Jargon Guide

Glossary

D&O  NEC’s Development and organisation committee
EHRC  Equality and Human Rights Commission
FRMC  Finance & resource management committee (UNISON)
LAOS  Learning and organising services
       (UNISON department responsible for member training)
LGBT  Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
LLL  Lifelong learning
MPU  Membership participation unit
       (UNISON department with equalities remit)
NBMC  National Black members’ committee
NDC  National delegate conference
NDMC  National disabled members’ committee
NEC  National executive council
NEC ELC  National executive council equality liaison committee
NWC  National women’s committee
NWO  National women’s officer
NYMF  National young members’ forum
PDCC  NEC’s policy development and campaigns committee
RWC  Regional women’s committee
RWO  Regional women’s officer
SOG  Self organised group
TUC  Trades Union Congress

Commonly used terms

Self organisation
Groups facing discrimination meeting and organising to determine their collective agenda and feeding it into UNISON’s structure.

SOGs
The four self-organised groups: defined by UNISON national rules as women members, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.

Positive action
Action to combat the prejudice and discrimination experienced by members of the self-organised groups.

Self-definition
Right of people to define themselves, e.g. as disabled or lesbian.

Proportionality
The representation of women and men in fair proportion to the relevant number of female and male members of the electorate – UNISON has a rulebook commitment to proportionality.

Fair representation
The broad balance of representation of members of the electorate, taking into account such factors as age and low pay, the balance between full-time and part-time time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations, skills, race, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity – UNISON has a rulebook commitment to fair representation.
### UNISON Organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>National delegate conference</strong></th>
<th>Supreme decision-making body of UNISON – annual conference of branch delegates at which the self-organised groups have representation.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEC</strong></td>
<td>National Executive Council – elected body of lay members.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lay member</strong></td>
<td>A member who is not an employee of the union.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lay structure</strong></td>
<td>A body that does not consist of employees of the union.</td>
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<td><strong>Regions</strong></td>
<td>UNISON is organised into 12 regions around the country, each with their own regional office and staff.</td>
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<td><strong>Service groups</strong></td>
<td>UNISON organises members in the following services – energy, health care, higher education, local government, police staff, transport, community and water and environment. The service group has autonomy to decide the group’s general policy and negotiate on behalf of their members. Each service group has an annual conference of delegates which sets the group’s agenda for the following year.</td>
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<td><strong>Sector</strong></td>
<td>A sub-group of a service group, e.g. the nursing and midwives sector of the healthcare service group.</td>
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<td><strong>Code of good branch practice</strong></td>
<td>A set of guidelines, including a chapter on self-organisation, drawn up by the NEC which it considers desirable for branches to follow.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNISON InFocus</strong></td>
<td>Monthly magazine for stewards and activists.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNISON efocus</strong></td>
<td>Weekly email to stewards and activists.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>U magazine</strong></td>
<td>Quarterly magazine for all members.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Labour link levy</strong></td>
<td>A fund made up of contributions from opted-in members used to support the Labour Party.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GPF</strong></td>
<td>General political fund: A fund made up of contributions from opted-in members used for non party-political campaigning.</td>
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<td><strong>Branch equality rep</strong></td>
<td>New activist position. The aim is to have an equality rep in every workplace, working as team members co-ordinated by the branch equality officer.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equality impact assessment</strong></td>
<td>Testing out whether a change, policy or service could affect different equality groups in different ways, and making sure that the needs of all groups are taken into account.</td>
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<td><strong>Equality strands</strong></td>
<td>The main equality strands covered by UNISON’s scheme are age, disability, gender, gender identity, low pay, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation.</td>
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<td><strong>Gender identity</strong></td>
<td>A person’s gender identity is their internal sense of their own gender. This is not necessarily the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Tackling discrimination on grounds of gender identity builds equality for transgender people.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Public sector equality duties

Public bodies are required by law to produce equality schemes showing how they will tackle unlawful discrimination and promote equality. They are also required to publish equality impact assessments. There is UNISON guidance on using the public sector equality duties in negotiations (stock number 2645).

Conference Organisation

Standing Orders Committee
Elected body of women members which oversees the smooth running of National Women’s Conference business and ensures that the Standing Orders are observed.

Standing Orders
The rules governing the conduct of business – agreed by Conference as a whole.

Plenary
All delegates meeting together.

Motion
A formal proposal to be debated and voted upon.

Amendment
A proposed change to a motion that deletes from or adds to it.

Grouped debate
Two or more motions on the same topic plus other amendments, debated together, but voted on separately to allow all the positions in a discussion to be presented.

Substantive
Motion as amended.

Composite
Two or more motions or amendments on the same topic combined to make one composite motion.

Competent
To be competent a motion or amendment must comply with Standing Orders and the guidance issued by the Standing Orders Committee, be appropriate and make sense, such as not demanding something which is already UNISON policy or instructing a body outside UNISON.

UNISON Organisation continued...
## UNISON Structure

### STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Secretary</th>
<th>National staff</th>
<th>Regional Organising staff</th>
<th>Large branches may have paid administrator</th>
<th>National Service Group Executives and Conferences</th>
<th>Regional Service Groups</th>
<th>national representative bodies</th>
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<td></td>
<td>National self organised groups and Labour Link committees and conferences</td>
<td>Regional self organised groups and Labour Link committees</td>
<td>BRANCHES</td>
<td>Branch Committee: Branch Officers &amp; reps</td>
<td>Workplaces and different employers: Stewards, H&amp;S and Equality reps, ULRs</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### 1.4 million UNISON MEMBERS working across public services in 7 service groups:

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### HOW DOES IT WORK?

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<td>National self organised groups and Labour Link committees and conferences</td>
<td>Regional self organised groups and Labour Link committees</td>
<td>BRANCHES</td>
<td>Send delegates and motions to national conferences</td>
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MEMBERS elect NEC, General Secretary and national service group executive members

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Getting involved in UNISON

The branch

The first point of contact for UNISON members is the UNISON branch. This is the main unit of local membership organisation and also normally the main vehicle for negotiation between the union and the employer. All members belong to a branch, dependant upon the employer they work for and the area in which they work.

Sometimes a branch is made up of members working for one employer e.g. a particular hospital trust or university. More commonly, a branch covers members working for a number of employers based in a geographical area and providing similar types of services. Branches fall into one of seven service groups: local government, health care, higher education, police support staff, transport, energy, and water.

However, there is now no requirement for branches to fit within these boundaries, and they are beginning to blur as the number of voluntary and private employers providing public services grows.

The UNISON branch plays a number of key roles, including:

• ensuring effective negotiations take place with the employers it covers
• ensuring that its members are given effective advice and representation
• providing effective support for stewards, safety representatives and workplace contacts
• being the main vehicle by which members participate in developing UNISON policy and objectives

It is, therefore, essential that stewards get involved in their local branch as much as they are able.

Branch structure

All branches must have at least one members’ meeting a year. This is the Annual General Meeting which is held between 1 January and 31 March. Some branches hold more than one members’ meeting a year, and large branches are asked to have “aggregate” meetings – a series of local meetings held at different times and venues to enable more members to attend.

Branches must elect certain core officers:

• Chair
• Secretary
• Treasurer
• Equalities Officer
• Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator
• Health and Safety Officer
• Education Co-ordinator
• Communications Officer
• International Officer
• Young Members Officer

Branches may also create other posts according to their rules. Officers are elected either at the AGM or by postal ballot beforehand.

The branch officers and stewards form the branch committee. Branch committees meet monthly and are responsible for running all branch business between full members’ meetings.
Making policy

UNISON's policy and general objectives are decided at the National Delegate Conference. This takes place in June each year. All branches are entitled to send delegates to the conference in proportion to the size of their membership. National Delegate Conference makes policy on a wide range of issues including:

- economic and social issues
- relations with government
- international matters
- internal organisation
- bargaining principles

In addition, each of the main service groups and self-organised groups hold conferences to develop policy within the national framework.

Each region has a Regional Council comprising representatives from each branch depending on its size. Regions also have regional committees, elected from regional councils, service groups and other regional bodies. Regional committees oversee the implementation of policy and co-ordination of branch activity within regions. Service groups and self-organised groups also have regional committee structures.