Unite LE111 Branch

Branch Lay Representation

Introduction

Branch lay representation serves a threefold purpose:

- an alternative source of representation for cases where the workplace rep is unable to take on the case for any reason;
- a vital service to members in workplaces where we have no workplace representatives; and
- providing a link to members, and raising our profile within unorganised workplaces.

As such, it is important that the branch administers and supports lay representation effectively.

Acceptance of Cases

On the basis of the above, in order to receive support from a lay representative, either the workplace representative must be unable to take on the case, or the member must be in a workplace without a representative. Exceptions to these criteria can be considered by the Branch Committee.

Our Objectives

These proposals are intended to:

- improve the level of support for those undertaking lay representation;
- guarantee minimum standards of representation for members;
- create a cycle of continuous learning from cases; and
- ensure that where representation creates opportunities for organisation and union building, these are fully exploited.

Proposals

Our proposal is to meet these objectives through the following:

1. **Recruitment** When a member offers their services as a lay representative, there will be a discussion between the member, a branch officer and the Regional Industrial Organiser (RIO) to establish the member's existing levels of skills and experience and the training and support their needs.

2. **Training** If the outcome of the discussion is that the member has the capacity to undertake lay representation, the member will be booked onto the appropriate formal Unite training. Members cannot normally qualify as branch lay representatives until

they have completed this training. However, the Branch Committee may agree on an exceptional basis that such training is not needed.

3. **Induction** Newly accredited lay representatives will be shadowed by a more experienced lay representative until such time as the branch is confident that the new representative is able to manage the case.

4. **Assignment of cases** When a request for representation is received, and meets one of the criteria set out in 2 above, it will be circulated to the pool of certified lay representatives by one of the branch officers or the RIO and assigned to the first representative able to take it on.

5. **Ongoing Support and Learning** The branch will convene regular lay representative groups with the frequency determined by the number and nature of cases across the branch. All those engaged in lay representation will be welcome at the meetings, regardless of whether they have any cases in hand. The meetings will allow lay reps to:
   - report on progress;
   - discuss the best means of managing their cases;
   - learn from each other;
   - identify whether any specialist training is needed so that this can be arranged by branch officers; and
   - identify any other follow up work that the branch may need to undertake, for example recruitment campaigns and publicity.

6. **Expenses** Travel, carer, and if necessary accommodation costs will be paid to lay reps for the time that they are engaged in lay representation. In addition to these expenses, a flat daily rate set annually by the branch will be paid to cover lunch and incidental expenditure such as stationary etc.

7. **Reporting by reps** Lay representatives will need to notify the Branch Secretary:

   - when they take up a case;
   - on the conclusion of the case; and
   - on the outcome of the case.

8. **Reporting to the branch** The Branch Secretary will report monthly to the branch on the number and status of branch lay represented cases, and any issues arising out of the reps meetings, including further training requirements and branch building follow up work.

The protocol was agreed by the branch meeting on: 14 August 2012