**

SOUTH EAST REGION

WOMEN’S COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION

2019/20

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SOUTH EAST REGIONAL WOMEN’S COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION

Introduction

* 1. UNISON national rules provide for the promotion of opportunities for members to ‘self organise’ in groups of; women members; black members; disabled members; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender members and young members.
  2. This self organised group within the Region shall be known as the South East Regional Women’s Committee (SERWC).

Objectives

The aims and objectives of the South East Regional Women’s Committee have been developed by the Committee over the years. They are based on the aims and objectives of self organisation as set out in the Rule Book. The Committee intention is to develop a clear and focused political agenda for UNISON women members in the Region in a friendly, supportive and non-oppressive framework. The Committee will develop long, medium and short-term strategies to achieve this, setting realistic goals, prioritising important issues and monitoring and reviewing progress.

**3. The Committee**

The Committee;

a) is a fully recognised constituent part of the regional organisation within UNISON rules. The Committee communicates with the Regional Executive via it’s representation on the Regional Committee/Council by 2 representatives with full voting rights and quarterly and annual reports;

b) communicates with and is accountable to UNISON women members in the Region.

c) appoints delegates to the Regional Council and may elect representatives to other regional committees;

d) may formulate proposals, motions or other initiatives, in line with UNISON Rules, to the Regional Council and/or Regional Committee;

e) may put forward proposals and motions to the National Women’s Committee and National Women’s Conference, in line with UNISON Rules;

f) may elect two representatives onto the National Women’s Committee;

g) may send two delegates to National Women’s Conference.

4. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Regional Women’s Committee set out the purposes of the Committee and define its role with UNISON South East Region. They outline the areas in which the Committee will develop its work in order to fulfil the responsibilities included in the Rule Book.

The South East Regional Women’s Committee will;

4.1 seek to advance the interests of women members within the union and help to create a union organisation that is relevant and appealing to women members.

4.2 encourage greater participation of women members at branch, regional and national level in the Region including new members and younger women.

4.3 support and assist UNISON in achieving proportionality and fair representation.

4.4 promote awareness of difference (e.g. culture, class, lifestyle, faith), challenge the multiple discrimination faced by Black women, lesbians, transgender and bi-sexual women and disabled women, encourage anti-discrimination initiatives and work to eliminate discrimination in our union.

4.5 give advice to other Regional Committees and Service Groups on specific social and political issues of concern to women and on priorities for women in negotiations, campaigns and polices as requested.

4.6 provide training to meet the particular needs and issues of women members and promote all courses widely in the Region.

4.7 publicise issues that affect women and support a wide range of activities in furtherance of the objectives of the committee, including the regular production of newsletters and any publicity materials .

4.8 develop links with women’s organisations in the Region, nationally and internationally.

4.9 play an active role in taking forward initiatives and campaigns emanating from National Women’s Conference motions.

4.10 provide an annual Action Plan and Budget to the Regional Finance Committee and Regional Council. The Committee’s action plan to deliver its objectives will be realistic and cost effective. The Committee will continue to monitor and review progress, prioritise important issue and ensure budgetary constraints are met.

5. Composition of the Committee

5.1 The Committee shall consist of twenty members.

5.2 In addition, the Committee will also include the following representatives :

(i) One woman representative from each of the other Self-Organised Groups (Black Members, LGBT Members and Disabled Members)

(ii) One woman representative from Young Members

(iii) Ex-officio: 1 woman retired member

(iv) Ex-officio : women members of the Convenors Group and the NEC

Ex-officio members will not have voting rights.

6. Annual General Meeting

6.1 The Annual General Meeting will usually be held before the end of November to fit in with the Regional Council timetable.

6.2 The Committee will produce an annual report for the Annual General Meeting.

6.3 Election of the twenty Committee members of the South East Regional Women’s Committee will take place at the Annual General Meeting.

6.4 Elections will also be held at the Annual General Meeting for the following;

(a) Chair (2 year term)

(b) Vice Chairs (2 year term)

(c) 2 regional delegates to National Women’s Conference (must provide an election address of no more than 500 words, to be submitted no less than 3 weeks before date of AGM).

(d) 1 representative to National Standing Orders Committee (2 year post)

(e) Elections will take place biennially for representatives to the National Women’s Committee. Nominees must be members of the Regional Women’s Committee. Nominations must be accompanied by an election address of no more than 500.

(f) 1 representative to TUC Women’s Conference

(g) UNISON regional and national committees, regional service group committees and appropriate outside bodies, as required e.g, SERTUC Women’s Rights Committee.

(h) 1 representative to Labour Link

**NB**. To find out more details about the above roles and level of commitment required, please see the Regional Women’s Handbook – a copy can be found on the ‘South East Women’s webpage’.

6.5 The Committee shall also elect from its Committee members, from time to time, such representatives and delegates, to any UNISON committees and appropriate outside bodies, as required e.g, SERTUC Women’s Rights Committee, Labour Link if not elected at the AGM or if vacancies arise during the year.

6.6 To ensure the widest participation and to contribute towards achieving fair representation, job sharing is encouraged.

6.7 Attendance at the Annual General Meeting shall be open to all women members.

6.8 Nominations for the Committee will be sought from women and branches at least six weeks before the date of the AGM.

6.9 The Annual General Meeting shall agree the work programme for the Committee for the coming year.

7. South East Regional Women’s Committee (SERWC) Committee Meetings

7.1 The SERWC will meet at no more than four times each year.

7.2 The Committee will implement and monitor the Action Plan as determined by the AGM, Committee, national women’s conference motions and the South East regional objectives.

7.3 The Committee will receive written reports from its elected representatives.

7.4 The Committee will report to the Annual General Meeting of the South East Regional Women’s Committee and the South East Regional Council meetings and its Annual General Meeting.

7.5 The Committee will consider any and all issues relevant to recruitment, retention and involvement of woman members in UNISON.

7.6 The Committee will consider and debate motions from branches and other SOGs.

7.7 If a member of the Committee misses two consecutive meetings without sending apologies, the committee secretary will be asked to contact the member and determine whether the member wishes to remain on the committee. If appropriate the committee will seek nominations for the vacancy without the need to delay to the following AGM.

8 Finance

8.1 The SERWC shall operate within its own financial allocation as determined by Regional Finance Committee and Regional Council.

8.2 All women attending the Annual General Meeting will have their transport costs paid by their branch, except for the current members of the Committee who shall be reimbursed through the Regional Women’s Committee budget, in keeping with the South East Regional Financial Standing Orders.

**9. Constitution**

9.1 Proposed amendments must be submitted at least 7 days prior to that meeting for advice to be sought and given on the implications of the change(s).

9.2 This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of members present at the Annual General Meeting.