



UNISON SCOTLAND DISABLED MEMBERS'
SELF-ORGANISED GROUP

C O N S T I T U T I O N

2022

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1. SELF-ORGANISATION

1.1. National Rule D5.2 observes that “The purposes of self-organisation shall be, within the framework of the Rules of the Union, to assist the union to:

1. Promote the union’s equalities and bargaining agenda.
2. Defend jobs, terms and conditions and services.
3. Build its density and have a strong and dynamic presence in the workplace.

2. SCOTTISH DISABLED MEMBERS’ GROUP

2.1. A Scotland Region Disabled Members’ Self-Organised Group [SOG] shall be established in accordance with the National Rule D5.

2.2. The Group shall be created from eligible members at Branch level and shall consist of eligible members who are registered to attend the SOG’s Annual Meeting.

2.3. The Group shall be called UNISON Scotland Disabled Members’ Group [SDMG] and shall operate in the whole of Scotland.

2.4. In accordance with the National Rules D5.3 and D5.6 the SDMG shall:

1. Work within the established policies, rules and constitutional provisions of the Union.
2. Be represented on the Scottish Committee by a representative with full voting rights.
3. Meet to share concerns and aspirations, and establish its own priorities.
4. Build confidence and encourage participation and provide opportunities for the fuller involvement of its membership.
5. Formulate proposals, motions or other initiatives to the Scottish Council and Scottish Committee.
6. Report on the Group’s activities at the Annual Meeting of the Scottish Council.
7. Elect its own representatives to its committee and to other levels of self-organisation and other appropriate levels of the Union.
8. Appoint a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary from nominations received.
9. Appoint representatives to the National Disabled Members’ Committee.

3. POWERS

- 3.1. The Scottish Council has the power to make policy at Scotland regional level in respect of disabled members' affairs in accordance with Rule 2 of the Rules and Standing Orders of the Scottish Council.
- 3.2. A Branch wishing to develop disabled members' policy at a regional level shall in the first instance submit a motion to the Scottish Regional Office in accordance with the National Rule D3.8.
- 3.3. If the issue relates exclusively to functions of the SOG it shall be referred to the Group's Committee for information or action as appropriate.
- 3.4. If the issue relates to the functions of the SOG but also has implications for other parts of the Union, it shall be referred to the Group's Committee and also to the Scottish Committee for information or action as appropriate.

4. SCOTTISH DISABLED MEMBERS' COMMITTEE

- 4.1. The SDMG shall establish a Committee from eligible members at Branch level in accordance with the National Rule D5.6.1 that shall be named the Scottish Disabled Members' Committee [SDMC].
- 4.2. The Committee shall carry out the functions of the SOG.
- 4.3. There shall be no reserved seat(s) on the Committee.
- 4.4. The Committee shall consist of
 1. 12 representatives who shall have speaking rights and voting rights.
 2. A Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary who shall be elected from the Committee's Membership.
- 4.5. UNISON staff may attend to support the self-organised group by prior request or invitation and subject to the agreement of the Chair and who shall have speaking rights but no voting rights.

5. FINANCE AND SUPPORT

- 5.1. The SDMG shall receive funding and resources from the Scottish Region in accordance with the National Rules D5.3.3 and D5.6.6.
- 5.2. Expenses incurred by delegates through attendance at the Annual Meeting, and other meetings or events hosted by the Scottish Disabled Members Committee, shall be borne in full by members' Branches and in accordance with Branches' financial arrangements.

- 5.3. A 'permission to use own vehicle' application form must be completed and forwarded to the Scotland Region Treasurer before mileage can be claimed.
- 5.4. The Committee representatives shall adhere to the scheme of Reimbursement of Expenses, Travelling and Subsistence in accordance with Rule 32 of the Rules and Standing Orders of the Scottish Council. This scheme ensures that all costs properly incurred are repaid from the funds allocated to the self-organised group.
- 5.5. All approved reasonable expenses incurred through attendance at a Committee meeting or undertaking approved Committee business shall be reimbursed from the Regional SDMG budget. Representatives in any doubt over what may be reclaimable should refer to the Scottish Regional Equalities' Officer *prior* to incurring that expense. No reimbursement shall be given for unapproved expenditure.
- 5.6. A representative attending a committee on behalf of the Committee, or co-opted onto another committee by *that* committee shall adhere to its expenses provisions. Representatives in any doubt over what may be reclaimable should refer to that committee's Secretary *prior* to incurring that expense. No reimbursement shall be given for unapproved expenditure.
- 6. ELIGIBILITY TO ATTEND THE SDMG ANNUAL MEETING AND TO SEEK NOMINATION TO ELECTABLE POSITIONS ON ITS COMMITTEE**
- 6.1. All UNISON disabled members employed in the Scottish Region are eligible to attend the Annual Meeting provided they are full members in accordance with the National Rule C2.3.
- 6.2. All UNISON disabled members employed in the Scottish Region are eligible to seek nomination for any elected position to the Committee described in Rules 2.4.7 through to 2.4.9 above provided they are full members in accordance with the National Rule C2.3.
- 7. REGISTERING AS A DELEGATE TO THE ANNUAL MEETING AND SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS TO AN ELECTABLE POSITION**
- 7.1. Eligible members wishing to attend the Annual Meeting shall be nominated by their Branch.
- 7.2. Eligible members wishing to be nominated to an electable position shall be nominated by their Branch.
- 7.3. The Scottish Regional Office shall ensure that all necessary paperwork relating to the SDMG Annual Meeting is circulated to all Scottish Branches. This shall include information that details the registration and nomination processes.
- 7.4. Branch Secretaries shall receive notification of the Annual Meeting inviting eligible members to register to attend the Meeting and to seek nomination to electable positions.
- 7.5. It is the responsibility of the Branch Secretary to ensure this Notice is circulated to its Disabled Membership.

- 7.6. Branch Secretaries shall ensure they have read the SDMG Constitution Rules prior to approving any nominations, and in particular to the provisions contained in Rule 5.2, Rule 6, and Rule 7.
- 7.7. Any member wishing to attend as a delegate to the Annual Meeting should complete the necessary paperwork and return this to their Branch Secretary.
- 7.8. Any member seeking nomination to an electable position should complete the necessary paperwork and return this to their Branch Secretary.
- 7.9. Branch Secretaries shall ensure that nominations (Rule 7.7 and Rule 7.8) are approved at a properly constituted quorate Branch Committee meeting prior to the submission deadline.
- 7.10. Branch Secretaries shall ensure that all completed paperwork arising is returned to the Scottish Regional Equalities' Officer by the stipulated deadline date and that approved expenses associated with attendance are reimbursed to the member.
- 7.11. Nominations received after the deadline shall not be accepted: the member will not be registered to attend and any corresponding nomination for an elected position will be void.
- 7.12. All delegates to the Annual Meeting must follow and are subject to the Rules of the Union.
- 7.13. All nominees elected to the Committee must follow and are subject to the Rules of the Union.
- 7.14. A member may seek nomination to one Office Bearer position only.
- 7.15. A member seeking nomination as Vice-Chair is not eligible for selection as a delegate to the National Disabled Members' Conference. If elected as Vice-Chair, any nomination received as delegate to that Conference will be void.
- 7.16. Eligibility to an electable position is subject to registration to attend the SDMG Annual Meeting.

8. ELECTIONS

- 8.1. The principles of proportionality and fair representation shall apply to all elections as defined with the National Rules D.2.14 and D.3.6.
- 8.2. All candidates nominated for election may supply biographical details of relevant Trade Union or other experience of up to 300 words which shall be circulated to delegates to the Annual Meeting prior to the election taking place. Candidates shall not be invited to speak in support of their nomination.
- 8.3. Where nominations are sought from the floor at the Annual Meeting those nominee(s) may speak for no more than five minutes in support of the nomination. The Chair has the discretion to alter speaking time upwardly.

- 8.4. If an election is required a vote shall be taken by ballot at a quorate meeting. Where there are more than two candidates and no candidate achieves an overall majority on the first count, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall withdraw and a further ballot shall be held. The process shall continue until the successful candidate achieves an overall majority of votes cast.
- 8.5. If no election is required, the nominee must achieve a minimum of one-third of the votes of delegates present to be successfully elected to any position.
- 8.6. If elected as an Office Bearer or Regional National Disabled Members' Representative the nominee is automatically elected to the Committee.
- 8.7. The period of office shall be from the close of the Annual Meeting to the close of the Annual Meeting the following year.

9. ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE

- 9.1. A Committee of twelve representatives shall be elected from nominations received. (Six women's seats; six general seats.)
- 9.2. A position of Committee representative is not eligible for job-sharing.
- 9.3. If a Committee vacancy exists Branches shall be notified and the position may be filled for the remaining period of office at the Committee's next scheduled meeting from nominations received (Rules 6.2 and 7.9 apply) by the stipulated deadline date. There is no compulsion on the Committee to fill a vacancy.

10. ELECTION OF REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NATIONAL DISABLED MEMBERS' COMMITTEE

- 10.1. The SDMG holds two reserved seats as regional representatives on the National Disabled Members' Committee in accordance with the National Rule D5.7.2.
- 10.2. One position shall be reserved for the SDMC's Vice-Chair.
- 10.3. If the Vice-Chair is unable to assume the reserved seat they may advise the Annual Meeting and the Chair shall assume the seat and carry out the functions described under Rule 14.2.3.
- 10.4. In that circumstance, the Vice-Chair remains eligible for selection as a delegate to the National Disabled Members' Conference. The Chair shall become ineligible for selection as a delegate to the Conference and any associated nomination submitted shall be void.
- 10.5. The SDMG shall elect to the remaining seat from nominations received at its Annual Meeting (one must be a woman).

11. ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO THE SCOTTISH COUNCIL

- 11.1. The SDMG holds two reserved seats as delegates to the Scottish Council in accordance with the Scottish Council's Rules and Standing Orders Rule 4.6.
- 11.2. Delegates to the Annual Meeting shall elect to the positions from nominations received by the stipulated deadline (one must be a woman).

12. OFFICE BEARERS

- 12.1. Office Bearers shall include a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary position.
- 12.2. Office Bearers are responsible for managing meetings and facilitating all meeting arrangements with the assistance of the Regional Office.
- 12.3. Office Bearers shall set an agenda for the SDMC policy seminar.
- 12.4. Office Bearers shall expedite the Committee's business between scheduled meetings liaising regularly with the UNISON Scottish Regional Office.
- 12.5. If an office bearer is unable to, or anticipates being unable to, attend in their capacity on a Regional or National committee for a period exceeding three months they shall inform the Scottish Regional Convenor. If the Regional Convenor assesses that a replacement is required one of the remaining office bearers may be requested to attend as a temporary replacement but only with the explicit consent of the Regional Secretary.

13. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

- 13.1. A Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary shall be elected at the Annual Meeting from nominations received.
- 13.2. One of the two posts of Chair and Vice Chair must be filled by a woman.
- 13.3. A position of Office Bearer is not eligible for job-sharing.
- 13.4. In the event of no eligible nominations being received by the Committee or where a vacancy arises between Annual Meetings the Committee may appoint individuals from among them to fulfil vacant Office Bearer positions. If required, a vote shall be taken by a ballot of those representatives attending the committee meeting.

14. ROLE OF OFFICE BEARERS

- 14.1. The Chair shall:
 - 1. Manage and chair all meetings from the close of the Annual Meeting to the close of the Annual Meeting the following year.

2. Ensure the SOG's work programme is progressed.
3. Progress work assessed as urgent that cannot wait until a scheduled meeting.
4. Hold the deciding vote where there is a split vote in accordance with Rule 25.3, below.
5. Represent the SDMG on the Scottish Committee and shall promote the SDMG's views and interests.
6. Provide a Report on decisions arising from the Scottish Committee's policy seminar that are of relevance to the Disabled Membership.

14.2. The Vice-Chair shall:

1. Act as Chair in their absence.
2. Ensure the SOG's work programme is progressed.
3. Oversee the preparation and submission of motions and amendments to all conferences and meetings.
4. Progress work assessed as urgent that cannot wait until a scheduled meeting.
5. Represent the SDMG on the National Disabled Members' Committee and shall promote the SDMG's views and interests. As part of that role they shall:
 - i. Ensure updates are provided in relation to the National Disabled Members' Committee's work programme.
 - ii. Manage and Chair the Scottish Region's pre-conference delegation meeting at the National Disabled Members' Conference.
 - iii. Provide a Report on the National Disabled Members Conference decisions to the Committee.
6. Ensure a pre-conference delegation meeting at the STUC Disabled Workers' Conference is arranged and held.

14.3. The Secretary shall:

1. Provide advice to the Chair and ensure the Constitution is observed.
2. Ensure the SOG's work programme is progressed.
3. Progress work assessed as urgent that cannot wait until a scheduled meeting.
4. Provide a quarterly work programme update.
5. Provide an Annual Report to the SDMG Annual Meeting.

6. Provide an Annual Report to the Scottish Council Annual Meeting and provide any interim reports as necessary.
7. Ensure a Financial Report is provided to the Annual Meeting.
8. Oversee electronic communications relating to urgent matters and maintaining an audit trail of all electronic decision making and voting.

15. ANNUAL MEETING

- 15.1. An Annual Meeting of the SDMG shall be held each year to conduct the following business:
 1. To receive an Annual Report of the Committee's work from the previous year.
 2. To receive a Financial Report.
 3. To elect a Committee.
 4. To elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.
 5. To elect regional representatives to the National Disabled Members Committee.
 6. To elect regional delegates to the Scottish Council.
 7. To consider all motions received from Branches, the Scottish Disabled Members' Committee, and the Scottish Committee.
 8. To approve the Scottish Council's Standing Orders for the Conduct of Business of the SDMG and its Committee.
- 15.2. A staff representative from the Scottish Regional Office is required to attend the Annual Meeting to act as an independent scrutineer in relation to the observance of the Constitution, Standing Orders, and Elections.

16. COMMITTEE POLICY SEMINAR

- 16.1. The Committee shall hold a policy seminar each year to agree a prioritised work programme.
- 16.2. This shall consider:
 1. All regional actions relevant to its Membership arising from motions carried at:
 - i. SDMG's Annual Meeting
 - ii. National Disabled Members' Conference
 - iii. Scottish Council
 - iv. STUC Disabled Workers' Conference

2. All other competent business raised relating to matters relevant to or of interest to disabled members.
 3. All matters raised by the Scottish Council.
 4. All matters raised by the Scottish Regional Office.
- 16.3. The Committee may appoint an individual or set up a short-term working group to undertake specific work on its behalf related to its work programme.
 - 16.4. If a short-term working group is established the Committee shall appoint a convenor from the working group's membership who shall report on progress to the Committee.
 - 16.5. No further work shall be undertaken by the Committee outside the agreed work programme without discussion and agreement of two-thirds of the Committee's membership at a quorate meeting.

17. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- 17.1. The Committee shall meet at least four times in every calendar year at times and venues to be agreed by the Committee at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting.
- 17.2. At its first meeting the Committee shall:
 1. Select representatives to reserved seats on any other UNISON regional committee that confers reserved seats to the disabled members SOG.
 2. Select two delegates to the National Disabled Members Conference (one must be a woman).
- 17.3. The committee shall conduct the following business in relation to the STUC:
 1. Select two representatives to be nominated for election on the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee (one must be a woman).
 2. Select delegates to the STUC National Disabled Workers' Conference (half must be a woman).
 3. Consider whether it wishes to nominate to the STUC General Council from among those delegates registered to attend the STUC Disabled Workers Conference.
 4. Consider whether it wishes to nominate to the STUC Annual Congress from among the delegates registered to attend the STUC Disabled Workers Conference.
- 17.4. The SDMG has a reserved seat on the Scottish Committee in accordance with the National Rule F5.6.3 with speaking and voting rights. This shall be reserved for the Committee Chair.

- 17.5. Members of the Committee cannot seek nomination to more than one regional committee unless no other nominations to vacant positions are received from Committee representatives.
- 17.6. The Committee shall progress an agreed work programme on behalf of the Disabled Membership taking advice and direction from the Scottish Regional Equalities' Officer.
- 17.7. The meeting shall consider only additional business notified in advance. No other matter shall be considered unless the Chair has been advised prior to the meeting, considers it to be relevant and urgent, and two thirds of those present agree to hear the matter.
- 17.8. At scheduled meetings following the Policy Seminar the Committee shall:
1. Progress its agreed work programme for the year.
 2. Provide motions and amendments to be submitted to relevant conferences and meetings.
 3. Progress regional actions arising from motions carried at relevant conferences and meetings.
 4. Receive Reports from Committee representatives for meetings attended by them on behalf of the SDMG.
 5. Undertake all other competent business arising to fulfil the functions described in Rule 2.4 above.
- 17.9. An extra-ordinary meeting of the Committee may be called by the Secretary subject to agreement of all Office Bearers and shall be held virtually.

18. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS FOR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- 18.1. Where possible, the Standing Orders of the Scottish Council shall apply to the conduct of meetings.
- 18.2. Annual Meeting
1. A calling notice shall be issued to each registered delegate providing notice of the meeting date, venue and agenda.
 2. The notice shall include a Report of the Committee's work from the previous year and other paperwork relevant to the Meeting.
 3. The notice shall include details of nominations received for electable positions and accompanying biographies submitted.
 4. The notice shall include a copy of the SOG's Constitution.

18.3. Policy Seminar

1. A calling notice shall be issued to each Committee representative providing notice of the seminar date, venue, and agenda.
2. The notice shall request confirmation of attendance.

18.4. Committee Meetings

1. A calling notice shall be issued to each committee representative providing notice of the meeting date and venue.
2. The notice shall include draft minutes of the previous meeting and reports received.
3. The notice shall request confirmation of attendance and notification of additional agenda items Committee representatives may wish to raise under Other Competent Business.

19. ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION AND DECISION-MAKING

- 19.1. Email communications shall relate directly to the agreed work programme or Committee business, and no other business.
- 19.2. Committee representatives wishing to raise new business between scheduled meetings should contact the Secretary in the first instance. Office Bearers shall consider whether the business is urgent or can wait until the next scheduled meeting.
- 19.3. A record of urgent communications and voting shall be maintained by the Secretary until the matter is discussed and recorded within the minute of the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

20. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- 20.1. All motions and amendments received shall be of primary relevance to the Disabled Membership.
- 20.2. All Scottish Region Branches shall have the right to submit a total of one motion and one amendment to the Annual Meeting.
- 20.3. The Scottish Council shall have the right to submit reports, statements, motions and amendments to the Annual Meeting.
- 20.4. The SDMC shall have the right to submit reports, statements, motions and amendments to the Annual Meeting.
- 20.5. Submitters may refer to the National Standing Orders Branch Guidance that is issued to all branches providing advice on writing motions or amendments and may also seek guidance from the National Standing Orders Committee Regional Representative.

- 20.6. Matters of competence shall be considered by the Vice-Chair taking advice from the Scottish National Standing Orders Committee Representative.
- 20.7. Motions and amendments shall be received from the submitting body under the signature of its Chairperson or Secretary.
- 20.8. Motions should reach the UNISON Scottish Regional Office at least 28 calendar days before the date of the Annual Meeting.
- 20.9. If a motion or amendment is deemed “not competent” the UNISON Scottish Regional Office shall notify the submitting Branch detailing the reason for the decision.
- 20.10. Motions submitted will be circulated to all delegates within the Agenda paperwork that will be issued at least 21 calendar days prior to the meeting.
- 20.11. Amendments must be received from the submitting body under the signature of the Chairperson/Secretary not less than 10 calendar days prior to the date of the meeting, and shall be made available to delegates at the meeting. Submitting bodies cannot submit an amendment to motion that propose to amend the Constitution.
- 20.12. The mover of a motion or amendment to motion must be present at the Annual Meeting.

21. COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION ON OTHER GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

- 21.1. Representatives on behalf of the Committee have the speaking and voting rights conferred by the committee or group calling the meeting.
- 21.2. The Rules and Standing Orders of that committee or group apply.
- 21.3. If a Committee representative elected onto another committee or group is subsequently co-opted further they represent the views or interests of *that* committee or group and not the Scottish Disabled Members’ Group or its Committee.

22. PRE-CONFERENCE DELEGATION MEETING

- 22.1. National Disabled Members’ Conference:
 - 1. A pre-conference delegation meeting shall be held for all Scottish UNISON delegates to the National Disabled Members’ Conference.
 - 2. The Vice-Chair shall be responsible for arranging the pre-delegation agenda in consultation with Office Bearers.
 - 3. The Vice-Chair shall be responsible for making all such arrangements as necessary in conjunction with Office Bearers to provide an agenda and facilitate the meeting.

22.2. STUC Disabled Workers' Conference:

1. A pre-conference delegation meeting shall be held for all Scottish UNISON delegates to the STUC Disabled Workers' Conference.
2. The Committee's delegates shall meet prior to conference to discuss the conference agenda and any other business arising.
3. The Vice-Chair shall be responsible for making all such arrangements as necessary in conjunction with the office bearers to provide an agenda and facilitate the meeting.

23. QUORUM

- 23.1. The quorum of the SDMG Annual Meeting shall be one third of those registered to attend and vote.
- 23.2. The quorum of the Committee shall be one third of those present eligible to vote.
- 23.3. The quorum for decision-making shall be by simply majority of those members present at a quorate meeting. For decision-making concerning complaints, finance, and joint working with other committees or groups the quorum shall be by two-thirds of the Committee's membership.

24. ALTERATION TO RULES OR STANDING ORDERS

- 24.1. These Rules and Standing Orders shall only be amended at an Annual Meeting by a two-thirds majority of those delegates present and voting.

25. GENERAL

- 25.1. All Committee representatives are bound by Collective Responsibility.
- 25.2. All Committee representatives represent the Self-Organised Group's views and interests in all communications and at all meetings attended in their capacity as representative or delegate for the Group and not those of their Branch or individual views and interests.
- 25.3. A member who behaves in an abusive or disruptive way at a meeting shall be removed from the meeting by the Chair. An extra-ordinary meeting of the Committee shall be held within one calendar week to consider whether a formal complaint should be raised with the Region. In that circumstance, the members' branch secretary shall also be advised.
- 25.4. With the exception of ballots relating to electable positions and motions received the Chair shall have a casting vote for all other matters arising where a vote is tied.
- 25.5. Where the Rules are silent on any issue the Scottish Council Rules shall prevail.