

The Rules of
the SOLID Trade Union



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1. Constitution

Name: The Solid Trade Union

Address: 4 York Crescent, Blackburn, BB1 9NW

Aims and Objectives:

The Solid Trade Union is an open general Trade Union accepting members from all trades or professions. The aim of the Trade Union is to build collective strength in order to improve members' contractual terms and conditions whilst constantly pursuing safer and more equitable working environments.

The trade union will, at the earliest opportunity, seek to be added to the 'list of trade unions' and will apply for a certificate of independence in order to pursue workplace recognition for the members (when membership density is at the requisite levels).

Modification of the rules:

The rules can only be changed by majority vote of the members at the AGM.

2. Governance

Democratic structure:

The Solid Trade Union believes in democracy and as much is reasonably practicable will try to ensure the members are involved in all decision-making processes. All positions within the trade union will be elected by the membership.

Branches:

When and where possible members will be allocated to branches. Preferably branches will be workplace branches. Any branch roles will be filled by way of election of the members within the branch. Branches can organise their own rules but these will need to be authorised or agreed at the AGM. Additional branch roles can be proposed and authorised at the AGM.

3. Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting (AGM) takes place in March of every year. The AGM can be conducted in person, via video conferencing or a hybrid of both. All members will be invited to attend the AGM. During this meeting all matters of the trade union can be discussed.

An overview of financial matters will be discussed during the AGM. The election of all roles within the trade union will be confirmed at the AGM. Any proposed changes to branch rules/roles will be ratified during the AGM by majority vote.

List of Executive Committee Member Positions

General Secretary & Treasurer

President

Equality Officer
Communication Officer
Auditor x 2

List of Branch Roles

Branch Secretary
Branch President
Shop Stewards
Safety Reps

Election of Branch Roles

Branch roles will be elected by the members within the branch and will be ratified at the AGM.

Election of executive committee members

After the first 5-year term all the executive committee positions will be up for election. Any member of the trade union will be entitled to stand in any of the executive committee positions. Nominations for the General Secretary position should be sent to the President before the end of November in the year before the 5-year term ends. Nominations for all other executive committee positions should be sent to the General Secretary before the end of November in the year before the 5-year term ends. Nominations will need to be proposed by a member and seconded by another member.

If any of the executive committee roles are contested a full postal ballot will be conducted in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. An independent scrutineer such as the ERS will be appointed to monitor and oversee the ballot.

The role of General Secretary is the only paid role within the trade union. This role will only be paid an amount, which is affordable and will be agreed at the AGM. Officers may on occasion be paid low amounts of honoraria not usually exceeding membership fee rates. Expenses will be paid when applicable and will be in line with HRMC guidelines.

4. Legal Assistance

We believe in challenging unscrupulous employers through legal means but members need to be aware that any legal assistance will be supplied on a discretionary basis.

Any member who wishes the trade union to pursue a legal employment claim must inform a representative or official at the earliest opportunity. The member must also supply all the relevant information and documentation to allow for analysis of the merits of the case. The member will be given an overview of the potential of the claim and will be given advice on how to proceed. This advice will be given in good faith and members should have due regard to the complexities of employment law. Any advocacy supplied by the trade union will be free of charge (except for membership fees) but the member will be expected to follow the advice given including recommendations to accept settlements.

The trade union may withdraw its legal support at any time but will not do so unreasonably.

Members who join with pre-existing workplace problems will not normally be supported with their issue however the general secretary has discretion to take the matter forward.

5. Industrial Action

We believe that industrial action is a tool for challenging the imbalance of power in the employment relationship. Industrial action will always be the last resort and we will always look to resolve any trade dispute informally and in an efficient manner. However, where agreement cannot be reached, we will look to ballot our members in accordance with the rules of the land in which the trade dispute occurs.

The trade union will not condone unofficial industrial action and will not take responsibility for workers who take matters into their own hands and take part in any unlawful, unofficial action. Any member who takes part in unofficial action will be subject to the disciplinary process detailed in these rules.

6. Finance

Members – membership fees:

We aim to minimise membership fees as much as possible from the outset and we believe that fees should reflect the service provided. New members who are not covered by one of our collective agreements start on a nominal rate of £2.50 per month. If recognition is in place or gained at the members' workplace the rate increases to £5 per month. Then once T&C's improvements are negotiated by the trade union the membership rate will increase to a maximum of £10 per month.

If a member who is on either of the lower rates (£2.50 or £5) requires any form of individual representation/assistance the membership rate increases to (and remains at) £10 per month. This representation includes employment law advice and/or advocacy in any hearings or meeting (for example during disciplinary or grievance procedures).

Budget and Accounts

The General Secretary and President should formulate and implement budgets. The budget should be presented to the committee for approval. Any additional expenditure outside of budget is discretionary and is to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

The General Secretary is responsible for maintaining the accounts and submitting the annual return to the certification office as and when required.

Audits

The General Secretary shall be responsible for appointing suitable auditors each

year for the purposes of auditing the accounts to be presented on the annual return.

Asset Lock

The property of the trade union, including all its income, shall be paid or solely applied for the aims of the trade union or benefit of our community, and it will not be distributed to any member as profit. The role of General Secretary is the only paid role within the trade union however honoraria and expenses can be paid to any member or officer as and when is necessary. Any such payments will be authorised by the committee members.

Trustees

There are two trustees of the trade union who will be elected at the AGM. If positions are contested a vote of the members attending the AGM will determine who are elected. The general secretary cannot be elected as a trustee but the positions are open to any other member of the trade union.

All trade union property will be vested in trustees. The trustees must act with high levels of probity and in the best interests of the trade union and will ensure that they communicate effectively with the committee.

7. Member Complaints/Discipline

Members Code of Conduct

Solid members must act with respect towards others at all times. Therefore, members must not engage in abuse of any kind towards anyone within the trade union. Members may be subject to disciplinary action, if it is found that they are in contravention of the code of conduct.

Members will at all times seek to uphold the values of the union. We expect the highest possible standards of probity to be taken by everyone in all matters within the trade union. We don't tolerate or condone discriminatory or abusive behaviour within the trade union. Any member whose conduct is called into question will be subject to an investigation under the disciplinary procedure. The outcomes of the disciplinary process are detailed within the rule book.

Member complaints

Complaints from members will be taken seriously and will normally be dealt with at committee meetings.

Members are to submit their complaints in writing with as much detail as possible including any documentary evidence. If required the committee may assign one of the committee members to carry out an investigation.

The member will be given every opportunity to state their case and can address the committee in writing, in person or via video conferencing (or combination of). The outcome of the complaint will be decided by majority vote of the committee excluding the general secretary who will not have a vote.

If the member is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, they can appeal in writing to the general secretary who will have the final say. Depending on the issue the member may be able to take the issue to the certification officer however it is the member's responsibility to look into this.

Discipline of members

If a members' conduct is brought into question the committee may appoint one of its committee members to investigate. If following the investigation there is a case to answer the member will be brought before the committee and will be given opportunity to make their case. The committee (excluding the general secretary) will have the deciding vote on any action to be taken against the member. The action can include the following:

- No further action
- Written warning
- Temporary suspension from the trade union
- Expulsion from the trade union

If the member is unhappy with the sanction they can appeal to the general secretary in writing. The general secretary's decision will be final and can vary in any way from the previous sanction that was awarded by the committee.

8. Dissolution

The trade union may only be dissolved or amalgamated by vote being taken and carried by at least two thirds of the committee.