch proceedings, as well as the electronic tools to moderate such proceedings.
- 7.1.4 To initiate and moderate an online discussion by the Branch Committee when, in the opinion of the Branch Moderator or the Organiser, or a majority of members of the Committee, the business of the Branch so requires.
- 7.1.5 To pass on motions and other matters discussed by the Branch to the General Secretary of the Union with the request where necessary that they shall be brought to the attention of the Council or appropriate National, Area or Specialist Committee.
- 7.1.6 To be responsible for the electronic distribution of nomination forms and ballot papers appertaining to Branch elections, other than the election of the Branch Committee and elections to a Representative Conference.
- 7.1.7 To draw up the Annual Report on the work of the Branch and to present the same to the registered members of the Branch for adoption and furnish a copy to the Organiser after such adoption.
- 7.1.8 To be ultimately responsible for the moderation of the Branch, and to draw up a schedule as to when other elected members of the Committee shall be on duty as Deputy Branch Moderator for the Branch Moderator when the latter is unavailable.
- 7.1.9 To preside (unless having temporarily appointed a Deputy Branch Moderator in her/his place) in the moderation of all debates and votes of the Branch (including Committee discussions). During all votes, any members who have presided or are presiding in accordance with this Rule shall not vote on any question over which they have presided, unless there are an equal number of votes for and against, when the Moderator currently presiding may exercise a casting vote.
- 7.2 The duties of the Deputy Branch Moderators shall be:
- 7.2.1 To carry out any of the above duties of the Branch Moderator as and when scheduled to do so by the Branch Moderator, which shall be achieved by open discussion and agreement.

- 7.3 The duties of the PRO shall be:
- 7.3.1 To publicise the affairs of the Branch generally, provided that any material which is to be published in any newspaper or any other form of publication shall not be published unless and until it has been approved by the Organiser.

8 Disqualification of Committee members

- 8.1 Rules 14.3 to 14.5 of the Rules of the Union – Qualification for Council - shall apply in the case of any such member seeking election to or holding office on the Branch Committee.

9 Dismissal of Committee members

- 9.1 Should the members of the Branch wish to remove any Committee Member from office, notice of a motion requesting the removal of the Committee Member, proposed and seconded by two members of the Branch and setting out the grounds for the request, shall be sent to the General Secretary. The General Secretary shall immediately inform the person about whom the complaint is made and shall decide whether the request is acceptable. If the General Secretary accepts the request, all the members on the Branch Register shall be informed of the motion in an online posting. If the motion is carried by an affirmative online vote of two-thirds of the votes cast for and against, the office shall become vacant. Provided that - should the General Secretary decide that the request is not acceptable - the proposer and seconder shall have the right to appeal to the Council for a final decision.

10 Branch Debates and Voting

- 10.1 All registered members of the Branch shall be enabled to receive online all postings from the Branch into their internet inboxes via the Union's website and shall in turn be enabled to make their own postings to other members of the Branch. No postings shall be made about matters which are not on the announced agenda of the Branch.
- 10.2 The Branch Committee shall have its own separate online exchange of postings in order to conduct its business.
- 10.3 The Branch shall be in continuous session for registered members who may choose to participate at any time. Notice of each item of business on the agenda and the time limitations given to any debate on it shall be posted online by the Branch Moderator or her/his appointed Deputy Branch Moderator not later than three days before debate on that item shall commence.
- 10.4 The Branch may consider all the business on its agenda concurrently.
- 10.5 Except as otherwise provided in these Rules, no decision of the Branch shall be acted upon until such decision has been approved by the Council or by the General Secretary acting on its behalf.

11 Annual Representative Conference

- 11.1 In accordance with Rules 37.2.3 to 37.2.8 of the Rules of the Union, the Branch Committee shall elect annually from among its members by ballot of all members of the Committee, two representatives to attend the Annual Representative Conference except that, if the Branch represents fewer than 200 members, it shall be entitled to only one representative. Co-optees to the Branch Committee may not take part in this election, except where the next unsuccessful candidate in the election of the Branch Committee has been co-opted to fill a permanent vacancy.
- 11.2 In accordance Rules 37.2.14, 37.2.15 and 37.2.17 of the Rules of the Union. The Branch shall be entitled to submit one motion and one amendment to a motion to the Annual Representative Conference.

11.3 In accordance with Rule 37.2.19 of the Rules of the Union, elected representatives shall discuss the Conference agenda with Branch members online prior to the Conference and shall report back online to the Branch afterwards.

11.4 In accordance with Rule 37.2.20 of the Rules of the Union, elected representatives shall not be mandated by the Branch, but each representative shall be free to decide how to vote after listening to the debate at the Conference. They shall have a single vote each.

12 Nomination & Support for Candidates in Equity Elections

12.1 The branch may nominate eligible candidates for elections to the Council, in accordance with Rules 14.1 and 15.3 of the Rules of the Union, or the national, industrial, specialist, equality or young member committees.

12.2 The branch may support the candidacy of a member or members already nominated and standing for elections for the President, the Council or the national, industrial, specialist, equality or young member committees.

12.3 Any proposal for nomination or for support must appear on an agenda prepared under Standing Order A.4 and the member or members should be informed of and consent to the proposal.

12.4 The decision shall be made by a simple majority vote of those present, voting for and against and entitled to vote under Rule 3 herein, and conducted under Standing Order A.6. The branch may report the fact of such a decision through a branch newsletter but nothing further. It may report further detail in the Online Branch Chat Room or on social media.

12.5 When nominating candidates, an officer of the branch must complete and sign the relevant section of the candidate's nomination form stating clearly the name of the nominating branch.

12.6 The branch may take a decision to support the candidacy of a member or members already nominated and standing for election at any time up to the close of poll.

12.7 A member who is nominated or supported by the branch shall be entitled to make that support known in their election statement and any election materials they produce themselves which do not use union resources.

13 Copies of Branch Rules and Standing Orders

13.1 A current copy of these Branch Rules and Standing Orders – as well as the Rules of the Union - shall be permanently available online to all registered members of the Branch.

14 Alterations to Branch Rules and Standing Orders

14.1 No alteration shall be made to these Branch Rules and Standing Orders except by the Council, but – subsequent to an online vote on the matter - the Branch shall have the right to refer a request to alter any Rule or Standing Order to the Council whose decision shall be final.

15 Interpretation of the Rules

15.1 Words importing the singular shall include the plural unless otherwise stated.

15.2 The Council shall have power to interpret these Rules or determine any matter on which these Rules are silent and its decision shall be final and binding.

16 Dissolution of the Branch

16.1 Subject to the approval of the Council, the dissolution of the Branch shall take effect when a motion to dissolve the Branch is carried by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the votes cast for and against in an online vote of the Branch. At least 28 days' clear notice shall be

given by an online posting of the proposal to dissolve to all members on the Branch Register and by publication in *The Stage* or the *Equity Magazine*, whichever is appropriate. Notwithstanding the foregoing, after consultation with the Branches concerned, the Council shall have power to close down Branches or to arrange for Branches to merge or to authorise the formation of new Branches. Upon dissolution of the Branch all records of the Branch shall be transferred to the General Secretary of the Union.

17 Standing Orders for Branch Debates and Voting

See Appendix A.

18 Standing Orders for Branch Committee Business

See Appendix B.

NOTE All the Rules of the Union and all amendments thereof shall be binding on the Branch. In the event of inconsistency between the Rules of the Union and those of the Branch, those of the Union shall prevail. In all matters in which these Branch Rules are silent the Rules of the Union shall apply.

APPENDIX A

Standing Orders for Online Branch Debates and Voting

A.1 Participation in Debates and Voting

A.1.1 Participation in Branch debates shall be by registered members of the Branch only, except as otherwise provided in Rule 3.4 of the Branch Rules. Participation in Branch voting shall be by registered members of the Branch only. All Branch debates and voting shall be conducted via the Union's website which shall have a mechanism to ensure that only members of the Union currently "in benefit" shall be registered members of the Branch.

A.2 Duration of Debates

A.2.1 The Branch Moderator (or the currently serving Deputy Branch Moderator) shall determine and announce time limitations from commencement to termination of debate on any individual agenda item. If an agenda item is not completed by the announced time of termination, an extension of time of up to 20% of the original duration may be moved by any registered member of the Branch and voted on by the registered members of the Branch. The vote to extend shall take place within 24 hours of the moving of the extension, during which time discussion of that agenda item shall be suspended.

A.3 Quorum

A.3.1 The Branch shall not conduct any business, except as provided for in Rule 15, if its registered membership is less than ten in number. No vote, except as provided for in Rule 15, shall be valid if fewer than ten registered members of the Branch participate in it.

A.4 Agenda

A.4.1 The Branch Committee shall agree the scheduling of all agenda items. Once every week, the Branch Moderator (or her/his appointed Deputy Branch Moderator) shall post online to the Branch members a list of current agenda items which shall include notification of any voting and details of when debate on any individual item shall commence and terminate.

A.4.2 Once every two months, the Branch Moderator (or her/his appointed Deputy Branch Moderator) shall post online to the Branch members a report which has been agreed by the Branch Committee. The report shall include the following items:

- A.4.2.1 Correspondence;
- A.4.2.2 A précis of Branch Committee discussions;
- A.4.2.3 Equity Council report;
- A.4.2.4 Other reports;
- A.4.2.5 Recruitment and retention;
- A.4.2.6 Health and safety;
- A.4.2.7 Equality and diversity.

A.5 Notice of Motion

A.5.1 A registered member of the Branch wishing to move a motion, not arising from the current announced agenda, may do so (provided that such a motion is in accordance with the Objects of the Union) by sending the wording of the motion to the Branch Moderator (or her/his appointed Deputy Branch Moderator).

A.6 Rules of Debate

A.6.1 *Making an online posting in a debate*

A.6.1.1 Anyone making a posting shall address it to the Branch as a whole and not to any individual member.

A.6.1.2 With the exception of invited guest speakers, the person making the posting shall state their Equity name at the top of their posting.

- A.6.1.3 The posting shall have in its Subject line the title of the agenda item (as specified by the Branch Moderator or Deputy Branch Moderator) to which the posting is a contribution. No other words shall appear in the Subject line.
 - A.6.1.4 If a member raises a point of order (which must deal only with procedure) in a posting, the currently serving Moderator may, if s/he decides it is necessary, suspend further debate on the item while the point of order is debated and resolved.
 - A.6.1.5 The posting must adhere to the Guiding Principles for Online Branch Debates in Appendix D.
- A.6.2 *Motions and amendments*
- A.6.2.1 All motions and amendments must be worded in the affirmative and moved and seconded before being discussed.
 - A.6.2.2 Motions and amendments shall have a maximum word limit of 250 words. Only ordinary type shall be used – i.e. no bold type, italics, block capitals, html, hypertext links, etc.
 - A.6.2.3 If a motion or an amendment is not seconded within a week of it appearing on the agenda, it shall fall.
 - A.6.2.4 No direct negative to any motion shall be taken as an amendment.
- A.6.3 *Word limit on postings*
- A.6.3.1 The mover of a motion, unless otherwise decided by the meeting, shall be allowed not more than 500 words to move the motion and the seconder and subsequent speakers, including movers and seconders of amendments, not more than 300 words. Such a word limit shall not include the text of the motion or amendment.
- A.6.4 *Posting twice*
- A.6.4.1 No member shall contribute more than one posting (except on a point of order or information) on any one motion or amendment except by special permission of the currently serving Moderator.
- A.6.5 *Right of reply*
- The mover of the original motion, but not the mover of an amendment, shall have the right to reply at the close of the debate upon such a motion, and shall be allowed not more than 300 words to do so. In her/his reply, s/he shall confine herself/himself to answering previous speakers and shall not introduce any new material into the debate.
- A.6.6 *Taking the vote*
- A.6.6.1 When the mover of the motion has posted their right of reply, the currently serving Moderator shall proceed to initiate an online vote forthwith without further discussion.
 - A.6.6.2 In initiating each online vote, the currently serving Moderator shall stipulate a date and time by which voting must be completed. The period of time for a vote shall never be less than one week nor more than two weeks.
 - A.6.6.3 The vote(s) on any amendment(s) shall precede the vote on the original motion and if the amendment(s) is(are) carried, the amended motion shall then be put to the Branch as the substantive motion.
 - A.6.6.4 At the end of each stage of the vote, the currently serving Moderator shall make a posting announcing the voting figures of the previous stage and the initiation (if any) of the next stage.
 - A.6.6.5 Before voting on any motion or amendment, each member shall electronically affirm that they have read all the postings made on the agenda item in question.
 - A.6.6.6 After the vote has been taken upon any motion or question, no further discussion upon the same motion or question shall be allowed unless and until notification of a further debate on the matter shall appear on the agenda postings made by the Branch Moderator or Deputy Branch Moderator.
- A.6.7 *Withdrawal of motions or amendments*
- A.6.7.1 A motion or amendment, once it has been moved and seconded, may not be withdrawn by the mover without the consent of a quorate decision of the Branch Committee.

A.6.8 *Closing debate*

A.6.8.1 Debate on an agenda item shall continue until the date and time designated in the agenda (see 4.1 above) unless a member, who has not previously made a posting in the particular debate, move "that the question be now put" (meaning that the matter has been sufficiently debated) or "next business" (meaning that the meeting shall proceed to the next business and allow the matter under discussion to drop). A motion "that the question be now put" or "next business", if accepted by the currently serving Moderator whose ruling may not be challenged under Clause 6.9 of these Standing Orders, shall be put to the vote without discussion. Such a vote (once initiated by the currently serving Moderator) shall be concluded within three days. If a motion "that the question be now put" is carried, the mover of the original motion has the right to reply before it is put to the Branch.

A.6.8.2 Should the currently serving Moderator consider that there is no practical difference of opinion among the members, s/he shall have the power to stop the discussion and put the proposition to the vote.

A.6.9 *Moderator's ruling*

Subject to Clauses A.6.8.1 of these Standing Orders, the currently serving Moderator's ruling on any point whatsoever shall be binding unless it be challenged by not less than four members. In which case the debate shall be suspended until another member of the Branch Committee is in place as Moderator, at which time the motion "that the previously serving Moderator's ruling be upheld" shall be immediately submitted to the vote of the Branch by the now serving Moderator, without discussion. Such a vote shall be concluded within three days. Any time lost from the debate timetable shall be added to the end and the vote delayed accordingly.

A.6.10 *Dealing with a complaint on a posting*

A.6.10.1 If any member has a concern on a posting or postings and wishes to make a complaint, they should inform the currently serving Moderator in writing. In making the complaint the member shall identify which Rule(s) of the Union and/or the Rules & Standing Orders of the Online Branch have been breached.

A.6.10.1.1 The currently serving Moderator shall make a decision as to whether or not the posting(s) shall be removed from the electronic record of the Branch and/or whether or not the person who has made the posting(s) shall be issued with a warning. The currently serving Moderator may immediately remove the posting(s) in contention from the electronic record of the Branch until they make their decision. Removal of the posting(s) shall not set a precedent as to the eventual decision of the currently serving Moderator in regard to the posting(s).

A.6.10.1.2 The currently serving Moderator shall give their decision, and the reasons for the decision, to the member in writing within seven days of being contacted by them. Before reaching a decision, the currently serving Moderator may, if they so wish, consult on the matter with a member of staff and/or another Moderator.

A.6.10.2 If the member making the complaint is not satisfied with the decision reached by the currently serving Moderator, they may appeal in writing, within seven days of being contacted by the currently serving Moderator, to the Branch Committee which shall also be given sight of the decision made by the currently serving Moderator and the reasons for the decision.

The Committee may immediately remove the posting(s) in contention from the electronic record of the Branch until the appeal process is concluded under A.6.10.2.2 below and/or until the disciplinary procedure is complete under A.6.10.3 below. Removal of the posting(s) shall not set a precedent as to the eventual decision of the Committee in regard to the posting(s).

A.6.10.2.1 The Committee shall make a decision to uphold or dismiss the appeal including whether or not the person who has made the posting(s) shall be issued with a warning.

- A.6.10.2.2 The Committee shall give its decision to the member within fourteen days of being contacted by them. Before reaching a decision, the Committee may, if it so wishes, consult on the matter with a member of staff and/or another Moderator.
- A.6.10.3 Any member refusing to obey a warning issued by a Moderator or the Committee shall have their membership of the Branch suspended for a period of 21 days.
- A.6.10.4 Nothing in the above procedure shall preclude the member from exercising their right at any time to make a complaint under Rule 28 (Disciplinary Procedures) of the Rules of the Union against the person who made the posting(s)."

A.7 Voting

- A.7.1 Only registered members of the Branch shall be entitled to vote and propose and second motions.
- A.7.2 The currently serving Moderator shall not vote on any question, unless there is an equal number of votes for and against, when s/he may exercise a casting vote.

A.8 Rescinding a motion

- A.8.1 No motion which has been passed shall be rescinded unless the members of the Branch have been duly notified by the Branch Moderator or Deputy Branch Moderator that there is a new agenda item consisting of a motion to rescind the original motion.

APPENDIX B

Standing Orders for Online Branch Committee Business

B.1 Participation in Business

B.1.1 Only members of the Branch Committee shall be entitled to participate in Committee business. All Committee debates and voting shall be conducted via the Union's website which shall have a mechanism for debate and voting that is exclusive to Committee members and separate from that for the Branch as a whole.

B.2 Duration of meetings

B.2.1 Branch Committee debate on any individual agenda item shall be time limited to one week from its initiation. If an agenda item is not completed within that allotted time, an extension of time of up to two days may be moved by any member of the Committee and voted on by the members of the Committee. The vote to extend shall take place within 24 hours of the moving of the extension, during which time discussion of that agenda item shall be suspended.

B.3 Quorum

B.3.1 A quorum shall consist of four members of the Branch Committee. Co-optees to the Committee shall count towards the quorum. If a quorum is not achieved during a vote on an agenda item, the result of that vote shall be void and, if necessary, the agenda item shall be re-scheduled.

B.4 Agenda

B.4.1 An Agenda shall be prepared by the Branch Moderator in consultation with at least one other Committee member. Once every week, the Branch Moderator (or her/his appointed Deputy Branch Moderator) shall post online to the Committee a list of current agenda items which shall include notification of any voting and details of when debate on any individual item shall commence and terminate.

B.4.2 Once every two months, the Branch Moderator (or her/his appointed Deputy Branch Moderator) shall post online to Committee members a draft report which shall then be debated, modified (if necessary) and agreed by the Committee. The report shall include the following items:

- B.4.2.1 Correspondence;
- B.4.2.2 A précis of Branch Committee discussions;
- B.4.2.3 Equity Council report;
- B.4.2.4 Other reports;
- B.4.2.5 Recruitment and retention;
- B.4.2.6 Health and safety;
- B.4.2.7 Equality and diversity.

B.5 Notice of motion

B.5.1 A member of the Committee wishing to move a motion, not arising from the current announced agenda, may do so (provided that such a motion is in accordance with the Objects of the Union) by sending the wording of the motion to the Branch Moderator (or her/his appointed Deputy Branch Moderator).

B.6 Rules of Debate

B.6.1 As in Appendix A, except that in Clause A.6.9 (*Moderator's ruling*) "not less than four members" shall read "not less than two members".

B.7 Voting

- B.7.1 Only members of the Branch Committee, including co-opted members, shall be entitled to vote and propose and second motions as part of Branch Committee business.
- B.7.2 The currently serving Moderator shall not vote on any question, unless there is an equal number of votes for and against, when s/he may exercise a casting vote.

B.8 Rescinding a motion

- B.8.1 No motion which has been passed shall be rescinded unless the members of the Branch Committee have been duly notified by the Branch Moderator or Deputy Branch Moderator that there is a new agenda item consisting of a motion to rescind the original motion.

APPENDIX C

Standing Orders for an Online Branch Chat Room

C.1 Rules of Debate

C.1.1 Making an online posting in the Chat Room

- C.1.1.1 Any member of the branch shall be able to initiate a thread in the Chat Room on a topic relevant to Equity members in their capacity as such.
- C.1.1.2 All contributions to discussions in the Chat Room must adhere to the Guiding Principles for Online Branch Debates in Appendix D.

C.1.2 Dealing with a complaint on a posting

- C.1.2.1 If any member has a concern on a posting or postings and wishes to make a complaint, they should inform the currently serving Moderator in writing. In making the complaint the member shall identify which Rule(s) of the Union and/or the Rules & Standing Orders of the Online Branch they believe have been breached. The currently serving Moderator may also identify a posting or postings themselves.
- C.1.2.2 The currently serving Moderator shall make a decision as to whether or not the posting(s) shall be removed from the Chat Room and/or whether or not the person who has made the posting(s) shall be issued with a warning. The currently serving Moderator may immediately remove the posting(s) in contention from the Chat Room until they make their decision. Removal of the posting(s) shall not set a precedent as to the eventual decision of the currently serving Moderator in regard to the posting(s).
- C.1.2.3 Before reaching a decision, the currently serving Moderator may, if they so wish, consult on the matter with a member of staff and/or another Moderator.
- C.1.2.4 Any member refusing to obey a warning issued by the currently serving Moderator shall have their membership of the Branch suspended by the Moderator for a period of 21 days.
- C.1.2.5 Any suspended member may appeal the ruling of the Moderator in writing to the Branch Committee which shall also be given sight of the decision made by the currently serving Moderator and the reasons for the decision.
- C.1.2.6 The Committee shall make a decision to uphold or dismiss the appeal and give its decision within fourteen days of being contacted.
- C.1.2.7 Nothing in the above procedure shall preclude a member from exercising their right at any time to make a complaint under Rule 28 (Disciplinary Procedures) of the Rules of the Union against the person who made the posting(s).

APPENDIX D

Guiding Principles for Online Branch Debates

- 1 Members taking part in Branch debates shall:
 - 1.1 treat fellow members with dignity and respect regardless of their sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or other status or personal characteristic;
 - 1.2. pay careful attention to what fellow members say and write;
 - 1.3 avoid, or clearly explain, use of acronyms and technical jargon;
 - 1.4 not use discriminatory language;
 - 1.5 not discriminate on grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or other status or personal characteristic;
 - 1.6 respect the confidentiality of discussions and disclosures;
 - 1.7 leave any personal disagreements outside the meeting;
 - 1.8 allow fellow members the opportunity to speak or comment, without interruption;
 - 1.9 keep to time and stick to the agenda;
 - 1.10 arrive prepared by reading all the relevant papers prior to the commencement of the meeting;
 - 1.11 respect decisions that have been reached and agreed to;
 - 1.12 refrain from making personal attacks on another member which are both undesirable may also be in breach of Equity's rule on harassment (Rule 3.1.1.8) and could give rise to a complaint under the Rules by a fellow member.