

VOTE YES TO YOUR RULE BOOK

YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IS URGING YOU TO VOTE YES IN THIS BALLOT.
BELOW IS A SHORT GUIDE TO WHAT YOU WOULD BE VOTING FOR



The rule book was approved by the Joint Executive Council of the union, after it had been drawn up by a Rules Commission composed of equal numbers from the T&G and Amicus sections. The rules are based on the Instrument of Amalgamation approved by the membership in the vote on merger last year.

Once adopted the new rules are in force, the two sections of **Unite the Union** will come to an end and we will be a constitutionally integrated union operating under one rule book and under the leadership of the lay Executive Council just elected. Obviously not all constitutional bodies of the union will have been elected under rule from day one, so the EC will provide for transitional arrangements for a short period as necessary.

The first Rules Amendment Conference provided for in the rule book will meet in 2010. That will be an opportunity for changes and improvements to the rule book to be considered.

This document is a summary of the main provisions of the rules, focusing in particular on those which relate to the democracy of **Unite the Union** and to the involvement of the membership in its structures. *It is produced to assist understanding of the rules among the membership, but if there appears to be any difference between explanations provided here and the wording in the rule book itself, only the Rule Book is definitive.*

It is also important to underline that there are many significant aspects of the union's life and functioning which are not dealt with in the rule book. They are under the direct control of your elected Executive Council. The EC decides, for example, on the level of membership benefits and contributions.

Industrial Sectors (Rule 7)

Every member of **Unite the Union** will be in a national industrial sector corresponding to the industry they are employed in. The Executive Council has agreed a list of 24 such sectors, covering every area of the economy our union organises in. A full list can be found in the rule book.

Each sector will be led by a national industrial committee, with full autonomy over the conduct of the industrial business for their sector. The committee will be elected from sector committees in the regions. Each sector will also have its own national delegate conference every two years to determine its own industrial policy.

The EC has the power to create sub-sectors and advisory committees where necessary to ensure the proper representation of particular groups of members.

So YOU will control your own industrial agenda, and YOUR voice can be heard on the issues that matter most at work.

Branches (Rule 17)

Branches are a key part of the union's democratic life and will be accessible to all members wanting to play a part. Wherever possible they will be based on the workplace in order to be as best organise and represent branch members at work, but for other members local and national industrial branches will be provided as appropriate.

Branches will retain a percentage of membership income for their own use – the Executive Council will determine the amount.

Regions (Rule 8)

Unite the Union has ten regions – one each for Scotland, Ireland and Wales and seven covering England. Each region is going to be led by a committee of lay members elected from industrial and area committees in the region. The regions will have their own funds and the Regional Committee will be responsible for managing the union in their region, subject to conformity with the decisions of the EC and those responsible to it in their territories. The Regions will also set up area activists committees as a way to bring activists from different workplaces and different sectors together at a local level.

Please see over...

Equalities (Rule 11)

Unite the Union is committed to full equality for all its members, at work and in the union itself. The rules provide for committees for women; black, Asian and ethnic minority members; disabled members, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members, at national and regional level. There will also be national and regional conferences for each of these groups of members every two years.

The rules also committed unite to ensuring that women and black, Asian and ethnic minority members are at least proportionately represented on all committees throughout the union, including the Executive Council.

Executive Council (Rule 14)

Unite members have just elected our first Executive Council – 40 representatives each from the T&G and Amicus sections. The Executive, entirely composed of lay members, is the highest authority in the union and has responsibility for its management, finances and policy, subject only to the rule book and the decisions of the Policy Conference.

The next executive election will be in 2011. For that and subsequent elections, members will be elected from industrial and regional constituencies. The industrial constituencies will be divided proportionate to membership of the industrial sectors, and the same principle will apply to the representation of regions.

There will be national representatives for women and black/ethnic minority members. The EC will determine the exact formula for drawing up these constituencies – but the provisions in the rules ensure that it will reflect the full diversity of our millions of members.

Policy Conference/Rules Amendment (Rules 12 and 13)

The union will hold a national Policy Conference every two years, which will decide policy for the union as a whole. The conference will be made up exclusively of lay delegates, with one representing every two thousand members.

The rules can be amended at a Rules Amendment Conference to be held once every four years. Again; lay delegates only, each one representing four thousand members.

Through these conferences the members will have the continuing ability to shape and reshape Unite's policies and structure.

Young Members (Rule 9)

There will be national and regional committees (and conferences) for members aged 27 or under in order to ensure that young members' voice is heard throughout the union.

Retired Members (Rule 10)

The union will maintain a Retired Members Association, with its own resources and constitution, primarily to campaign for the rights of retired workers.

Organising (Rule 14.10)

Recognising the central importance of the organisation of workers in to the Union, the union will devote no less than five per cent and shall aim to move to no less than ten per cent of its income to organising within no less than three years of amalgamation.

General Secretary (Rule 15)

The Joint General Secretaries of **Unite** are Derek Simpson and Tony Woodley. Derek Simpson is entitled to remain in office until December 2010 and Tony Woodley is entitled to remain for up to a year after Derek Simpson's retirement. An election will be held during Derek Simpson's last year of office for a single General Secretary to succeed them, and that person will hold office as General Secretary Designate during Tony Woodley's last year of office.

There are many other important provisions in the Rule Book, and many areas where our recently elected Unite EC will be giving guidance and filling in details in order to bring the new rule book to full working life.

This leaflet is available in large print or Braille by contacting Ballot Unit on 020 7611 2500