

UK Hospitality Union

Rules and Constitution Version 4 - September 2026

1. Name

The name of the trade union shall be the UK Hospitality Union, also referred to in these Rules as UKHU or the Union.

2. Principal Office

The principal office of the Union shall be 4th Floor, Silverstream House, Fitzroy Street, London, W1T 6EB or such other address as the Union may determine from time to time.

3. Objects

The Union exists principally to organise workers and collectively regulate relations between workers and employers in the hospitality sector, and to protect and advance the interests of its members.

The objects of the Union are:

To organise workers collectively and to seek voluntary recognition, collective bargaining and consultation arrangements with employers where appropriate.

To represent members in relation to pay, terms and conditions of employment.

To support members in grievance, disciplinary, dismissal and workplace dispute matters, subject to these Rules.

To negotiate, consult and bargain collectively with employers, employers associations and other relevant bodies on matters affecting members.

To conclude collective agreements and other lawful arrangements concerning pay, hours, working conditions and other employment-related matters.

To promote the welfare, dignity, safety, equality and fair treatment of members.

To provide advice, assistance and such other services as the Union considers appropriate in furtherance of its objects.

To do all lawful things incidental or conducive to the attainment of these objects.

4. Values

The Union is independent, member-led and non-partisan.

The Union is anti-racist and anti-fascist and will not tolerate conduct which undermines the dignity, safety or equal treatment of members.

The Union shall remain independent of employers and employers associations. No employer, employers association or person acting on their behalf shall exercise control over the governance, policies, finances, elections or administration of the Union.

The Union may receive lawful facilities, access or assistance from employers where appropriate, provided that such support does not compromise the independence of the Union or permit interference with its affairs.

The Union may engage with employers, public bodies, elected representatives and other organisations where doing so supports the interests of members.

5. Membership

Membership of the Union shall be open to persons working in, or seeking work in, the hospitality sector, subject to these Rules.

The hospitality sector includes hotels, restaurants, bars, pubs, cafes, catering, contract catering, hospitality venues, events and other related hospitality occupations or services determined by the Executive Board.

The General Secretary may refuse an application for membership where the applicant does not meet the membership criteria, has previously been expelled from the Union, or where there are reasonable grounds for believing that admission would materially prejudice the legitimate interests of the Union.

A person shall become a member upon acceptance of their application and payment of the required subscription.

Membership shall cease on resignation, non-payment of subscription, ceasing to qualify for membership under these Rules, or expulsion following the procedure in Rule 17. An existing member shall not be expelled or have membership terminated on disciplinary grounds except in accordance with Rule 17.

The Union shall provide a copy of these Rules to any member on request and may provide the same in electronic form. New members may also be provided with a copy of these Rules on joining.

6. Subscriptions

The standard membership subscription shall be £14.99 per month.

The Executive Board may approve a change to the standard subscription rate where reasonably required for the financial sustainability or development of the Union. Any such change shall be notified to members in advance and reported to the next Annual General Meeting.

The Executive Board may provide for reduced-rate membership for retired members, unemployed members, members facing hardship, or other concessionary categories on such terms as it determines.

Failure to maintain payment of subscriptions may result in suspension or termination of membership after reasonable notice has been given to the member.

7. Pre-existing Matters and Eligibility for Support

The Union will not ordinarily provide representation, formal casework or legal support for matters which arose before the member joined the Union.

The Union will not provide representation or formal casework in relation to matters arising within the first eight weeks of membership.

Legal assistance shall not be available to members until they have completed six months' continuous membership and are not in arrears with subscriptions.

The General Secretary may authorise exceptional assistance where there is a significant safeguarding concern, a serious risk to life or liberty, or a wider Union interest in the matter.

8. Officers of the Union

The officers of the Union shall be:

The General Secretary.

The Deputy General Secretary.

The Treasurer.

Such trustees as may be appointed in accordance with these Rules.

9. General Secretary

The Union shall have a General Secretary who shall be the Chief Executive Officer and principal officer of the Union.

The General Secretary shall be elected by secret ballot of eligible members in accordance with these Rules and applicable legislation and shall hold office for a term of five years from the date of election.

The person holding office as General Secretary immediately before the adoption of Version 4 of these Rules shall continue in office as the incumbent General Secretary and shall not be required to seek reappointment merely because these revised Rules have been adopted. The commencement date of the incumbent General Secretary's current term shall be recorded in the Union's formal records, and any subsequent election shall take place within the period required by applicable legislation.

The General Secretary shall remain in office after the expiry of a term only for the limited period reasonably necessary to complete the election and handover to a duly elected successor.

The General Secretary shall have overall responsibility for the leadership, direction, management and administration of the Union, including the delivery of its objects, the management of staff and representatives, and ensuring that the Union carries out its role as a trade union.

The General Secretary shall be entitled to attend, speak and vote at any meeting of the Union, except where these Rules or applicable legislation require the General Secretary to withdraw because of a conflict of interest.

Anything required or authorised to be done by or to the General Secretary may, where the office is vacant or the General Secretary is unable to act, be done by or to the Deputy General Secretary or, if there is no Deputy General Secretary, by such person as the Executive Board may appoint on an interim basis.

Where the General Secretary resigns, dies, becomes legally disqualified, or is certified by a qualified medical practitioner as incapable of performing their duties for a period exceeding three months, the Executive Board may appoint an interim General Secretary pending an election conducted in accordance with these Rules.

The General Secretary may be paid such reasonable remuneration and expenses as the Union may determine for services actually rendered to the Union. No material reduction in the remuneration of the General Secretary during a current term of office shall take effect without the consent of the General Secretary, save where required by law, insolvency, or a general reduction applied equally to all paid officers or employees of the Union as part of a bona fide financial restructuring.

10. Eligibility and Election of the General Secretary

A candidate for General Secretary must:

Be a member of the Union in good standing for not less than twelve consecutive months before the close of nominations, or, where the Union has existed for less than twelve months, have been a member in good standing since its formation.

Have relevant experience in trade union representation, organising, governance, employment relations or another role which, in the reasonable opinion of the independent Returning Officer, demonstrates suitability to hold the office.

Not be disqualified from holding office under applicable legislation.

Subscribe to the Union's Code of Conduct and declare any actual or potential conflict of interest.

Be nominated by not fewer than five members in good standing. Where the Union has fewer than fifty members, nomination by two members in good standing shall be sufficient.

Compliance with the eligibility requirements shall be verified by the independent Returning Officer or scrutineer appointed for that election.

The General Secretary shall be elected by secret ballot of eligible members in accordance with Rule 16 and applicable legislation. Each candidate shall be given an equal opportunity to submit an election address. Where only one valid nomination is received, that candidate shall be declared elected unopposed where permitted by applicable legislation.

11. Deputy General Secretary

The Union shall have a Deputy General Secretary who shall support the General Secretary and perform such duties as may be assigned by the General Secretary or these Rules.

The Deputy General Secretary shall be elected by secret ballot of eligible members and shall hold office for a term of five years.

The Deputy General Secretary shall remain in office after the expiry of a term only for the limited period reasonably necessary to complete the election and handover to a duly elected successor.

Where the office of Deputy General Secretary becomes vacant, the Executive Board may appoint an interim Deputy General Secretary pending the next election. Any interim appointment shall not extend beyond the next scheduled election for that office.

12. Treasurer

The Union shall have a Treasurer who shall oversee the financial administration of the Union in accordance with these Rules and report to the Executive Board.

The Treasurer shall be elected by secret ballot of eligible members and shall hold office for a term of five years.

The Treasurer shall remain in office after the expiry of a term only for the limited period reasonably necessary to complete the election and handover to a duly elected successor.

Where the office of Treasurer becomes vacant, the Executive Board may appoint an interim Treasurer pending the next election. Any interim appointment shall not extend beyond the next scheduled election for that office.

13. Executive Board

The Executive Board shall comprise the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Treasurer, and such additional members as may be elected in accordance with these Rules.

All elected members of the Executive Board shall normally serve a term of five years and shall remain in office after the expiry of a term only for the limited period reasonably necessary to complete the election and handover to a duly elected successor.

During the initial establishment of the Union, existing founding appointments to the Executive Board may continue until the Union first holds elections for those positions. Such elections shall take place no later than the first Annual General Meeting following the Union being entered on the Certification Officer's list of trade unions, or such earlier date as the Executive Board determines.

Following the first elections held under these Rules, all additional voting Executive Board positions shall be filled by election in accordance with Rule 16. Where a casual vacancy arises, the Executive Board may appoint a temporary replacement until the next scheduled election for that position.

Candidates for Executive Board positions shall satisfy any reasonable eligibility and conflict of interest requirements published before nominations open, provided those requirements are consistent with these Rules and applicable legislation.

The Executive Board shall meet at least quarterly and more frequently where reasonably required.

No business shall be transacted at a meeting of the Executive Board unless at least three members of the Executive Board are present, one of whom must be the General Secretary or, in their absence, the Deputy General Secretary, except where the matter concerns either officer personally and they are required to withdraw.

The Executive Board shall oversee the governance and financial management of the Union. The General Secretary shall have overall responsibility for the day-to-day direction, management and administration of the Union, subject to these Rules and decisions properly made by the Executive Board or membership.

The Executive Board shall ensure that proper accounting records are kept and that financial statements are prepared and audited or independently examined for each financial year in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

The Executive Board shall support the Union in carrying out its objects and may authorise legal proceedings where necessary in the interests of the Union.

The Executive Board may continue to act notwithstanding any vacancy in its membership, provided the meeting remains quorate.

Members of the Executive Board may engage in other employment, consultancy or business activities, provided that any actual or potential conflict of interest is declared and appropriately managed and does not materially conflict with the interests or independence of the Union.

14. Trustees

All property belonging to the Union shall be vested in trustees in trust for the Union in accordance with applicable law.

Trustees shall be appointed by the Executive Board and their appointment shall be reported to the next Annual General Meeting. No person shall be appointed as a trustee where an actual or potential conflict of interest would materially compromise the interests or independence of the Union.

A trustee shall hold office until resignation, death, legal disqualification, removal by the Executive Board for proper cause, or replacement by a trustee duly appointed in accordance with these Rules.

15. Meetings

The Union shall hold an Annual General Meeting in each calendar year.

Not less than forty-two days' notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be given by the General Secretary.

Any member wishing to raise a matter for discussion at the Annual General Meeting shall notify the General Secretary in writing at least twenty-eight days before the meeting, providing sufficient information to allow the matter to be properly considered.

The General Secretary may accept matters received after that deadline where it is reasonable and in the interests of the Union to do so. The final agenda shall be issued to members before the meeting.

The quorum for an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting shall be five members or five per cent of the eligible membership, whichever is greater, subject to a maximum quorum requirement of twenty-five members. During the first twelve months following the adoption of Version 4, the minimum quorum shall be three members.

A Special General Meeting may be called by the Executive Board or on a written request signed by at least ten members or ten per cent of the eligible membership, whichever is lower, stating the business to be considered.

Meetings may be held in person, remotely or in hybrid form where the Union can reasonably verify attendance and voting eligibility.

16. Voting and Elections

Voting in Union elections shall be by secret ballot and shall be conducted in accordance with applicable legislation.

Every member in good standing who is entitled to vote under applicable legislation shall have one vote. No member shall be denied a statutory voting entitlement by reason only of length of membership.

Only members who meet the eligibility requirements set out in these Rules may stand for election to the Executive Board or any elected office.

Candidates must be nominated in accordance with the requirements for the relevant office. A serving office-holder may stand for re-election.

Each election shall be administered by an independent Returning Officer or scrutineer appointed by the Executive Board in accordance with applicable legislation. No candidate in an election may administer, determine or control the conduct of that election.

The independent Returning Officer or scrutineer shall determine and publish the election timetable, nomination procedure, method of voting, arrangements for candidate statements, counting process and declaration of result, consistently with these Rules and applicable legislation.

Candidates shall be given an equal opportunity to submit an election address or biography within the timetable set for the election.

Where only one valid nomination is received, that candidate shall be declared elected unopposed where permitted by applicable legislation.

A candidate must receive a majority of the valid votes cast to be elected. Where no candidate receives a majority and more than two candidates stand, a further ballot may be held between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

In the event of an equality of votes between the remaining candidates, a further ballot shall be held. No officer shall have a casting vote in an election.

Proxy voting shall not be permitted in a secret ballot election unless expressly required or permitted by applicable legislation and administered in a manner consistent with that legislation.

The declared result shall take effect subject to any internal election challenge procedure and any statutory right to make a complaint or application to the Certification Officer or other competent authority.

Election records shall be retained for any period required by applicable legislation or, where no specific period applies, for at least twelve months after the declaration of the result.

17. Discipline, Removal and Appeals

Any member, representative, officer or Executive Board member may be subject to disciplinary action for serious misconduct, breach of these Rules, fraud, dishonesty, discriminatory conduct, conduct bringing the Union into serious disrepute, or conduct materially adverse to the legitimate interests of the Union.

A person subject to disciplinary proceedings shall be informed in writing of the allegation, the material facts relied upon and the potential consequences, and shall be given reasonable notice of any disciplinary hearing.

The person shall be given a reasonable opportunity to see and respond to the evidence relied upon, to provide their own evidence and representations, and to be accompanied or represented by a person of their choice who is willing and able to act, subject to reasonable procedural requirements.

Any disciplinary matter shall be investigated fairly and proportionately by a person who, so far as reasonably practicable, has had no material prior involvement in the matter.

A disciplinary hearing shall be conducted by a Hearing Manager or panel appointed by the Executive Board, provided that the decision-maker has not been directly involved in the matter under consideration and has no material conflict of interest.

The Hearing Manager or panel may determine one of the following outcomes: no further action, formal warning, final warning, suspension for a specified period, expulsion from membership, or removal from office where permitted by these Rules and applicable legislation.

The decision and reasons shall be provided in writing.

The General Secretary may only be removed from office during a current term by resignation, death, legal disqualification, certified incapacity, serious misconduct established under this Rule, or by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of eligible members voting in a secret ballot convened specifically for that purpose, subject always to applicable legislation.

Any person subject to disciplinary action shall have the right to appeal in writing within twenty-one calendar days of receipt of the written decision.

Any appeal shall be heard by a different person or panel with no prior material involvement in the matter. Where an appeal concerns the General Secretary, the appeal panel shall be appointed by the Executive Board without the participation of the General Secretary and shall include an independent person where reasonably practicable.

The outcome of any internal appeal shall be final within the Union, without prejudice to any statutory right of complaint or application to the Certification Officer, a court or other competent authority.

Nothing in this Rule prevents the General Secretary, or where the matter concerns the General Secretary the Executive Board, from imposing a temporary precautionary suspension where reasonably necessary to protect the interests of the Union pending the outcome of a full process. A precautionary suspension is not a disciplinary sanction and shall be reviewed periodically.

18. Member Complaints and Grievances

A member may raise a complaint or grievance concerning the administration of the Union, treatment by an officer or representative, an alleged failure to follow these Rules, discrimination, the provision of Union services, or another matter materially affecting their rights as a member.

A complaint should normally be made in writing and should identify the issue, relevant facts and the outcome sought. The Union shall acknowledge and consider the complaint within a reasonable period.

The complaint shall be considered by a person who has no material conflict of interest and, so far as reasonably practicable, no prior involvement in the matter.

The member shall receive a written outcome with reasons and may appeal within twenty-one calendar days of receipt of that outcome.

An appeal shall be considered by a different person or panel. Where the complaint concerns the General Secretary, the Executive Board shall appoint an independent person or panel to determine the complaint or appeal without the participation of the General Secretary.

Nothing in this Rule limits any statutory right available to a member.

19. Legal Assistance

The Union may provide legal advice, assistance or representation to members on such terms and subject to such conditions as the Union may determine.

Legal assistance shall not be available to members until they have completed six months' continuous membership and are not in arrears with subscriptions.

The provision of legal assistance shall be at the discretion of the General Secretary, who shall take into account the merits of the matter, the interests of the Union, available resources and any other relevant considerations.

Legal support will only be provided where the General Secretary considers that the merits of the case and the interests of the Union warrant it.

A decision not to provide legal assistance does not affect any separate right a member may have under these Rules to representation or advice which does not involve legal expenditure.

20. Finance, Accounts and Audit

All monies of the Union shall be paid into accounts in the name of the Union.

Proper accounting records shall be kept and retained in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Financial statements shall be prepared for each financial year and presented to the Executive Board and membership as required by law.

The Union shall appoint an auditor or auditors, or arrange an independent examination where lawfully permitted, in accordance with applicable legislation. Where an auditor is required, the auditor shall be qualified and independent as required by law.

The auditor shall normally be appointed by the members at the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Board may appoint an auditor to fill a casual vacancy until the next Annual General Meeting.

The removal, resignation or replacement of an auditor shall be dealt with in accordance with applicable legislation and any required member approval.

Payments out of Union funds shall be authorised in accordance with financial controls approved by the Executive Board. No single officer shall have unrestricted authority to make material payments to themselves.

Union funds shall be applied solely in furtherance of the objects of the Union, except for proper remuneration, expenses, legal costs and other lawful payments made in accordance with these Rules.

The Executive Board shall take reasonable steps to maintain the financial independence and sustainability of the Union and shall not accept financial or material support from an employer where that support would permit or create a material risk of employer control or interference.

21. Expenses

The Union may reimburse reasonable expenses incurred on authorised Union business, subject to requirements and limits approved by the Executive Board from time to time.

Claims for reimbursement must be properly evidenced and submitted within such time as the Union may reasonably require.

No officer shall approve their own material expense claim. Such claims shall be approved by another authorised officer or by the Executive Board in accordance with the Union's financial controls.

22. Alteration of Rules

These Rules may be amended by a resolution approved by a majority of eligible members voting at a duly convened Annual General Meeting, Special General Meeting, or ballot of the membership, provided that proper notice of the proposed amendment has been given in advance.

The Executive Board may propose amendments but shall not itself make substantive amendments to these Rules without member approval.

Where an amendment is strictly necessary to comply with a change in applicable legislation or a binding legal requirement, the Executive Board may make the minimum temporary amendment necessary for compliance. Any such amendment shall be notified promptly to members and submitted for ratification at the next Annual General Meeting, Special General Meeting or membership ballot.

23. Dissolution

The Executive Board may recommend the dissolution of the Union, but the Union may only be dissolved following a secret ballot of eligible members in which not less than two-thirds of the valid votes cast are in favour of dissolution, subject to any additional requirement imposed by applicable law.

If, upon dissolution of the Union, any property or funds remain after satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, such property or funds shall be transferred to such organisation or organisations with similar objects, or to such charity or charities, as the Executive Board may determine consistently with any resolution of the membership and applicable law.

24. Notices

Any notice required to be given under these Rules may be given by post, email, electronic communication, publication on the Union's website, or by any other reasonable method the Union considers appropriate, subject to any particular method required by law.

A notice shall be treated as given when sent or published by the Union using the relevant method, unless applicable legislation requires otherwise.

25. General

If any provision of these Rules is found to be unlawful or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

These Rules shall be read and applied in accordance with applicable law governing trade unions in the United Kingdom.

Where these Rules conflict with a mandatory statutory requirement, the statutory requirement shall prevail and the Union shall take reasonable steps to amend these Rules accordingly.