

EC GUIDANCE REGIONAL EQUALITIES CONFERENCES

Unite will shortly convene its first round of regional equalities conferences, which will receive nominations from regional industrial sector committees and area activist committees and elect the first regional Women's, BAEM, Disabled members and LGBT committees.

Great care must therefore be taken to ensure that these conferences are properly conducted in accordance with the best democratic practice, and that they elect representatives committees in conformity with EC guidance.

Considerable work has been done by senior officers and lay members throughout the union to the point where proposals for all the regional equalities committees are ready to be put to the EC for approval.

These proposals establish clearly-defined constituencies, made up of one of more regional industrial sectors or activist areas.

The EC has already resolved that only representatives attending a conference from an industrial sector/activist area within a constituency will be able to vote for the committee member(s) in that constituency.

Standing Orders for the conferences agreed by the EC have further mandated that nominations for each constituency must be received in advance of the conference.¹

For further clarity, the EC believes that where a multi-seat constituency on a particular committee represents members from more industrial sectors or activist areas than there are seats available (eg a constituency which might provide three seats for representatives from five different industrial sectors; or two seats for four different activist areas) then where others have nominated, no one industrial sector/activist area should have more than one representative elected onto the committee.

In such circumstances, the requirements of the Statement of Intent adopted by the EC last May, directing that care should be taken to ensure the fair and proper representation of members from both former sections of Unite in situations in which both former T&G and former Amicus members are involved, should be taken careful note of.

¹ In relation to nomination to Regional Disabled Members Committees and Regional LGBT Committees, it is recognised that the agreed constituencies reflect the total membership numbers and not specific numbers of disabled members and LGBT members. It is therefore recognised that those responsible for Regional and AGS/National preparation of the committee constituencies may be required to make recommendations to amend final proposals in the light of nominations received, to be confirmed with Joint General Secretaries/the EC; while also maintaining the nomination criteria of those eligible to stand for election under Rule 6.

Under the authority of the EC, Regional Secretaries are required to designate themselves and/or the Regional Women's Organiser/Race & Equalities Officer as responsible for the proper convocation and conduct of each regional equalities conference (alongside the lay Chair in each case). The EC directs the Joint General Secretaries to make arrangements with the AGS/National Equalities officers for the proper briefing of all such officers to ensure that they fully aware of, and accountable for, their responsibilities in ensuring the smooth running of the conferences and the committee elections in particular.

Bearing in mind that this will be the first such conferences and that there may be concerns in some cases, the EC will establish a system for speedily hearing appeals from lay members regarding the conduct of elections, and reserves the power to suspend a regional equalities committee from taking office until such appeals are resolved.

Under these circumstances, the EC modifies the guidance issued in January regarding regional industrial sector and equalities conferences. As previously indicated, all eligible representatives may attend the conference but there is no requirement to elect voting delegates from amongst their number², since such a procedure could prove bureaucratically cumbersome and divisive amongst our lay representatives who wish to take part in the conference. The EC regards the safeguards outlined elsewhere in this document (including the procedure for appeal) as sufficient guarantee of the representative nature of the elections for the regional industrial sector and equalities committees, the issue which the idea of "voting delegates" was designed to address.

This guidance note supplements the :

- *Standing Orders - Regional Equalities Conferences*
- *EC Guidance : Regional Women's, Black, Asian & Ethnic minority, Disabled members and LGBT Committees*

² For the elections for this first period, in order to ensure implementation of Rule 11.2 on representation of women and BAEM members at least reflecting the membership (see below), a date will be set by which registration of equalities conference delegates should take place, and positive steps will be taken to ensure all eligible reps are informed and strongly encouraged to attend. At this time, when the total number is known, the minimum numbers of women and BAEM delegates required to achieve at least proportional representation will be calculated, and where under-representation is identified, further positive steps will be taken to ensure women and BAEM representatives attend specifically in those areas, and regions will be required to report to the Executive.

"11.2 All constitutional conferences and committees of the Union shall have a gender and ethnic balance of elected representatives at least reflecting the proportion of the black, Asian and ethnic minority and female membership which they represent. The Executive Council shall ensure the implementation of this rule and shall report on its implementation to the Policy Conference of the Union."