

**UNISON LABOUR LINK**  
**OPERATIONAL RULES**

**MAY 2003**



# UNISON LABOUR LINK FUND OPERATIONAL RULES

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**Agreed at the UNISON Labour Link National Forum, May 2003**

# **UNISON LABOUR LINK FUND OPERATIONAL RULES**

## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Status of the Document**

This document sets out the operational rules under which the UNISON Labour Link section of the UNISON Political Fund is administered and organised. It supplements and is governed by the requirements for the UNISON Labour Link fund which are set out in rule J of the UNISON Rule Book. Under these rules the administration of the Affiliated Political Fund section, UNISON Labour Link, is delegated by the NEC to the exclusive control of a national committee of NEC and Regional Representatives whose members pay the UNISON Labour Link levy.

These rules have been agreed by the UNISON Labour Link National Forum following detailed consultation with all stakeholders to ensure the efficient operation of the Labour Link section of the Political Fund.

### **1.2 Name and Terminology**

The name of the fund is the UNISON Labour Link. The fund was formerly known as the Affiliated Political Fund (APF) and is referred to as such in the UNISON Rule Book. UNISON Labour Link is one of two sections of UNISON's political fund, established at the foundation of UNISON, which continue the traditions of the founder unions and offer members a choice of funds.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives reflect the policies and priorities of UNISON as set out by National Delegate Conference and the UNISON Labour Link National Forum and take into account the requirements of other bodies within UNISON such as service groups, self-organised groups and regions. The key Aims and Objectives are:

1. To affiliate to the Labour Party at national, regional and local level and play a major role in Labour Party activities.
2. To promote the policies and priorities of UNISON within the Labour Party by being active at all levels of the Labour Party such as attending national and regional bodies and conferences, Policy Forums, CLPs and local Labour Party branch meetings.
3. To campaign for support for the Labour Party and the election of Labour Party representatives.
4. To encourage UNISON members to become Labour Link levy payers and to encourage levy payers to participate in UNISON Labour Link activities and

policy-making, by developing and using good communications to keep members well-informed and to develop the UNISON Labour Link structures to maximise member involvement.

5. To encourage levy payers to become individual members of the Labour Party and become involved in Party activities and so increase UNISON's influence.

#### **1.4 Functions**

In pursuit of these objectives the key UNISON Labour Link functions are to:

1. Pay the affiliation fees and support Labour Party activities on the basis established by the UNISON Labour Link National Committee and National Forum.
2. Represent UNISON at Labour Party committees, conferences and forums promoting UNISON policies and our members' interests.
3. Maintain good communication and effective liaison with other sections of UNISON such as Service Group Executives, Self Organised Groups and Regions to take forward their policies and concerns within the Party.
4. Communicate effectively with levy payers to inform and motivate their involvement and provide opportunities for feedback.
5. Ensure that the UNISON Labour Link structures work to deliver our aims and objectives and that we involve the widest number of members possible in decision making and seek their views on policy issues using all appropriate means.
6. Distribute as widely as possible reports of actions taken by the UNISON Labour Link at all levels in pursuit of UNISON policies and priorities. Making minutes of UNISON Labour Link meetings available to all UNISON committees at branch, regional and national levels.
7. Work with Labour Members of Parliament and the European Parliament who are members of the UNISON groups to promote UNISON policies and the interests of our members.
8. Work with Labour Members of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Greater London Authority and members of newly devolved regional administrations in England who are members of the UNISON groups.
9. Work with Labour councillors who are UNISON members to promote the interests of UNISON members and their communities.
10. Maintain and monitor Constituency Development Plans through our regions

with Constituency Labour Parties.

11. Liaise closely with the General Political Fund to work on shared objectives.

12. Link up with other affiliated trade unions to pursue common objectives within the Labour Party.

13. Campaign amongst levy payers and in the wider community to win support for Labour's policies where they reflect those held by UNISON and are in the interests of UNISON members and play a full part in all elections to maximise the vote for Labour.

14. Develop a wide range of political education and training activities to assist levy payers in participating in the Labour Party more effectively and develop recruitment strategies to encourage levy payers to become members of the Labour Party.

### **1.5 Proportionality and Fair Representation**

The UNISON Labour Link is strongly committed to the application of proportionality and fair representation at all levels of activity. In addition, Labour Party rules require that conference delegations reflect the proportion of women and men in membership. In the case of the UNISON Labour Link approximately two-thirds of the levy payers are women. Therefore, all committees and delegations should reflect this requirement. In elections where the small numbers do not allow a two thirds/one third split the UNISON Labour Link National Committee will issue further advice on how this objective can best be met.

The definition of fair representation is more complex but equally important. The UNISON rule book defines fair representation as "taking into account such factors as the balance between part-time and full-time workers, manual and non manual workers, different occupations, skills, qualifications, responsibilities, race, sexuality and disability".

Our commitment to this principle means that representation in UNISON Labour Link structures should reflect the make up of our UNISON Labour Link membership within each Region. There are two key areas where steps will be taken to ensure fair representation.

First, ensuring that low-paid workers have their voice and interests fully represented within the UNISON Labour Link structure and in the Labour Party.

It is therefore agreed to have a reserved proportion of places on committees, forums and delegations for low paid members as follows:

1. Low-paid is defined with an upper earnings limit in terms of a basic hourly rate of pay set at the same level as that for reserved NEC seats in Rule 2.2.1 of the

UNISON Rule Book, with candidacy being open to both male and female members.

2. This proportion will reflect membership numbers in the relevant section of the union and be applied for all elections to the national and regional UNISON Labour Link committees, national and regional forums, and delegations to Labour Party conferences.

Second, ensuring that black, disabled, gay and lesbian and young levy payers are properly represented in the UNISON Labour Link.

Black, disabled, gay and lesbian, and young UNISON Labour Link levy payers will be represented at the Labour Link National Forum and on the Labour Party Conference delegation. Action will also be taken to ensure effective national and regional liaison with the Self Organised Groups as appropriate.

### **1.6 Ways of Working**

It is intended that the activities of the UNISON Labour Link for the most part will be conducted on an informal basis in the spirit of openness and mutual support and in a jargon free environment.

However, these operational rules are laid down to protect the rights of levy payers and will be invoked at times when particular guidance is needed or a dispute has arisen.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

#### **2.1 How to Join UNISON Labour Link**

Membership of the UNISON Labour Link is available to all UNISON members, as described in the UNISON Rule Book, on the following basis:

All UNISON members can choose whether they want to contribute to UNISON Labour Link, the General Political Fund, or both, or neither. Application and transfer forms are available from the Labour Link officer or branch secretary.

#### **2.2 UNISON Labour Link Contribution Rates**

The UNISON Labour Link contribution rates are published in the UNISON rule book. The political fund levy is part of the UNISON subscription rate and is not an additional charge. However, members choosing to pay both the UNISON Labour Link and the GPF levies will incur an additional charge for the additional levy as set out in the UNISON rule book.

#### **2.3 Retired Members**

Members who were paying the UNISON Labour Link levy on their retirement can continue to participate in Branch and Regional Labour Link activities on payment of a £5 annual fee. They can work within their Branch and Region to maintain links with local Labour Parties but, other than as delegates to Constituency Labour Parties, not hold office within the UNISON structures.

#### **2.4 Rights of Individual UNISON Labour Link Levy Payers**

Levy payers have the following rights within the UNISON Labour Link structure:

1. Attend and vote on UNISON Labour Link issues (as set out in Chapter 3) at their branch meeting or sectional meeting if the branch includes GPF levy payers.
2. Be consulted on policy and constitutional matters concerning UNISON Labour Link and the Labour Party and receive regular reports from branch delegates and representatives.
3. Receive regular copies of UNISON Labour Link and other publications providing information on UNISON Labour Link activities.
4. Vote in relevant Labour Party ballots in the affiliated section i.e. for Leader and Deputy of the national parties, as provided for in the Labour Party rules.
5. Elect branch delegates to represent the branch at the UNISON Labour Link regional political forum, candidates for which must be individual members of the Labour Party.

6. Vote in ballots to elect their regional representative on the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.

7. Attend appropriate policy discussions and political education events.

In addition, levy payers who become individual members of the Labour Party are eligible to participate in other UNISON Labour Link activities including the delegations to regional and national Labour Party conferences, the regional and national UNISON Labour Link committees and the Regional and National Political Forums.

Union members who pay the UNISON Labour Link levy can become individual members of the Labour Party at the reduced rate.

## **CHAPTER 3 LOCAL ORGANISATION**

### **3.1 Branch Structure**

All UNISON Labour Link levy payers within a branch should meet together regularly to discuss UNISON Labour Link matters within the terms of the Rule Book and the Code of Good Branch Practice.

Where a branch contains members paying into the General Political Fund or not paying a political levy, arrangements must be made for UNISON Labour Link levy payers to be able to meet separately from the normal branch business. Any reports or minutes of UNISON Labour Link meetings should go to Branch Executive meetings for information and discussion.

In some areas it may be appropriate for UNISON Labour Link members to organise across Branches, on a Constituency, County or other appropriate basis that helps to build Labour Link organisation and coordinate effective input into the Labour Party. Such arrangements should be agreed and monitored by the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee.

The Branch UNISON Labour Link Officer should sit on the Branch Committee and work to take UNISON interests forward within the Labour Party.

### **3.2 UNISON Labour Link Officer**

Members of each branch who pay the UNISON Labour Link levy should elect a UNISON Labour Link Officer to co-ordinate UNISON Labour Link activities within the branch and in the local Labour Party - they must, therefore, be a member of the Labour Party.

The UNISON Labour Link Officer will:

1. Receive correspondence and information on UNISON Labour Link matters from national and regional levels and from the Labour Party.
2. Take UNISON branch interests forward within the Labour Party.
3. Help explain and develop the role of the UNISON Labour Link within the branch and ensure that correct procedures are followed regarding the rights of UNISON Labour Link levy payers.
4. Circulate information to UNISON Labour Link members in the branch.
5. Convene meetings of UNISON Labour Link members as necessary.
6. With the Regional Political Contact, ensure that forms for affiliations and delegates to Constituency Labour Parties are administered efficiently.

7. Arrange discussions on policy and constitutional matters for members and ensure reports are made by branch delegates on their activities on behalf of members.
8. Liaise with UNISON Labour Link regional political contacts.
9. Promote political education and policy discussions.
10. Strengthen links with local Labour Parties.
11. Communicate with Labour Party members within the branch.
12. Encourage individual membership of the Labour Party.
13. Build campaigning work around key issues and encourage support for Labour candidates at elections.
14. Distribute to branch committees appropriate reports and copies of UNISON Labour Link materials.

### **3.3 Branch Labour Link Functions**

The following issues are the legitimate business of the UNISON Labour Link levy payers within a branch:

1. Electing a branch UNISON Labour Link Officer to coordinate activities and represent the levy payers on the UNISON branch committee and to coordinate work in the local Labour Party.
2. Agreeing affiliation to appropriate Constituency Labour Parties or District Labour Parties where members of the branch live or work. Electing delegates to represent the branch at the Labour Party General Committees, sending resolutions and receiving regular reports from delegates.
3. Promoting the policies and priorities of UNISON at Labour Party meetings.
4. Attending local Policy Forums to promote UNISON policies.
5. Electing up to two branch representatives to the UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum, held annually, on the basis of fair representation as set out in Chapter 1 (at least one of whom must be a woman) and sending resolutions, as appropriate. Branches with more than 1,000 levy payers may have up to four representatives, applying the principles on fair representation and gender balance. All candidates must be individual members of the Labour Party.

6. Nominating branch representatives for election to the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee.
7. Nominating branch representatives, who must be individual members of the Labour Party, for election to the UNISON Labour Link delegation to the regional Labour Party Conference.
8. Nominating branch representatives who must be individual members of the Labour Party for election to the regional delegation to the UNISON Labour Link National Forum.
9. Discussing and developing UNISON policies to pursue through the regional and national UNISON Labour Link structures and the Labour Party and receiving reports from delegates on activities.
10. Supporting and participating in local Labour Party initiatives and election campaigns.
11. Organising recruitment campaigns to persuade levy payers to become individual members of the Labour Party.
12. Participating in policy forums and political education events.
13. Linking with other affiliated union branches and the local community to influence Labour Party policies in the interests of UNISON members.
14. Liaising with members paying into the General Political Fund on issues of common concern.

### **3.4 Financial Issues**

The UNISON Labour Link fund is based on the income from levy payers which is calculated annually at a national level. A national budget is drawn up which includes a budget for regional activities which is the responsibility of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees.

Affiliations to local Labour Parties are paid for by the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee.

Local UNISON Labour Link members standing for election as Labour candidates can claim on behalf of their Constituency Party a grant from their Region towards campaigning costs.

Branch UNISON Labour Link levy payers can apply to the region for additional funds to support specific activities such as meetings and leaflets following guidelines in the UNISON Labour Link Branch Handbook.

## **CHAPTER 4 REGIONAL ORGANISATION**

### **4.1 Regions**

There will be regional structures within UNISON Labour Link based on the UNISON regions, excluding Northern Ireland. Where UNISON regional boundaries are not co-terminus with Labour Party regional boundaries separate arrangements will be made to ensure that appropriate meetings and delegations are coordinated across UNISON boundaries. This will be the responsibility of the regional political contacts in the regions concerned.

### **4.2 UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee Composition**

Each region will establish a UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee which will be elected annually, normally at the beginning of the year. This section outlines a model structure – local circumstances should be taken into account to produce structures which work effectively, and variations applied for as in 4.8.

All members and ex officio members of the committee shall be individual members of the Labour Party and UNISON Labour Link levy payers. Appropriate measures will be taken to obtain fair representation on the committee to reflect the make up of UNISON Labour Link membership as outlined in Chapter 1.

The committee will be composed as follows:

1. Nine members elected on the basis of fair representation as set out in Chapter 1 (at least five of whom shall be women). These members to be elected at the regional forum, by branch ballot or by individual ballot of UNISON Labour Link members, as determined in advance with the UNISON Labour Link National Committee. There should aim to be a spread of service group and geographical representation.
2. Six members elected by the UNISON Labour Link levy payers on the UNISON regional committee from amongst the members of that committee paying the UNISON Labour Link levy. They shall be elected on the basis of fair representation as set out in Chapter 1 (at least three of whom shall be women). Variations to these arrangements may be agreed by the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.
3. Ex officio members who serve on the UNISON Labour Link National Committee who may speak but shall not vote.
4. Ex officio members who represent the UNISON Labour Link on the regional Labour Party Executive who may speak but shall not vote.
5. The Regional Political Contact, who will be a paid official and will act as secretary to the committee: and other paid officials, as appropriate, who may

speak but shall not vote.

#### **4.3 Chair/Vice Chair**

The Committee shall elect from its membership a Chair and Vice Chair (one of whom shall be a woman). The election shall take place at the first meeting of the Committee following the UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum. The Chair and Vice shall also act as Chair and Vice Chair of the regional forum.

#### **4.4 Frequency of Meetings**

The Committee shall meet quarterly at venues, dates and times to be agreed by the Committee.

#### **4.5 Functions of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee**

UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees should ensure the widest participation of members in decision making at all levels within the region using all appropriate democratic means and develop effective communications with branches and members. They should coordinate policy development on all issues relating to the regional Labour Party, working with the regional Service Groups and Self Organised Groups to take UNISON policies forward.

Each region will prepare an annual report to be submitted to their Regional Forum and to the UNISON Labour Link National Committee on the development of the Labour Link organisation in the region and their activities during the year.

The UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee shall also have the responsibility to:

1. Oversee the organisation and administration of all UNISON Labour Link fund activities throughout the region between meetings of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum, producing a regional work-plan and monitoring development.
2. Control the regional UNISON Labour Link fund and budget and, if appropriate, seek additional funding from the national UNISON Labour Link for campaigning and training.
3. Organise delegations to the relevant Scottish, Wales and regional Labour Party Conferences to promote UNISON's policies and interests.
4. Receive regular reports from the regional Labour Party Executive and associated committees and guide the work of the union's representatives.
5. Receive regular reports from members of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.
6. Ensure effective liaison with elected Labour representatives in the region and oversee the effective and democratic involvement of UNISON Labour Link

representatives within the party's structures at regional and local level.

7. Encourage members to pay the UNISON Labour Link levy and to persuade levy payers to join the Labour Party.

8. Organise policy debates and political education events to develop the knowledge and skills of members and activists.

9. Work with the Labour Party on joint campaigning providing resources and support for the regional Labour Party before and during elections.

10. Administer and monitor Constituency Development Plans with Constituency Labour Parties, developing organisation and campaigning to help promote UNISON members' interests.

11. Promote equality and fair representation at all levels of UNISON Labour Link organisation in the region, monitoring progress and taking appropriate action to obtain these aims including the setting up of women's and youth groups, as appropriate.

#### **4.6 UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum**

Each region shall hold an annual UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum prior to the UNISON Labour Link National Forum at a time and venue agreed by the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee. A special meeting of the Forum may be called by the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee with approval of the National Committee.

#### **4.7 Composition**

The composition of the forum shall be as follows:

1. Up to two representatives from each UNISON branch entitled to be represented on the basis of fair representation as set out in Chapter 1 (at least one of whom must be a woman). Branches with more than 1000 levy payers may have up to four representatives, applying the principles on fair representation and gender balance. Such representatives may speak and vote and must be individual members of the Labour Party.

2. Elected members of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee. Such members may speak and vote.

3. Representatives on the Regional Labour Party Executive Committee, Regional Labour Women's Committee and other Labour Party bodies. Such representatives will be ex-officio and may speak but shall not vote.

4. Representatives from the region on the UNISON Labour Link National Committee. Such representatives will be ex-officio and may speak but shall not

vote.

5. Labour MPs, MEPs, MSPs, AMs and English regional directly-elected representatives from within the region, who will be ex-officio and may speak but shall not vote.

6. Secretary of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee and other paid officials as appropriate. Such officials may speak but shall not vote.

7. Any others the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee consider appropriate to invite in an ex officio capacity.

#### **4.8 Variations to this Composition**

Variations to this composition of regional committees and forums to take into account local circumstances can be agreed by the UNISON Labour Link National Committee. Requests should be submitted in writing setting out the proposed variation and the reasons why this is necessary.

#### **4.9 Forum Chair/Vice Chair**

The Chair and Vice Chair of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee shall be the Chair and Vice Chair of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum.

#### **4.10 Functions of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum**

The functions of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum are as follows:

1. To receive reports from the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee, the representatives on the regional Labour Party Executive and other representatives, as appropriate.
2. To conduct elections for UNISON Labour Link regional representatives and delegates in accordance with these rules.
3. To develop UNISON Labour Link policy and organisational proposals through workshops and political education initiatives.
4. To receive and debate motions from UNISON Labour Link branches and the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee. Motions received will be circulated to branches and the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee. Each branch and the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee will be able to submit two amendments within a time-scale agreed by the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee.
5. To develop the objectives and priorities for the region in the coming year.
6. To determine UNISON Labour Link policy in the regional Labour Party within the overall policy of UNISON.

7. To determine up to two motions to be forwarded to the UNISON Labour Link National Forum.

#### **4.11 Voting at the Forum**

When formal votes are required on policy and constitutional issues affecting the UNISON Labour Link and Labour Party and for regional representatives and delegates, it shall be carried out using a weighted system of voting to reflect UNISON Labour Link membership in branches as follows:

1. One vote for branches with up to 250 UNISON Labour Link members.
2. One vote for each 250 UNISON Labour Link members or part thereof above this.
3. Up to a maximum of eight votes for any branch.

#### **4.12 Regional Elections**

The region is entitled to determine the following categories of representatives through branch ballot, through a ballot conducted at the forum or by an individual ballot of members, depending on the method laid out in these rules or agreed in advance by the UNISON Labour Link National Committee:

1. Nine places on the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee based on fair representation as set out in Chapter 1 (six of whom shall be women).
2. The specified number of places at the UNISON Labour Link National Forum as determined by the size of the region, according to the schedule set out in Chapter 5.
3. Two delegates to the national Labour Party Conference on the basis of the schedule set out in Chapter 5.
4. The delegation to the regional Labour Party Conference.
5. All delegates to the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee, UNISON Labour Link National Forum, Regional Labour Party and National Labour Party must be UNISON Labour Link levy payers and fully paid up members of the Labour Party.

## **CHAPTER 5 NATIONAL ORGANISATION**

### **5.1 The UNISON Labour Link National Committee Composition**

The UNISON Labour Link National Committee is a Committee established under Rule J8.2 of UNISON Rules. It comprises 12 members of the National Executive Council elected by members of the NEC who are contributors to the UNISON Labour Link fund and one representative from each region (save for Northern Ireland) elected by members in branches in that region who are contributors to the UNISON Labour Link fund. All members of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee must be contributors to the UNISON Labour Link fund and paid up individual members of the Labour Party.

Members of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee elected by the NEC are elected for a 2 year period. Regional representatives on the UNISON Labour Link National Committee are to be elected for a 2 year period by an individual ballot of Labour Link members in that region, unless a variation is agreed by the NEC on the recommendation of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.

Membership of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee should meet our commitment to proportionality and fair representation, reflecting the membership patterns of the UNISON Labour Link as laid out in chapter 1.

Members of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee will be expected to report back to and liaise with their respective UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees.

The UNISON Labour Link National Committee shall meet quarterly. Meetings will be chaired by an elected lay member of the Committee.

The Head of the UNISON Labour Link fund will act as secretary to the Committee. Labour Party NEC representatives and appropriate officers shall attend the meetings.

### **5.2 Functions**

The UNISON Labour Link National Committee will be responsible for the efficient overall administration and organisation of the UNISON Labour Link fund.

The national UNISON Labour Link will:

1. Be responsible for the UNISON Labour Link fund and budgets which arise from its operation.
2. Pay the affiliation to the Labour Party and consider other appropriate donations, grants and affiliations.

3. Oversee local and regional UNISON Labour Link organisation to ensure its effective operation and ensure proper liaison and communication with the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees particularly in regard to differing circumstances and needs with devolved government in Scotland, Wales and English regions.
4. Ensure effective liaison and communication across UNISON with Service Group Executives and Self Organised Groups.
5. Deal with all issues relating to the Labour Party, ensuring proper representation and input of policy at all appropriate Committees and Forums.
6. Oversee arrangements for delegations to the Labour Party Conference and other conferences, as appropriate.
7. Receive regular reports from UNISON Labour Link representatives on Labour's NEC, other Labour Party committees and policy forums.
8. Oversee issues relating to the relationship with Labour MPs, MEPs and other Labour representatives in liaison with the regions.
9. Receive annual reports from UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees, including monitoring Constituency Development Plans, and take any appropriate action to ensure good practice.
10. Develop political education and policy debates and encourage Labour Party Membership.
11. Assist the Labour Party financially and organisationally at election times, and campaign for the election of Labour representatives at all levels.
12. Promote equality and fair representation at all levels of UNISON Labour Link and within the Labour Party, monitoring progress and taking appropriate steps to obtain these aims.
13. Seek the widest involvement of members in decision making, elections and policy development using all appropriate means including membership ballots and keep members informed of UNISON Labour Link activities by developing good communications.
14. Do everything necessary to ensure the proper administration of the UNISON Labour Link fund.

### **5.3 The UNISON Labour Link National Forum**

The UNISON Labour Link National Forum shall meet annually at a time and place determined by the national UNISON Labour Link, taking into account the

timing of the UNISON National Delegate Conference and Labour Party Conference.

#### **5.4 Composition of the Forum**

The Forum shall consist of representatives on the following basis, ensuring that our criteria for proportionality and fair representation described in Chapter 1 are met and that all representatives are individual members of the Labour Party:

1. Representatives from the UNISON Labour Link regions according to their UNISON Labour Link membership:

up to 40,000 Labour Link members	: 6 representatives (at least 4 women)
40,000 to 60,000	: 8 representatives (at least 5 women)
above 60,000	: 10 representatives (at least 6 women)

2. They shall be elected each year by the UNISON Labour Link Regional Forums or any other manner approved in advance by the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.

3. Members of the Labour Party Conference delegation for that year.

4. Members of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.

5. Regional UNISON Labour Link representatives on Labour Party regional executives (ex officio).

6. Labour Parliamentarians and other elected Labour representatives as appropriate (ex officio).

7. The UNISON Labour Link Standing Orders Committee members.

8. National paid officials and regional political contact officers will also attend and carry out the responsibilities assigned to them.

#### **5.5 Voting Rights**

Voting rights at the Forum are restricted to those delegates who are lay members in the first two constituent groups (5.4.1) and (5.4.2), excluding those who are members of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.

#### **5.6 Standing Orders Committee**

The UNISON Labour Link National Forum standing orders committee shall consist of six members as follows:

1. Two members from the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.

2. Four members elected from the UNISON Labour Link regions. Each region will

be able to nominate one person and the election shall take place at the national forum, meeting criteria for proportionality and fair representation as laid out in Appendix I: Rules and Standing Orders.

### **5.7 Responsibilities of the Forum**

The UNISON Labour Link National Forum shall determine the priorities of the National UNISON Labour Link through workshops, plenary debates and motions. It shall look at the best ways to promote UNISON policies within the Labour Party. The forum will coordinate regional UNISON Labour Link organisation and activities and receive reports of UNISON Labour Link activities from the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.

### **5.8 Motions**

Each UNISON Labour Link region and the UNISON Labour Link National Committee shall submit up to two motions for consideration by the UNISON Labour Link National Forum. Black; Disabled; Lesbian and Gay; and Young Members self organised groups may submit one motion each.

Motions should be not more than three hundred words in length and be confined to one subject.

The UNISON Labour Link National Committee is also entitled to submit an annual report and statements to the forum on a basis approved by the Standing Orders Committee.

Motions accepted by the Standing Orders Committee for consideration by the UNISON Labour Link National Forum will be circulated to UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees.

Each region and the UNISON Labour Link National Committee will be able to submit two amendments within a timetable agreed by the Standing Orders Committee.

### **5.9 Changes to the UNISON Labour Link Operational Rules**

Changes to these UNISON Labour Link Operational Rules may be submitted from among their two motions to the Forum by UNISON Labour Link regions or from the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.

Rule changes require a two-thirds majority for approval.

If a motion is approved by the Forum that would require a rule change to put into practice an appropriate, additional rule amendment will be submitted to the next annual Forum by the UNISON Labour Link National Committee for approval.

## **5.10 UNISON Labour Link Labour Party Conference Delegation Composition**

The UNISON Labour Link delegation to the annual Labour Party Conference shall consist of the following members who are all individual members of the Labour Party. The delegation shall meet the requirements of UNISON Labour Link and the Labour Party to proportionality and fair representation as described in Chapter 1.

All delegates must abide by the 'Guidance to Delegates' advice relating to conduct and procedures.

The delegation is made up of:

1. Two representatives from each of the UNISON Labour Link regions. All regions must elect at least one woman each year and four regions, on a rotating basis, must elect a second woman.
2. The Chair and five members of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee, at least three of whom should be women.
3. Four members of the NEC who pay the UNISON Labour Link levy, at least two of whom should be women and not excluding members of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee.
4. Two UNISON Labour Link members each from the black; disabled; lesbian and gay; and young members self organised groups, at least one from each being a woman.
5. Two Labour Parliamentarians, at least one being a woman.
6. Seven paid officials as determined by the senior officer responsible for the UNISON Labour Link, at least three of whom should be women.
7. UNISON representatives on Labour's NEC and National Policy Forum shall attend delegation meetings.

## **5.11 Responsibilities**

A group meeting of the delegation shall agree positions on policy motions and elections in accordance with UNISON Labour Link policy, and taking into account the policies agreed at the UNISON conference as set out in the attached statement.

## **5.12 Sectional Labour Party Conferences**

The UNISON Labour Link National Committee will draw up a schedule for UNISON Labour Link delegations to sectional Labour Party Conferences based

upon the widest possible regional involvement and proportionality and fair representation.

### **5.13 Relationship with UNISON Conference**

The relationship of the UNISON Labour Link structure to UNISON Conference was discussed at the 1994 UNISON Conference. A statement from the NEC was submitted to the Conference clarifying the relationship.

This is set out in Appendix IIA.

A report from the Standing Orders Committee as set out in Appendix IIB was also adopted by the Conference.

These two documents form the basis on which the UNISON Labour Link relates to UNISON Conference decisions.

## **APPENDIX 1 UNISON LABOUR LINK NATIONAL FORUM RULES AND STANDING ORDERS**

### **1. Application of Standing Orders**

- 1.1 These Standing Orders shall apply to all meetings of the UNISON Labour Link National Forum. The principles of proportionality and fair representation, as detailed in the UNISON Labour Link operational rules, shall apply to all aspects of our work.
- 1.2 The UNISON Labour Link National Forum will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and generosity. The Chair will take all necessary steps to create a welcoming atmosphere in which delegates can state their views freely and be heard without interruption.
- 1.3 The Chair will take all possible steps to guide the Forum through the business without recourse to procedural points unless absolutely necessary to maintain order. In such cases the procedures being adopted will be explained clearly to all delegates by the Chair.
- 1.4 The Standing Orders Committee will liaise closely with the Chair of the Forum to create a programme which is fair, democratic and understood by all delegates.

### **2. Standing Orders Committee**

- 2.1 The members of the Standing Orders Committee shall hold office from the end of one UNISON Labour Link National Forum until the end of the next UNISON Labour Link National Forum.

The Standing Orders Committee will consist of six members, four elected from the regions and two nominated from the UNISON Labour Link National Committee (at least one woman).

The four regional representatives will be selected by the following procedure:

- 2.1.1 Each UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee may nominate a candidate for the Standing Orders Committee taking regard of proportionality and fair representation.
- 2.1.2 Each candidate to submit a statement of up to 250 words to be circulated to delegates to the National forum; election by individual ballot of delegates with voting rights at the Forum.

- 2.1.3 Each delegate to have four votes for the four representatives needed; to ensure proportionality – the two women candidates with the most votes will be automatically elected together with the other two candidates with the highest votes.
- 2.2 At its first meeting after it takes office, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson from amongst its members (at least one of whom shall be a woman).
- 2.3 The functions of the Committee, subject to these Standing Orders shall be to:
- 2.3.1 Ensure that the Rules and Standing Orders relating to the business of the Forum are observed, and notify the President of any violation that may be brought to the Committee’s notice.
- 2.3.2 Draw up the agenda of Forum business, and the proposed hours of business.
- 2.3.3 Determine the order in which the business of the Forum shall be conducted, subject to the approval of Forum.
- 2.3.4 Consider all motions and amendments submitted for consideration by the Forum and, for the purpose of enabling the Forum to transact its business effectively, the Committee shall:
1. decide whether such motions and amendments have been submitted in accordance with the Rules;
  2. group together motions and amendments relating to the same subject, decide the order in which they should be considered and whether they should be debated and voted on separately or debated together and voted on sequentially;
  3. prepare and revise, in consultation with the movers of motions, and amendments, composite motions in terms which in the opinion of the Committee best express the subject;
  4. refer to another representative body within the Union a motion which in the opinion of the Committee should properly be considered there; the region shall be informed of the reason for so doing;
  5. have power to do all such other things as may be necessary to give effect to these Standing Orders.

Any decisions of the Committee which are to be reported to the Forum, shall be announced by the Chairperson of the Committee and shall be subject to ratification by the Forum.

### **3. Motions and Amendments: Pre-Forum Procedure**

- 3.1 Each region may submit two motions in order for the business to be completed in the allotted time.
- 3.2 Motions may be proposed by the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees on behalf of their UNISON Labour Link Regional Forum.
- 3.3 The UNISON Labour Link National Committee may also submit motions and other appropriate business to the Forum.
- 3.4 Motions shall be sent to the Head of the UNISON Labour Link in order that the Standing Orders Committee may consider them for inclusion in the agenda.
- 3.5 UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees may submit up to two amendments. The date and time by which motions and amendments to be considered for the Forum shall be received by the Head of the UNISON Labour Link shall be notified to UNISON Labour Link Regional Committees by the Head of the UNISON Labour Link.

### **4. Conduct of the Forum**

- 4.1 The UNISON Labour Link National Forum shall meet in public session, except that by direction of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee or by resolution of the Forum the whole or any part of a Forum may be held in private. In addition to the elected delegates and those who have the right to attend and speak at the Forum, the only persons permitted to attend a private session of the Forum shall be:
  - 4.1.1 such members of the staff as have been authorised by the UNISON Labour Link National Committee or the Head of the UNISON Labour Link to attend the Forum;
  - 4.1.2 such other persons as the Chair may determine.
- 4.2 The agenda for the UNISON Labour Link National Forum shall be arranged so that the first session of the Forum shall be in public, subject to Rule 4.1 above.
- 4.3 Apart from the elected delegates and those persons who have the right to speak at the UNISON Labour Link National Forum no other person shall speak except by permission of the Standing Orders Committee.
- 4.4 Any question of procedure or order raised during the Forum shall be decided by the Chair whose ruling shall be final and binding.

- 4.5 Upon the Chair rising during a Forum session, any person then addressing Forum shall resume her/his seat and no other person shall rise to speak until the Chair authorises proceedings to continue.
- 4.6 The Chair may call attention to continued irrelevance, tedious repetition, unbecoming language, or any breach of order on the part of a member and may direct such a member to discontinue his or her speech.
- 4.7 The Chair shall have power to call any person to order who is causing a disturbance in any session of the Forum and if that person refuses to obey the Chair, she/he shall be named by the Chair, shall forthwith leave the Forum and shall take no further part in the proceedings of the Forum.

## **5. Voting**

- 5.1 The method of voting shall be by a show of hands of the delegates present, unless a card vote is called by the Chair or, immediately after the result of the show of hands has been declared, by at least 10 per cent of the delegates registered at the Forum standing in support.
- 5.2 In the event of a card vote being called, the vote shall be taken immediately, but no business shall be suspended pending the declaration of the result of the vote except that which in the Chair's opinion may be directly affected by that result.

## **6. Tellers**

Conference shall appoint delegates to act as tellers for the duration of the Forum.

## **7. Withdrawal of Motions and Amendments**

A motion or amendment which is shown on the agenda may not be withdrawn without the consent of the Standing Orders Committee, whose decision shall be reported to the Forum.

## **8. Motions not on Agenda**

- 8.1 A motion which is not shown on the agenda may not be considered by the Forum without the prior approval of the Standing Orders Committee and the consent of the Forum, which shall be governed by the following rules:
- 8.2 Such motions shall be in writing, signed by the Secretary and Chairperson of the UNISON Labour Link Regional Committee on whose behalf it is submitted and shall be sent to the Standing Orders Committee at least five

working days before the commencement of the Forum except if it relates to events which take place thereafter. It will state at which meeting it was debated and adopted.

- 8.3 If the Standing Orders Committee gives its approval to the motion being considered, copies shall be made available for delegates before the Forum is asked to decide whether to consent to the matter being considered.
- 8.4 An emergency motion will not be given priority over others on the agenda except where the Standing Orders Committee decide that the purpose of the motion in question would be frustrated if it were not dealt with at an earlier session of the Forum.

## **9. Procedural Motions**

Delegates are requested to observe the intent of paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4 and to conduct the business of the Forum without recourse to procedural points unless judged essential to help the work of the Forum. In this context the following procedural motions may be moved any anytime without previous notice on the agenda:

- 9.1 That the question be now put, provided that:
  - 1. The chair may advise the Forum not to accept this motion if in her/his opinion the matter has not been sufficiently discussed.
  - 2. If the motion is carried, it shall take effect at once subject only to any right of reply under these Standing Orders.
- 9.2 That the Forum proceeds to the next business.
- 9.3 That the debate be adjourned.
- 9.4 That the Forum (or any part thereof) be held in private session.
- 9.5 A motion under Rules 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 shall be put to the vote without discussion and no amendment shall be allowed.
- 9.6 The Chair may at her/his discretion permit a motion under Rule 9.4 to be discussed.
- 9.7 No motion under Rules 9.2 or 9.3 shall be moved by a person who has spoken on the motion in question.

## **10. Limit of Speeches**

- 10.1 The mover of a motion shall not be allowed to speak for more than seven minutes and each succeeding speaker for not more than four minutes, except where the Standing Orders Committee have decided otherwise.
- 10.2 No person shall speak more than once on a question, except that the mover of the original motion may exercise a right of reply for not more than four minutes, introducing new material.

## **11. Points of Order**

- 11.1 A delegate may raise a point of order if she/he considers that the business is not being conducted in accordance with the Forum's Rules and Standing Orders.
- 11.2 Such a point of order must be raised as soon as the alleged breach occurs or at the earliest practicable moment thereafter:
- 11.3 The Chair's ruling on the point of order is final.

## **12. Grouped Debates and Sequential Voting**

- 12.1 Where, in the view of the Standing Orders Committee, separate debates on specified motions dealing with the same subject matter would lead to undue repetition in the debates, a grouped debate and/or sequential voting may be adopted by the Forum
- 12.2 The following procedure will be followed:
  - 1. The Chair will advise the Forum of the order of business and of the sequence in which motions will be moved and voted on following a general debate, and of the effect of certain proposals on others.
  - 2. All motions included in the debate shall be moved.
  - 3. The general debate shall take place.
  - 4. The Chair shall again state the order of voting and shall advise the Forum which, if any, motions will fall if others are carried.
  - 5. Voting will take place on motions preceded by relevant amendments, in the order in which they were moved.

6. A debate being conducted under this procedure may not be adjourned until after all the motions have been moved.

### **13. Labour Party Policy Development**

The prime purpose of the National Forum is to discuss how best to promote UNISON policy within the Labour Party. Forum will discuss Labour Party policy documents at appropriate points in the Partnership in Power cycle, using facilitated workshops to agree submission to Labour Party Policy Commissions.

### **14. Reports by UNISON Labour Link National Committee**

- 14.1 After the opening of the Forum the UNISON Labour Link National Committee shall present its report for the past year. The report shall be discussed on a subject basis and in conjunction with any motions on the agenda which bears directly upon any part of the report.
- 14.2 If the UNISON Labour Link National Committee presents a report to the Forum which contains proposals or recommendations, approval and adoption shall be sought from the Forum.

### **15. Reference of outstanding items to the UNISON Labour Link National Committee**

If at the end of the National Forum the business of the Forum has not been concluded, all motions then outstanding shall stand referred to the UNISON Labour Link National Committee which shall in due course report to members its decision on these matters.

### **16. Suspension of Standing Orders**

Any one or more of these Standing Orders may be suspended by a resolution of the Forum in relation to a specific item of business properly before that Forum and to the proceedings thereon at that Forum, provided that at least two thirds of the delegates present and voting shall vote for the resolution or in the case of a card vote at least two thirds of the votes cast are for the resolution.

## **APPENDIX II RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER UNION BODIES UNISON CONFERENCE 1994**

### **A. Statement on UNISON policy making and the Labour Party**

The UNISON Rules make it clear that the supreme policy making body of the union is the National Delegate Conference and that between Conferences and the National Executive Council is responsible for management and control of the union.

The Rules also provide for a political fund which maintains the relationships which reflect the traditions of COHSE, NALGO and NUPE. Therefore the political fund is divided into two sections to enable continued affiliation to the Labour Party on the one hand and political independence on the other.

It is accepted that UNISON as a whole is not affiliated to the Labour Party and the National Delegate Conference does not debate motions in a Labour Party context.

Under the Rules, both sections of the political fund are under the exclusive control of two separate committees consisting of members of the NEC paying into their section of the fund. In this context the Affiliated Political Fund has set up a structure to mirror Labour Party areas of participation and decision making involving their levy payers. Therefore, the Affiliated political Fund, representing the members who are affiliated to the Labour Party, should decide the most appropriate ways to pursue agreed UNISON policy in the Labour Party.

The Affiliated Political Fund also receives policy consultation documents from the Labour Party to which it has to respond in a way, which effectively promotes UNISON Policy. This means that the APF must have a legitimate role in helping to develop UNISON policy.

Discussions are continuing on how the policies should be interpreted and any differences resolved in liaison with the GPF and Policy and Economic Committee representatives. There is a constructive dialogue taking place which should resolve any remaining concerns and it is recognised by all parties that agreement on this is in the interests of UNISON as a whole.

### **B. Report from the Standing Orders Committee on Reference Back on Point 7 of the Second Report**

Conference, this morning you agreed a reference back from the West Midlands Region on that paragraph of the Second Report of the Standing Orders Committee which dealt with motions ruled out of order because of their effect on the Affiliated Political Fund.

The Standing Orders Committee has taken on board the views expressed this morning by Conference and subsequent representations we have received from a number of branches asking us to maintain our position. We have also taken full account of the Rule Book and the Final Report and now wish to report to Conference as follows:

The Rules set out the aims and objects of the union. There are further sections on national delegate conference, standing orders for that conference, and a further section about the political funds.

With regard to this issue the Standing Orders Committee has had particular regard to Rule B.4.1, page 3 within the Aims and Objects sections which states:

“To maintain a political fund and the relationships which reflect the traditions of COHSE, NALGO and NUPE.”

The Standing Orders Committee has also had regard to rules on the political fund in Section J, in particular Section J.7.1 and J.7.2 referring to the existence of two distinct sections of the political fund and the creation of two separate committees with exclusive control of these sections of the fund.

The Standing Orders Committee consideration has also been informed by relevant sections of the Final Report which have been referred to in the discussions with branches and regions who have raised this issue with the Standing Orders Committee.

We have also been very aware of the manner in which the merger discussions took place and from which the Final Report was produced.

The Standing Orders Committee believes that the Final Report relates in particular to Rule B.4.1 in the Aims and Objects part of the Rule that I referred to earlier.

There is no doubt in our minds that this national delegate conference determines UNISON policy. We did, however, have to look very carefully at the words used in submitted motions because under Rule P.2.3.4.1 we have the duty to decide whether such motions and amendments have been submitted in accordance with the Rules

Motions which sought to give instruction or direction in relation to Labour Party matters were ruled out of order. However, those which merely ask, urge, or call on were ruled in order. For example a motion which called on the NEC to ensure that a policy decision was taken into the Labour Party Conference, as did the West Midlands Region motion, was ruled out of order. A branch that called on Conference to press for the Labour Party to do something (Tower

Hamlets/Composite S) was ruled in order. Conference, the Standing Orders Committee recognise the importance of this matter and the strong feelings which are held on both sides, but firmly believe given all that we have said that the Standing Orders committee came to the only conclusion we could have come to in dealing with these matters and we therefore strongly urge Conference to accept this report and the position of the Standing Orders Committee.