



**Your union  
is run by  
YOU**

**Do  
YOU** want to become a  
member of Unite's  
Executive Council?



**Your union, Unite, depends on members like you keeping our democracy alive.**

**Our Executive Council is our 'government'. It brings ordinary workers from around the UK and Ireland together to shape our policies and development.**

**And it is not just the union and our members that will benefit from your expertise – being an EC member can be also be hugely personally rewarding. You will be taking part in the running of the biggest union in the country, and taking forward the best force for working people in Britain and Ireland.**

**Please read this guide to the Executive Council, what it does and what being a member entails. And get involved.**

“

*I have learnt a great deal from my time on the Executive and often finish each Executive inspired. I have also had the opportunity to meet and work with some of the best union activists in our movement.*

*When I stood I expected the meetings to be combative and heated. In fact they are conducted with humour and mutual respect and are occasionally very entertaining.*

”

**Frank Wood (Health)**

**If you want to discuss it further,  
drop a line to [executive.council@unitetheunion.org](mailto:executive.council@unitetheunion.org)**



# Executive Council – Role and Responsibilities

There are currently 63 members on the Council.

The responsibilities of the Executive Council (EC) are contained in Rule 14 of the Unite Rule book.

This briefing note explains some of those tasks in more detail. Please look at the chart at the end of this paper to find out more about how the Executive Council fits into the constitution and structures of Unite.

## Composition

As with all of the Union's constitutional committees the EC must meet the requirements of minimum proportionality. This means that women members and Black, Asian Ethnic Minority (BAEM) members must be represented on the EC in proportion to their membership of the union. The EC is also required to have a representative of both LGBT and disabled members.

For the 2017/2020 electoral period there will be a new, full member of the EC representing young members.

“ I believe Unite is and always should be lay member led. I stood for the EC to represent the members and influence the policy and direction of my Union. ”

**Kate Osborne (North East, Yorkshire and Humberside)**

## Types of Representatives

The EC is divided into constituencies. The number of constituencies and EC members per constituency (EC seats) depends on the number of members in relevant sections. A full list of constituencies and seats on the current Council is attached as Appendix 1.

There are 3 types of representative:

**1. Industrial Sector Representatives** – these are elected by and from one of the 20 industrial sectors. In some sectors, depending on the size and make-up of the membership, there are also seats reserved for Women members and Black, Asian Ethnic Minority (BAEM) members.

**2. Regional Representatives** – these are elected by and from Unite's 10 geographical regions. In all regions there are seats reserved for Women members and, depending on the size and make-up of the membership, in some regions seats reserved for Black, Asian Ethnic Minority (BAEM) members.

**3. Equalities Representatives** – these are elected nationally to ensure that different groups (women, BAEM, LGBT and disabled members) within the membership are represented on the Council.

From the next electoral period the Young Members' representative will be a full member of the EC. There will be two observers, one each representing members in Gibraltar and Retired Members.

The exact composition of the next Executive Council will be determined at the EC meeting in September 2016.



## Standing for the Executive Council

To be eligible to stand for election to the Executive Council you must be an accountable representative of workers. You must also have made at least 13 weeks' financial contributions i.e paid your union subs, and you must not be more than 13 weeks in arrears.

Further details are available in Rule 6 of the rule book and the EC Guidance on the rules which are available on the Unite website

<http://www.unite.theunion.org/growing-our-union/about-us/structure/>

Nominations are made by branches and workplaces in accordance with the rules of Unite.

Election is by a postal ballot of members, again in accordance with the Rules and current legislation.



“ *There are definite benefits from being on the Council both within the organisation & in the workplace. You are respected for the role you undertake, and any issues that are raised are taken more seriously.*

*And finally no, being on the Council is nothing like I expected when I stood.* ”

**Paul Welsh (GEMS)**

## Responsibilities of the Executive Council

The main responsibilities of the Executive Council include:

- overseeing the management of the financial affairs of the union, including its property portfolio
- the appointment and promotion of union full time officials, other than the General Secretary
- ensuring that all constitutional committees have a named responsible full time official
- the consideration of motions remitted (put forward) by Regional Committees, National Industrial Sector Committees and National Equalities Committees
- dealing with matters of membership discipline and hearing appeals from members in connection with how Unite's Rules are applied
- receiving reports on industrial disputes; sanctioning the payment of dispute benefit
- deciding questions of policy between meetings of the Policy Conference
- setting the political direction of the union, including relations with the Labour Party
- sending delegations to the TUC Congress and Labour Party Conference and associated labour and social movement events, conferences and meetings
- receiving a quarterly report from the General Secretary and reports from the Assistant General Secretaries and Departmental Directors.



## Appointment of full time officials

One of the key responsibilities of the EC is the appointment of full time officials of the union.

These appointments are made by panels of 3 or more Council members in conjunction with the relevant senior official with line-management responsibilities.

Recruitment and selection training is provided to each new EC member before they can participate in these appointment panels.

“ *Sitting on the EC has enhanced my knowledge of all the sectors in my region and the challenges that our members face on a day to day basis in their workplaces especially in these turbulent times.* ”

**Joyce Still (South East)**

## How much time do EC members have to commit?

There is no getting away from it, being a member of the EC requires a considerable time commitment from members.

In addition to Executive Council meetings members may be elected to a sub-committee of the Council or as a delegate to another body or a conference.

Under Unite's rules, EC members are also required to be accountable to and attend their relevant National Committee for industrial or equalities representatives, or their relevant Regional Committee for regional representatives.

## How often does the Executive Council meet?

The EC meets 4 times a year for up to 5 days from Monday at 1.00 pm through to Friday.

These meetings are held in March, June, September and December in Unite House, Holborn, London.

Should you be elected to serve on one of the sub-committees of the Council then you will be required to attend further meetings throughout the year.

“ *From the creation of the Community Membership programme to our campaigns against the Bedroom Tax, and exploitation in Sports Direct, Unite has been at the forefront of our movement's fightback to defend working people. I'm very proud to be part of an Executive Council which has led from the front on these campaigns.* ”

**Bryan Simpson (Young Member Observer)**



## EC Sub-Committees

The EC has several sub-committees to which it delegates its authority in specific areas. Each consists of members elected by and from the EC at its first meeting after taking office. EC members report back to the Council on the business of the committees on which they are a member.

Unite's Rules require the Council to elect a Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GPC). The F&GPC meets for 1 day in every month when the EC does not meet to transact business that need not wait for a full meeting of the EC.

The Council currently also has the following sub-committees:

- Education Sub-committee – meets quarterly
- International Sub-committee – meets quarterly
- Branch Reorganisation/Rule 6 Appeals Panel – meets as required
- Rule 27 Disciplinary Panel – meets as required
- Strike Pay Committee – meets as required
- Severance Committee – meets as required



“ I put myself forward as a territorial representative for the Irish region to give our members a voice and to ensure we are an integral part of our union and the trade union movement in general. ”

**Therese Moloney (Ireland)**

## Bodies to which the EC elects delegates

There are a number of committees and conferences to which the EC elects delegates as a matter of course

- Trades Union Congress (TUC) – meets annually
- TUC General Council – meets quarterly
- Unite National Labour Party Liaison Committee – meets quarterly
- Labour Party Conference – meets annually
- Labour Party National Policy Forum – usually meet annually, may be more frequent
- Unite Pension Fund Board of Trustees – meets quarterly
- Unite Trustee Company – meets as required, usually annually



## Unite Conferences

EC members are required to attend the biennial Policy Conference and the 4 yearly Rules Conference. These conferences meet for up to 5 days Monday to Friday and as with delegates EC members are required to attend during the weekend in the lead up to the conference.

EC members are also entitled to be observers at the relevant biennial National Industrial Sector and Equalities Conferences.



“ *It has been a privilege to represent Unite members on our EC and in particular the interests of our sector - standing up for our members, their families and communities, and offering support and guidance to our reps and activists.* ”

**Ged Dempsey (GPM&IT)**

## Executive Council Support

To help EC members in their role Unite provides mobile IT equipment. EC members can choose from a digital notebook, laptop or tablet.

Members are also provided with a Unite e-mail address, if they don't already have one.

Training can be provided. All notifications and documentation for meetings is provided to EC members online. Paper copies of documentation are provided at meetings.

Assistance with travel and hotel bookings is also provided centrally by the Constitutional Administration Department. The Unite ICT helpdesk is available to help with IT problems and queries.

## Training

Following the election of a new Executive Council an induction day is held before the first meeting for new EC members. Training in recruitment and selection is also given before new EC members are asked to sit on an officer appointment panel.

“ *I stood for the EC after various sectors, branches and activists convinced me that I may be able to better represent their views and aspirations on the highest committee of our union.* ”

*The issues of austerity, the proper funding of the NHS and other services are only a few of the topics that we campaign on, to the benefit of our members.* ”

**Eddie Cassidy (Scotland)**

“ *I stood for the Executive for the same reasons I am a convenor in my workplace: to make a difference; to make the union stronger; to ensure representation, integrity and support for members is core, and to make our members proud of their union.* ”

**Steve Hibbert (East Midlands)**



# EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: CONSTITUENCIES AND SEATS 2017-2020

The Constituencies and seats on the next Council will be as follows. This make up takes into account the requirement for minimum proportionality contained in Rule 11.

The numbers in brackets below specify where designated seats have been allocated in accordance with Rule to achieve minimum proportionality of Women members or Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority (BAEM) members on the Executive Council.

The first set of brackets in each case refers to a designated seat for Women members; the second set of brackets refers to a designated seat for Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority (BAEM) members.

Region Seats	EC members
East Midlands	2 (1)
Ireland	2 (1)
London & Eastern	4 (1)(1)
North East, Yorkshire & Humber	2 (1)
North West	3 (1)
Scotland	2 (1)
South East	2(1)
South West	2 (1)
Wales	2 (1)
West Midlands	3 (1)(1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 (10)(2)</b>

National Equality Seats	
Women	1 (1)
BAEM	1 (-)(1)
LGBT	1
Disabled	1
Youth	1
<b>Total - National Seats</b>	<b>5 (1)(1)</b>



<b>Industrial Sector Seats</b>	
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	2
Automotive Industries	3 (-)(1)
Civil Air Transport	3 (1)(1)
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	1
Community, Youth Workers & Not for Profit	1
*Construction (Unite)	4
*Construction (UCATT)	4
Docks, Rail, Ferries and Waterways	1
Education	1
Energy and Utilities	1
Food, Drink and Agriculture	3 (1)(1)
Finance and Legal	3 (2)
General Engineering, Manufacturing and Servicing	2
Government, Defence, Prisons & Contractors	1
Graphical, Paper, Media and Information Technology	1
Health	3 (2)
Local Authorities	2 (1)
Metals (including Foundry)	1
Passenger Transport	2 (-)(1)
Road Transport Commercial, Logistics and Retail Distribution	2
Service Industries	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42 (7)(3)</b>
<b>Total number of seats on the EC</b>	<b>71 (18)(7)</b>

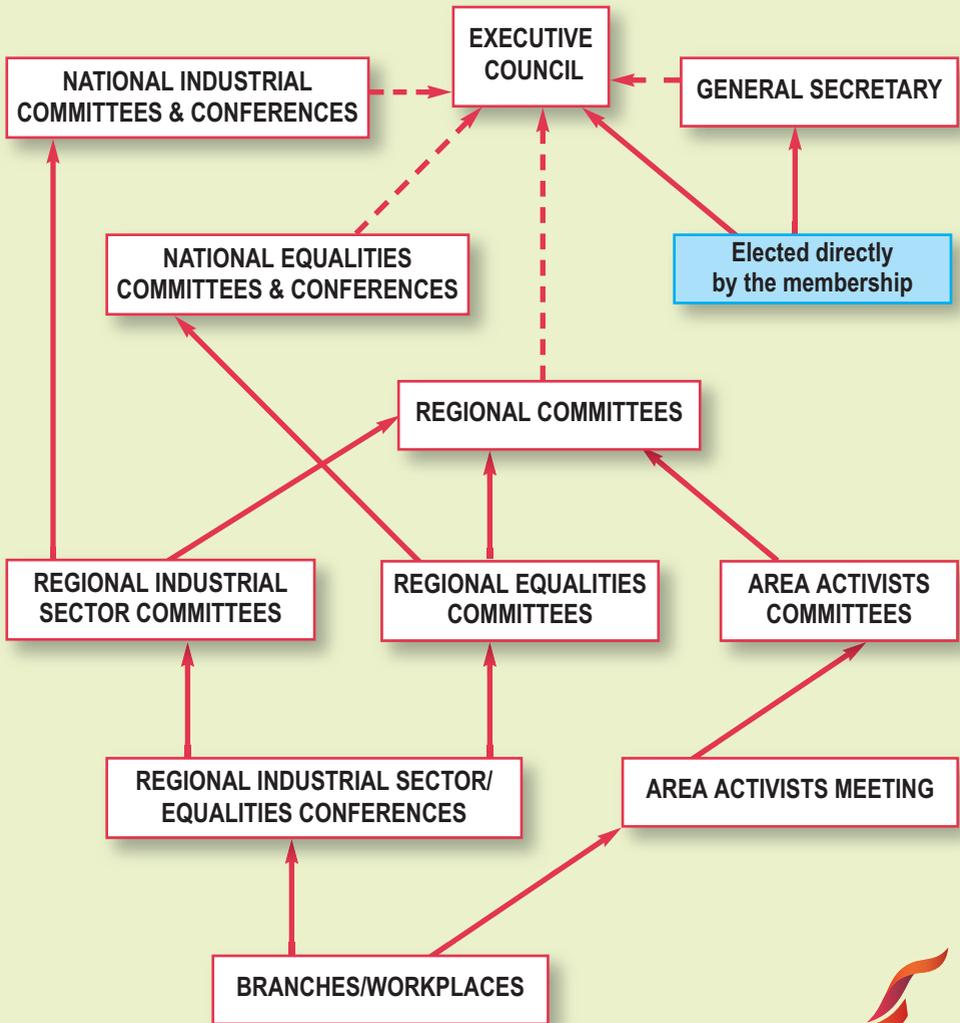
\* These seats are dependent on the transfer of engagements from UCATT to Unite going ahead and discussions with the Unite Construction NISC. The 4 UCATT seats would be taken by members of their existing executive.

## Observers

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Seats</b>
Retired Members	1
Gibraltar	1
<b>Total - observers</b>	<b>2</b>

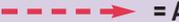


# UNITE DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE



## APPENDIX 2



 = Elected by  
 = Accountable to





**@unitetheunion**



**Unitetheunion1**

**[www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)**

