



RULE

BOOK

OUR OBJECTIVE

We work to enhance the quality of life and render new prospects for all our members and their kin. In our struggle, we toil to better the lives of AW UNION members and make sure that their successes lead the way for working people in Britain and across the world. Every AW UNION member should have the right to partake in work that is fulfilling and rewarding. No workplace should be a place for exploitation, destitution and discrimination. To achieve this aim we will:

- **negotiate** with employers to obtain useful and beneficial agreements that help to achieve our purpose.
- **encourage** non-members to join, inspire members to become active, and aid active members to take full part in the life of the union. In particular, we will recruit and help develop young people so that we improve their lives and protect the future of the workforce from injustice.
- **educate** local representatives to represent members in an able and proficient way, so that they attain respect for their members, us and themselves.
- **enlist** members through delivering an exceptional service to working people, encouraging people to stay with us for their whole lives.
- **democratise** the workplace, by first putting elected workers at the heart of positions of responsibility inside the union, and then agitating for more accountability in the corporate structures.
- **support** an atmosphere of teamwork in which every AW UNION office holder and partner will feel personally responsible for achieving our goals.

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Core Rules

CHARTER

Rule 1

Name and office

- 1 The Union is called the Autonomous Workers' Union and it is abbreviated to AW UNION, AWU or shortened to Autonomous.
- 2 Our main office is at Marie Villa, 75 Abbey Wood Road, London SE2 9DZ.
- 3 In line with any decisions made by the Assembly or the Executive Council, we will be run according to these core rules.

Rule 2

Aims

Our aims are as follows.

- recruit, organize and represent all workers.
- harmonize relations between employees and employers and between employees themselves.
- uphold and improve wages and conditions, to make work as secure as possible
- promote industrial and internal union democracy
- attain and maintain equal pay for women, promote equal opportunities within the union, the workplace and society in general, and end discrimination against people because of their sex, race, nationality, religious beliefs, disability, age, marital status or sexuality
- provide benefits to members in line with our rules
- promote training and educating members in relation to the activities they carry out on our behalf, and to provide scholarships to educational institutions for members, in line with conditions set out by the Executive Council.
- sponsor or support legislation in the interests of members, especially those laws relating to the legal rights of trade unions, industrial health, safety and welfare, social and economic welfare and environmental protection.

- help elect members to Parliament and public authorities who promote our policies and the interests of members through political methods, providing the candidates are pledged to collective ownership, under democratic control, of the means of production, distribution and exchange.
- encourage the social, moral and intellectual interests of our members, however this will be limited to the core functions of the union as there will be no plans for providing financial services or products that fall under the remit of the FCA.

Rule 3

Altering and amending rules

No new rules can be made, or any of these rules changed, amended or cancelled, unless agreed by a majority vote at Assembly, or by a proposed ballot of members.

Rule 4

Disbanding the union

The union may be dissolved (formally ended) by a vote of five sixths of the whole of the financial members of the union. 2

MEMBERSHIP

Rule 5

Membership

AW UNION is an open and democratic organisation and welcomes into membership people from any industry or walk of life who are committed to upholding the aims and rules of the AW UNION.

The Executive Council may create temporary grades of membership if they think they are necessary

Despite anything set out in these rules, the Executive Council may, by giving six weeks' notice in writing, cancel the membership of any member, if this is necessary to keep to:

- a decision made by the Disputes Committee of the Trades Union Congress (TUC);
- a decision arising from an inter-union disputes committee set up by us
- a recommendation of the Independent Review Committee, set up with the support of the TUC.

The Executive Council, has the power to suspend a member from benefit or ban them from holding any AW UNION office, or ban a member from taking part in AW UNION business and affairs, in any case for as long as the council feels necessary:

- if they believe the member is guilty of trying to harm the union or acting against the rules;
- if the member makes or in any way associates themselves with any defamatory or abusive comments made against any of our officials or committees;
- if the member, alone or together with any other members or people opposes or acts against any of our policies;
- if the member acts against the best interests of the AW UNION
- if the member encourages or takes part in the activities of any organisation or group whose policies or aims are racist or promote racist beliefs, or for any other sufficient reason.

Branch Committees have the power to recommend that the Executive Council cancel the membership of any member for any of the reasons set out above. The Executive Council will make the final decision on a recommendation from a Branch. A member who has their membership cancelled will not be eligible to re-join without the permission of the Executive Council or the appropriate Branch Committee.

If a Branch Committee takes disciplinary action against a member under these rules and the member is not satisfied with the decision, he or she can appeal by writing to the Executive Council's President within one month of the decision being made. The case will be referred to the Executive Council, who will make the final decision.

Rule 6

Membership relocations

Members who have a reason to relocate to this union through leaving their previous job, or for other reasons we approve, will be accepted as full financial members if they are financial members of the union they leave. This clause applies only to members who transfer to this union in line with TUC procedures.

Rule 7

Contributions

Once they join the AW UNION, members will pay a contribution in line with this rule. Members will pay £2.00 a week and be classed as grade-1 members, unless they are:

- part-time members employed for 20 hours or less;
- young people under 18; or
- recruited as being unemployed; in which case, they will pay £1.25 a week and be classed as grade-2 members.

COMPLAINTS

Rule 8

Grievance process for members

Any affiliate who wants to protest must do so to their branch secretary, who will take the matter to the branch. If the member is not satisfied with the branch's resolution

or the branch agrees it does not have the authority to deal with the matter, the associate can appeal in writing to the President within one month of the branch meeting. The President will make the final decision.

At each inquiry before the branch, the member will have a reasonable opportunity

- to display their case orally or in writing
- to aid their case with written statements or by using witnesses
- to receive the evidence against their complaint, to answer it and to question witnesses.

ASSEMBLY

Rule 9

Assembly of the union

The Assembly (Ordinary or Special), made up of representatives from the branches of the union, holds supreme authority.

The Assembly will be held every year on dates decided by the Executive Council.

The Executive Council can choose to hold and arrange a Special Congress.

All delegates must be fully financial members. Each Branch will be entitled to send one delegate for every 100 financial members.

For 100% of delegates, each branch may nominate two members to stand for election as a delegate to represent the branch at the Assembly. These nominations must be sent to the President no later than 31 December. The President will then print and issue lists during the third week of January, setting out the name and branch of each candidate. The closing date for voting will be 28 February. The candidates who receive the largest number of votes will be elected.

The following will take part in the Assembly and will have the right to speak but not to vote.

- The President
- Branch Secretaries

Rule 10

Business of the Assembly

A standing orders committee will be appointed before each Congress, and the constitution reported to Congress. Each Branch will appoint one member for this committee.

The Assembly will:

- consider and make decisions on policies affecting the general, industrial, political or social welfare of our members;
- receive reports from the President and treasurer (which will include reports from senior officials nominated by the President) and the branch secretaries;
- consider and make decisions on all matters included in the agenda for the Congress; and
- confirm the elections of officials and general member auditors when necessary.

The Assembly by a majority vote shall have power to rescind, alter and add to any of these rules. The Executive Council shall, nevertheless, have power to submit to any Assembly amendments to rules.

Any branch committee or the Executive Council can put forward motions for inclusion in the agenda of the Assembly.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Rule 11

Executive Council

The union is run by the Executive Council. The council also deals with any trade disputes.

The Executive Council will be made up of voting members elected from each Branch. The President and treasurer will also be a voting member of the Executive Council.

Rule 12

Executive Council Business

The Executive Council will hold ordinary meetings as and when required, but at least six times per year. The Executive Council may meet at other times if necessary.

To carry out any part of its business, the Executive Council can appoint committees. It may give any of these committees as much responsibility to carry out its business as it feels necessary. In carrying out this business, the committee will act on behalf of the Executive Council, and must keep to the relevant conditions of these rules as if it were the Executive Council. The committees will make decisions on behalf of the Executive Council, who, except where it says otherwise, must give its approval. The representatives will be appointed in whatever way the Executive Council feels is necessary.

The Executive Council will have the power to grant permission to start new branches and to break up or suspend any branch which may act against the rules or for any other reasons. The council can take any steps it feels are necessary to carry on the work of these areas.

The Executive Council may use any powers and carry out all acts, duties and responsibilities it feels are necessary to achieve our aims, whether or not these powers, duties and responsibilities are specifically mentioned in these rules.

Rule 13

Executive Council Assets

The council will make sure our funds are not misused and, through the President or any other officer they appoint will prosecute or take any other appropriate action against any officer or member who misuses or withholds any money or property belonging to us.

All books, property, funds and documents belong to the union and not to the branches, and the Executive Council has the power to demand that the books, property, funds and documents a branch holds are given to the Executive Council or an officer the Executive Council has appointed.

The Executive Council will have the power to borrow money on any terms, and with or without security, as it considers necessary.

The Executive Council will have the power to provide funds for any purposes it feels are necessary to support trade-union or working-class aims in line with the aims and policies of the Union.

The Executive Council will appoint special auditors to examine the books and accounts of any branch of the union whenever it feels this is necessary.

Rule 14

Executive Council Rulings

- The minutes of the Executive Council will be sent to the secretary of each branch.
- Any decision the Executive Council makes will bind all our members.
- The Executive Council will make a decision on any matters not set out in these rules.
- The Executive Council can give as much responsibility as it feels necessary to Committees. The Executive Council will have the power to set up new sections of the union.
- The Executive Council can make by-laws for how a certain group of members carry out and manage their business in line with our rules.

Rule 15

Elections to the Executive Council

- One member will be elected as a representative of each section in each branch.
- Members will be elected as general representatives as follows.
- One member will be elected as a general representative in each branch which has 100 or fewer members on 31 May in the year the election takes place.
- Two members will be elected as general representatives in each branch which has more than 100 members on 31 May in the year the election takes place.
- Each branch may nominate members for general seats.
- Beginning in 2022, elections under this rule will be held by secret ballot for all groups every four years. Members of the Executive Council who are elected in this way will hold office for 2 years from the first Tuesday in December in the year they are elected. Except where the Executive Council decides

otherwise casual vacancies that arise during the first two years of the term of office will be filled by a byelection held on a day decided by the Executive Council and casual vacancies that arise during the last two years of the term of office will not be filled. Any member who is elected to fill a casual vacancy will hold office for the rest of the above two-year period.

- Elections under this rule will be organised and held in line with by-laws issued by the Executive Council. The Executive Council can amend or withdraw any by-law, as long as doing so would affect only the future conduct of current or future elections.
- When we refer to 'members' in this rule, we mean financial members.

FULL-TIME OFFICIALS

Rule 16

President and treasurer

The President of the union will also act as treasurer. They will not be removed from office except under the conditions set out in this rule.

If the position is vacant or an official has been suspended, the Executive Council can appoint an elected official to temporarily act as general secretary and treasurer until a new President is elected or the suspended official returns to office. An elected official who temporarily holds office will not be entitled to a vote on the Executive Council.

The President will be responsible to the Executive Council for delivering the objectives of the AW UNION. The President will be responsible for the good governance of the Union, including the maintenance of high standards of administrative efficiency, financial management and probity.

They will go to all meetings of the Executive Council and they will have the right to speak on any business carried out at these meetings.

The President and treasurer can be dismissed or suspended from office on the terms and for as long as the Executive Council considers proper, for the following reasons.

If he or she fails to perform his or her duties.

If he or she behaves in a way that could be classed as serious misconduct.

For any other reason the Executive Council feels is appropriate.

When resigning, the President and treasurer must give three months' notice. If they are dismissed, they will receive three months' notice or three months' wages.

Rule 17

Electing a President and treasurer

This rule will apply to how the President and treasurer is elected. They will hold office for five years.

The Executive Council will ask branches for their nominations six months before the existing official's term of office runs out (or, if there is a vacancy, as soon as possible after taking account of any relevant matters). Branches should send their nominations to a returning officer appointed by the Executive Council.

The Executive Council may remove wording from a personal statement of a potential nominee, to be published in accordance with by-laws made under this rule by AW UNION that is deemed to be untrue, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory or otherwise unlawful. The decision of the Executive Council will be final. No member will be eligible to stand as a candidate in an election under this rule unless the Executive Council is satisfied that: a he or she is eligible under these rules to be elected to office; and b he or she meets the conditions set out in by-laws for people who are nominated as candidates. Elections under this rule will be organised and carried out in line with by-laws issued by the Executive Council, which may in particular:

- set a threshold for the number of branch nominations required, and set other conditions which possible candidates will need to meet;
- ban or allow and control canvassing (campaigning for votes) and spending by or on behalf of candidates; and
- decide how (including the format, layout and typeface) copies of candidates' election addresses will be produced and given out to voters. The Executive Council may amend or withdraw any by-law if it thinks it is necessary. 5 An election will not need to take place if the holder of the office:

Rule 18

General trustee

There will be one trustee. The general trustee will be elected in any way the Executive Council decides, and for as long as it feels is appropriate. Members who are not financial members will not be eligible to be appointed as a trustee. The trustee must not sell, withdraw or transfer any of our invested funds without the authority of the Executive Council, which the President and treasurer will give, in writing, on the council's behalf. The trustee will perform the duties the Executive Council has made them responsible for. The Executive Council can replace the general trustee. The Executive Council can appoint a corporate organisation to act as custodian trustee under the Public Trustee Act 1906. The general trustee will be the sole signatory on the account.

Organisers

Branches shall have the power to appoint officers to work as organisers subject to the approval of the President and the Executive Council. The Executive Council may, from time to time, decide how these officers will be appointed. Organisers will, at all times, be responsible to and work under the direction and control of the branch secretary. Within two years of being appointed, and at a time decided by the branch secretary and the branch committee and approved by the Executive Council, all organisers will take part in an election. When elected, these officers will be known as 'elected' organisers.

Branch Secretary

When a vacancy arises an appointment, panel made up of an equal balance of members of the branch committee and the Executive Council will appoint a branch secretary. The person appointed will need to be approved by the Executive Council.

Appointments under this rule will be made in accordance with guidelines and procedures issued by the Executive Council.

AW UNION Reps

To help the President and Treasurer with matters relating to members of the sections, the Executive Council will appoint an AW UNION Official for each section, and such for each section as the Executive Council considers necessary.

Procedure for electing organisers

The date the election takes place will be decided by the branch secretary and branch committee, and approved by the Executive Council.

FINANCE

Rule 19

Union funds

All money and property we receive or obtain will belong to the union, and will be controlled by the general trustee.

The funds of the Union will be held in one or more banks as specified by the Executive Council. The Executive Council can choose to hold part of the fund in any other bank or in any way and in any part of the world as it feels is appropriate. The Executive Council will have the power to use our funds in any way it feels is necessary and appropriate. There will be a central fund for protecting and supporting members to achieve their aims in their workplaces, and for generally managing the union. The Executive Council will raise the central fund from the branches or in any way it feels is necessary. The Executive Council will decide which

costs will be met by the central fund. The central fund will be managed by the Executive Council, who will give instructions for how all cheques should be signed.

Branches must pay 100% of their income to the central fund.

If any branch does not pay its appropriate share to the central fund as necessary, the Executive Council will investigate and decide what action to take. After paying the above amounts to the central fund, each branch can, with the approval of its council or branch committee, request funds to invest in a branch fund. The branches can then use this fund to pay any necessary expenses connected with managing itself, including any expenses designated by the Executive Council.

Rule 20

Audits

Our accounts will be audited by accountants appointed by the Executive Council.

Our membership register will be audited by an assurer appointed by the Executive Council.

Our accounts will be examined by three of our members, who will be elected every four years in line with the appropriate rules for nominating and electing officials.

No Branch will have more than one auditor. The auditors elected will be the first three candidates from different branches according to the number of votes cast.

Rule 21

Inspection of books and accounts

Any member of the union has the right to inspect the books in line with legislation.

Rule 22

Paying expenses

The Executive Council will set scales of payments for expenses, fares, subsistence and loss of working time for members, representatives and officials who carry out our business.

BRANCHES

Rule 23

Branches

The purpose of each branch is to help us achieve the aims set out in these rules, giving priority to recruiting, organising, providing services for and keeping members. As the basic unit of the union Branches will encourage members to take part in its democracy.

In January each year, branches will set out a development plan for the year ahead. The development plan will identify:

- recruitment plan

- schedule of branch meetings including dates and venue(s)

- union democracy activity

- branch servicing and retention

- branch organising

- branch resources

- communication

- training

A branch recruitment plan will identify:

- the local areas and workplaces in which the branch will make the most effort to recruit new members;

- the opportunities the branch has to increase the number of members;

- the resources the branch considers necessary to carry out the recruitment campaign;

- the branch officials and members who will carry out the campaign; and

- the timetable for the campaign. The branch secretary will send the development plan to the Executive Council.

Rule 24

Branch Chair

- The chair will head all branch meetings and make sure officials behave appropriately and keep to the rules.
- At all meetings they chair, they will have a vote but not a casting vote.
- The branch chair will sign the minutes, balance sheets and other documents, and will tell the secretary when to call special meetings of the committee.
- At each branch meeting, the branch chair will inspect and read to the members all receipts for money the branch office has received. The branch chair will report to the President in any case where a branch official has failed to carry out their duties. The president must give one month's notice before they resign.

Rule 25

Branch secretary

The branch secretary will:

- keep all the branch's books, accounts and documents;
- carry forward in the contribution book and on members' cards all contributions members have not yet paid;
- deal with all correspondence and read it to the members of the branch; and
- take part in all branch and committee meetings, and keep a record of them.

Each quarter, the branch secretary will hand over all money taken on behalf of the branch to the Executive Council. They will also give the President a quarterly sheet showing the branch's income and spending. If, under the circumstances, the branch secretary is not able to do this, they must make other arrangements with the President. The branch secretary will send to the Executive Council the branch's financial report, which should be signed by the auditors and the chair, within the timetable set by the Executive Council.

Rule 26

Dissolving branches

Branches can only be dissolved (closed down) if the branch committee chooses to do so. When considering this, the branch committee must take account of the views of that branch's members. If a branch is dissolved, the branch secretary will immediately organise an audit of all the branch's books and arrange a meeting for the members if necessary. The officials of the branch must send all money, books and other property of the Union to the President, together with a full statement of the branch's funds. If any member of a dissolved branch wants to stay in the union, they will be transferred to the nearest branch.

Rule 27

Representatives in the workplace

Shop stewards or staff representatives will be appointed (or elected by the members employed where necessary), if approved by the branch committee or the Executive Council (if more than one branch is involved).

- These representatives will be appointed in any of the following ways, depending on which is the most suitable.
- By a majority vote, through a show of hands or a ballot, of the members at the workplace.
- By a majority vote, through a show of hands, at a branch meeting.
- If all the members concerned agree that a member appointed by the branch secretary should act as representative.

By shop stewards or staff representatives at the workplace electing one of themselves as convenor or chief staff representative. The shop stewards and staff representatives and their convenor or chief staff representative will work under the authority of the branch committee. They must follow the decisions and policies set out by the governing authorities of the union. Once a shop steward or staff

representative has been appointed, their name, address and branch should be sent to the President, who will then give that person a credential card, shop steward's or staff representative's badge, and a handbook. When that shop steward or staff representative no longer holds office, they must return the credential card and badge to the President.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Rule 28

Disputes

If any dispute arises, the members concerned should tell their branch secretary, who will immediately report it to the Executive Council. Members must not stop or threaten to stop working without the permission of the branch committee or Executive Council. Branch committees have the power to approve a strike where up to 30 members are involved. If any branch or group of members want us to take steps to increase their wages or improve their conditions of employment, the branch secretary will report the claim to the Executive Council.

The form used to make the claim will set out the number of members entitled and not entitled to benefit, the number of non-members at the workplace (if any) and the number of votes the branch or group of members has recorded as being for and against the claim. In cases where wages may be reduced or working conditions made worse, the form will clearly set out all the details relating to this. Except where the Executive Council decides otherwise, members must not stop working unless the branch members or group of members concerned have taken a vote, and two-thirds of those members who vote have voted in favour of stopping working (and then only with the approval of the Executive Council or branch committee). Every member affected will have an opportunity to record their vote for and against stopping work. Members will not be entitled to strike benefit if they begin a strike without the Executive Council's approval. The Executive Council will have the power to refer a dispute to arbitration.

DISPUTES WITH ELECTIONS

Rule 29

Appeals and disputes

This rule will apply to all complaints, grievances and disputes arising from any election to the Executive Council. The branch secretary must receive any of these types of complaints no later than one month after the results of the election have been announced.

Each branch committee will elect a branch elections committee from its own members. The committee will be made up of the branches representative on the

Appeals Tribunal panel (who will be the committee's chair) and two other representatives. Three other people should also be elected as 1st, 2nd, 3rd possible replacements if the first choices are disqualified for any reason (see below). The following people must not be chosen to sit on the committee.

- Election candidates, returning officers or scrutineers who are involved in the election which the complaint, grievance or dispute relates to.
- Members of a branch, or employees who work at a workplace, where there is a dispute over the votes made in an election. If one or more members of the branch elections committee are disqualified, the person elected as a replacement will sit in their place for as long as the committee deals with that particular dispute.

If any member has a complaint relating to any matter falling within this rule, they must put it to the appropriate elections committee by writing to or phoning the executive council office. They must also tell their branch secretary at the same time. If a member complains about their entitlement to vote or to vote by post in an election, and they make their complaint on or before the day (or, if the election is held on more than one day, the last day) of voting, this paragraph will apply unless the complaint says otherwise. The elections committee can ask for and consider a written or spoken report from the returning officer, and should make every effort to make a decision on the matter before the end of the last day of voting. The person complaining will have the right to support their case with written statements, but will not have the right to:

- present their case to the committee direct;
- use witnesses; or
- see or hear any report the returning officer makes to the committee.

Members of the elections committee can either meet to decide the matter or do so over the phone. The person complaining, and any person or branch who the elections committee reasonably considers to have an interest in the outcome of the complaint, will have a reasonable opportunity to present their case to the committee. They can present their case direct or in writing, and will have the right to support their case with written statements or by using witnesses (or both). They will have the right to see and hear the evidence against them and any report from the returning officer (which the committee may seek), and have the opportunity to reply to it and question witnesses. The elections committee will, in line with normal practice, consider the matter in private. The elections committee may order a complaint to be struck out for scandalous, vexatious or unreasonable behaviour by a complainant or for excessive delay in proceeding with the complaint. Before

making such an order the complainant will be sent notice giving them an opportunity to show why the order should not be made.

If an elections committee accepts all or part of a complaint, it may make any order it feels is necessary in line with our rules and by-laws. In particular, it may make an order for: a any person to be entitled to vote or be disqualified from voting; b any person to be entitled to vote by post; c any person to be entitled to stand for election or be disqualified from standing; d all or any of the votes in any branch or workplace to be counted or rejected; or e a new election to be held. The elections committee must tell the person complaining, and any person or branch with an interest in the outcome of the complaint, about what the committee have decided and any orders they have made. If, in the committee's opinion, a rule or by-law was only broken in a way that would not have affected the result of an election, it can make an order for the result of that election to stand. If any member or branch is not satisfied with the decision of the elections committee, they can appeal by writing, within one month of the decision, to the President, who will refer the case to the Appeals Tribunal. The Appeals Tribunal will make the final decision.

Rule 30

Appeals and disputes relating to senior officers

This rule will apply to all complaints, grievances and disputes arising from an election for an President and treasurer. The returning officer must receive any complaint under this rule in writing, within the following timescales. If a member complains that the Executive Council has decided, that he or she is not eligible to stand as a candidate in an election, the officer must receive the complaint no later than one week after the Executive Council's decision. In all other cases, the officer must receive the complaint no later than one month after the result of the election is announced.

A committee of the Executive Council will deal with any complaints under this rule. If the person complaining appeals against the decision (the returning officer must receive the appeal, in writing, no later than one week after the decision is made), a different committee of the Executive Council will deal with the appeal. This committee will make the final decision, and the person complaining will not have any further right to appeal.

The Executive Council may rule that, before making a decision about the complaint, the candidate appearing to have the highest number of votes should take office or be excluded from taking office. The Executive Council may also rule that, before a decision is made about the complaint (or complaints), the person should hold office and exercise the powers relating to that office, as if they had been validly elected without any complaint or dispute being made.

AFFILIATIONS

Rule 31

Affiliations to trades councils and similar organisations

Branches will not be entitled to affiliate (officially link themselves) to a trades council or other organisation, without getting the Executive Council's approval and unless. All fees for branches to affiliate themselves to local trades councils, conciliation boards, federated trade unions and similar industrial or trade-union organisations will be paid for out of the branch funds. Affiliation fees should not go over £7 for every 100 financial members (not including sick and retired members). If the fees are more than £42 a year for any one branch, they must be approved each year by the Executive Council.