

1) **Name.** The name of the party shall be [Left Unity].

2) **Aims** The aims of [Left Unity] are:

a) to unite the diverse strands of socialist politics in Britain, bringing together members of trade unions and other workers' organisations; individuals and communities facing discrimination because of gender, ethnicity, age, disability or sexuality; environmental and green campaigners; campaigners for peace, democracy and civil rights and all those who seek to give an authentic voice to, and represent, the interests of working people.

b) to introduce fundamental changes in British society based on our belief in the need for democracy, cooperation and common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. We aim to rebuild society on the basis of universal human rights, internationalism and peace in order to achieve social, political and economic equality for all. We aim to develop a democratically planned economy that is environmentally sustainable, within which all enterprises operate in ways that serve the needs of working people and an inclusive welfare state which meets the needs of all and within which each contributes according to their ability.

c) Above all to promote grass roots democracy, in the understanding that fundamental and radical change can only come with the support and active involvement of the majority of working people.

3) **Membership.**

a) Membership of [Left Unity] shall be open to any individual without regards to disability, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation who:

- i. commits to further the aims of [Left Unity]
- ii. abides by the democratically decided rules and constitution of [Left Unity]
- iii. pays any membership subscription agreed by National Conference
- iv. supports [Left Unity] candidates in elections

b) There shall be two types of membership of [Left Unity]:

i. Individual membership as set out in (3a).

ii. **Affiliated membership.** Bona fide Trade Union bodies, including union branches and district, regional or national level trade union organisations, may affiliate to the party subject to the approval of National Conference or the National Council. National Conference shall from time to time determine the appropriate levels of subscriptions for affiliated unions and the number of delegates they may send to relevant party bodies, save only that all delegates must be individual party members and no delegate shall have more than one vote in any circumstances.

4) **Structure and general principles**

a) The structure of [Left Unity] is based on the principles of transparency, openness and participative democracy:

i. The minutes of all meetings of branches, regional and national committees or other party bodies will be published and made available to members in a timely manner and in accessible forms.

ii. No member may hold a nationally elected post within the party for more than three consecutive years, following which s/he may not stand for election to that post for two years.

- iii. All party bodies have the right to recall the elected officers and spokespersons accountable to them.
- iv. As part of our overall commitment to gender equality, at least 50% of those elected to regional and national committees should be women.
- v. We seek to build a broad, pluralist and inclusive party. It is important that all members and affiliates participate within the party in this positive manner.
- vi. We are opposed to racism, sexism, sectarianism, homophobia and all forms of discrimination. Members should reflect this in their language and behaviour.

## 5) Individual members

All members have the following opportunities to participate in decision making in [Left Unity]:

- a. as a member of a branch that can propose resolutions to regional bodies, National Conference, National Council and national committees,
- b. through attending and participating in regional and National Conferences,
- c. through electing representatives from their branch to regional bodies, National Council and National Conference,
- d. through standing for election to regional and national committees or to regional and national elected posts,
- e. through participation in on-line forums and consultative exercises in e-democracy organised to involve those who cannot attend National Conferences in person,
- f. through joining together with like-minded individual members in Networks and Platforms to propose motions to regional and national bodies and nominate individuals for elected individual positions at a national level.

## 6) Branches

- a. Branches are the basic unit of the party and bring together members of [Left Unity], ideally along constituency and ward lines. Branch members, in liaison with their Regional Council, can agree to merge their branch with others or to subdivide their branch to create new branches.
- b. Individual members will normally be part of the branch based on the geographical area in which they live. In some cases however, an individual member may find it more appropriate to be part of a branch based on where s/he works or studies – but this should be agreed with the branch covering the area where the member lives and that which s/he wishes to join.
- c. Branches should meet at least monthly.
- d. Branches will organise an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which a Chairperson, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and any other positions agreed by the branch to be necessary shall be elected. Vacant positions, or positions created to meet a newly identified need, may be filled by election at an ordinary branch meeting if members have been given proper notice.
- e. Members should be informed of all branch meetings and activities. Members should receive at least two weeks notice of the branch AGM, candidate selection meetings and any other branch meetings at which elections are to take place (such as the selection of the National Conference delegation).

## **7) Networks and Political platforms**

Members of [Left Unity] have the right to form and organise in Political Platforms and in Networks.

### **a) Networks**

- i. Networks can be established to encourage the self-organisation of party members who suffer from specific discrimination and to enable them to organise collectively in campaigns against oppression and take a lead in the party on these issues.
- ii. Networks can also be set up to bring together party members who have distinct interests and/or who are interested in campaigning on a specific issue. Such sections can help to bring together members who are active in campaigns in order to intervene more effectively, co-ordinate activity, promote the party's policies and feed- back experience into the party.
- iii. Networks should submit their constitutions to the National Council (or Regional Council if regionally based) for approval prior to their formal launch. These should state who is eligible to join the network, the activities it intends to undertake and how the internal democracy of the network will operate. Networks are encouraged to submit written reports to National Council/Regional Council on their activity at least twice a year.
- iv. Each Network representing an oppressed group as defined in 7a(i) has the right to send one delegate to the National Council. Regional Networks representing oppressed groups have the right to send one delegate to Regional Council.

### **b) Platforms**

- i. Members have the right to organise in Platforms. As a pluralist party, we recognise that a range of political points of view is a necessary and healthy source of debate and new ideas.
- ii. All Platforms should be open – their meetings, aims and objectives should be brought to the attention of the National Council and should be available to all other party members.
- iii. Platforms have a right to be heard, to organise meetings, to produce literature, to distribute materials at [Left Unity] meetings and, in general, to try to influence and/or change party policy.
- iv. Platforms/Tendencies are not expected, however, to organise public campaigns against the overall aims or policy of the party.

## **8) English Regional, Scottish and Welsh structures**

- a. National committees will be created for Scotland and Wales, comprised of elected representatives of the branches in those nations.
- b. In England, regional committees of representatives from branches will be organised for the following English regions London, South East, North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, Eastern , South West. Each local group will be entitled to send two delegates with speaking and voting rights and as many observers as wish to attend. Regional affiliates and the party's youth and student sections organised in each region shall be entitled to send delegates on such basis as shall be determined from time to time by National Conference.
- c. The role of English regional, Welsh and Scottish committees will be co-ordinating and prioritising campaigning and organisational activities, assisting in the creation and building of branches and encouraging political education.

## **9 National Conference**

- a. National Conference is the sovereign body of the party. Each National Conference should take place within 13 months of the previous annual conference. Between times, however, the National Council shall conduct the party's affairs, with the elected Executive Committee and Regional Committees supporting it.
- b. The National Council may call a Special National Conference on a vote of 2/3 present and voting, or if, over a three month period, 25% of branches pass a resolution, or 25% of the membership sign a petition, calling for one.
- c. Conference is organised on a delegate basis from branches, with one delegate for every ten branch members or part thereof, or such a proportion of branch membership as shall be decided from time to time by Conference. Delegates should be elected by single transferable vote. Branches are not entitled to mandate delegates to National Conference.
- d. The number of delegates affiliated unions can send to National Conference and the basis on which that number is calculated shall be determined from time to time by Conference, save only that all delegates must be individual party members and no delegate shall have more than one vote in any circumstances.
- e. The party's national youth and student sections shall be entitled to send delegates to National Conference on a basis that shall be determined from time to time by Conference.
- f. Individual party members are entitled to attend National Conference as visitors. Party visitors can participate in debates but will not have voting rights.
- g. All party bodies and any group of at least 20 individual members may submit motions to National Conference.
- h. National Council may submit the proposals of sub-committees, working parties or standing committees, as amended by National Council, to National Conference in the form of motions.
- i. Sub-committees or working parties established by conference motion may be charged to submit proposals directly to National Conference.
- j. National Networks may send one motion and one amendment to National Conference.
- k. Each National Conference shall elect a Conference Arrangements Committee, which shall consist of six elected members plus the National Secretary. The Committee will be responsible for all aspects of the organisation of the next National Conference except the organisation and timing of its agenda, which is the responsibility of the Standing orders Committee.

## **10 Standing Committees**

- a. National Conference may establish standing committees to oversee specific areas of the party's work. Standing committees provide an opportunity for as broad a range of party members as possible to contribute to the development of party policy and campaigning initiatives. Standing Committees should meet at least 3 times per year.
- b. Between Conferences, standing committees shall be accountable to the National Committee, which will have the right to endorse, amend or reject the proposals of standing committees. Standing committees should provide regular reports outlining their work and proposals for action. The minutes of all meetings of standing committees should be forwarded to the national Executive Committee for information.

- c. Members of standing committees will be nominated by branches and directly elected by national ballot.

## **11 Standing Orders Committee, Disputes Committee and Appeals Committee**

- a) A Standing Orders Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee will consist of six people, but shall not include members of the National Committee or national officers.
  - i. It shall be responsible for the timing and running of the National Conference agenda, including sending out a prioritised motion or resolution ballot forms to each branch and facilitating the compositing of motions where appropriate.
  - ii. The Standing Orders Committee will produce and maintain a set of Standing Orders for conducting the business of National Conference that may be amended from time to time by National Conference.
  - iii. Between National Conferences, the Standing Orders Committee shall be the final authority on the interpretation and application of the party's constitution and procedures.
- b) A Disputes Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee will consist of six people, but shall include no members of the National Committee or national officers. Its role will be to investigate disputes and complaints about the behaviour of individual party members referred to it by Regional Councils or the Executive Committee, who will be expected to have endeavoured to resolve the specific disputes or complaints before referring them on. The Disputes Committee may form a sub committee of at least 3 members to consider any one case.
- c) A Regional Council or the Executive Committee may refuse anyone membership (or decide an existing member no longer meets the criteria for membership listed in 3a) or take other disciplinary action against an individual member. Such action may only be taken as a result of an investigation and recommendation from, the Disputes Committee, which must be explained in writing to the member (or potential member) concerned with copies to the Appeals Committee. The individual concerned then has the right to appeal in the first instance to the Appeals Committee, then to National Council, then National Conference.
- d) If an individual member, or group of members, have a complaint against another member, the first recourse should be to the relevant branch, which should attempt to resolve the issue. Should a branch fail to resolve the issue or consider disciplinary action necessary, it should refer the matter in writing to the Regional Council for consideration.
- d) The Disputes Committee shall adopt its own Procedures and Standing orders, subject to approval and amendment from time to time by National Conference.
- e) An Appeals Committee shall be elected annually by national ballot. This committee will consist of six people, but shall include no members of the National Committee or national officers. The Appeals Committee may form a sub committee of at least 3 members to consider any one case.
- f) The Appeals Committee shall adopt its own Procedures and Standing orders, subject to approval and amendment from time to time by National Conference.

## **12 National Council**

- 12.1 National Council is responsible for implementing party policy between National Conferences and for monitoring the work of the Executive Committee, standing committees, sub committees and working parties. It is the body that takes stock, learns lessons and readjusts strategy where necessary between conferences as well as implementing policy agreed at National Conference.
- 12.2 a) The National Council will consist of the Executive Committee, branch delegates, national network

delegates, and such delegates from the party's youth and student groups and trade union affiliates as National Conference may from time to time determine. National Council will aim to meet every three months, but shall meet at least every four months.

- b) Branches should each elect one delegate, or such a proportion of branch membership as may be determined from time to time by National Council.
- c) All national Networks shall have the right to send one delegate to National Council.
- d) All national officers and national spokespersons who are not delegates to National Council are encouraged to attend and participate as observers.

12.3 All party bodies shall have the right to send motions and amendments to National Council.

12.4 The National Council may establish sub-committees and working parties as necessary to look in detail at specific areas of policy development, to develop campaign proposals and to organise events. Sub-committees and working parties do not have to consist of delegates to National Council, but are accountable to it. Sub-committees and working parties should report to the Executive Committee and National Council. The minutes of sub-committee and working group meetings should be forwarded to the national Executive Committee and National Council for information.

12.5 The National Council has the right to call a Special Conference if it considers this to be necessary.

12.6 All members of the party are entitled to attend National Council meetings as observers.

12.7 The National Council shall adopt its own standing orders, subject to approval by National Conference.

### **13 Executive Committee**

13.1 The Executive Committee is responsible for the day to day running of the party. The Executive Committee is accountable for all its actions to National Council and National Conference.

13.2 a) The Executive Committee shall consist of the National Secretary, National Co-Chairs, National Treasurer, National Trade Union Co-ordinator and 12 members directly elected at National Conference.

b) To ensure gender balance for the directly elected positions National Conference will elect six women and six men by STV.

c) If no member of the Executive Committee is a member of a branch in one of the party's eleven regions/national sections, the candidate from that region/national section with the highest number of votes in the election for directly-elected places will serve as an additional member of the Executive Committee.

d) The Minutes Secretary and the Press and Publicity Co-ordinator shall attend Executive Committee meetings ex officio. The relevant national officers, spokespersons and committee members are entitled to take part in discussions of the Executive Committee related to their field of responsibility. All members of the party are entitled to attend Executive Committee meetings as observers.

13.3 a) The National Secretary and National Co-Chairs will draw up the agenda for each National Council meeting in liaison with the Executive Committee.

b) The Executive Committee should refer all major decisions to National Council. This does not preclude the Executive Committee reaching interim decisions on urgent matters and seeking the ratification of National Council at the earliest opportunity.

- c) Minutes of Executive Committee meetings should be tabled at National Council meetings.
- 13.4 The Executive Committee should meet at least monthly.
- 13.5 The Executive Committee shall produce its own Standing Orders, subject to approval by National Council.
- 13.6 The Executive Committee shall oversee expense payments and wages to members who are regular volunteers and staff.
- 13.7 All heritable and moveable property of the party shall be vested in Trustees so authorised by the Executive Committee, (“the Trustees”) representing and acting for the whole of the members of the party. No personal liability shall attach to any Trustee except to the extent of such funds of the party as may be actually received by him or her.
- 13.8 The Executive Committee shall have power to authorise the Trustees and the Trustees, when so authorised, may a) hold, purchase or take on lease any land or buildings, sell, exchange, borrow on security of, lease or build upon the land and alter and pull down buildings and again rebuild; and b) grant security over the heritable property of the party and obtain advances of money for the purposes of the party and upon such terms as to interest and repayment of principal as the the committee may determine.

#### **14 National Officers and Spokespersons**

- 14.1 National Officers will be elected annually by national ballot. National Officers will be responsible for processing the decisions of National/Special Conferences and National Council. National Officers will be as follows, or as may be determined from time to time by National Conference:
- **National Secretary**; responsible for preparation of agendas, dealing with external correspondence & communications, liaising with regional councils, reporting to the Executive Committee and the National Council on progress etc. The National Secretary shall be the Party’s designated Data Protection Officer.
  - **Two National Co-Chairs** (one man and one woman); responsible for presiding over Executive Committee Meetings, National Council meetings, conferences etc., liaising with the Secretary over agendas for meetings etc., and acting as national spokespersons for the party.
  - **National Treasurer**; responsible for keeping details of party income and expenditure, preparation of quarterly financial reports to be sent to all National Council members and Branch Secretaries, and presentation of audited accounts to National Conference and the Electoral Commission, fundraising etc.
  - **National Trade Union Co-ordinator**; responsible for organising groups of party members in each trade union in order to co-ordinate their activities and promote the party’s trade union strategy.
  - **Nominating Officer/Elections Co-ordinator**; responsible for drawing up and implementing procedures for the democratic selection of party candidates for public office, and for the overall co-ordination of national election campaigns. For the technical purpose of registration with the Electoral Commission only, this post holder will be designated party leader.
  - **National Press & Publicity Co-ordinator.**
  - **International Co-ordinator.**
- 14.2 The National Conference/Council may elect members as Party Spokespersons to communicate with the media on specific topics. The Executive Committee can appoint Spokespersons between National Council meetings but the appointment can only be until the appointment is ratified or not by the next National Council meeting.

#### **15 Youth and Student groups**

Subject to the approval of National Conference, [Left Unity] shall establish youth and student groups in local constituencies, in schools and in colleges and universities. Membership of the party’s youth section shall be open to all members under the age of 26 and of its student section to all members who are full time students

in any educational establishment. Members of local youth and student groups shall establish their own national sections and determine their own Standing Orders, subject to approval by National Conference.

## **16 Accountability of internal representatives**

The following safeguards to ensure transparency and accountability will apply to all members of the NCC (and other national bodies):

- a. Any member of [Left Unity] has the right to observe meetings of any national committee or sub-committee/working group but shall not have speaking rights (unless agreed by the meeting) or voting rights. The dates and agendas of all meetings will therefore be made available in good time prior to any meetings.
- b. All minutes of national committees and working groups will be published in a timely manner, normally within a week.
- c. If 25% of branches or 3 Regional/National Committees request the recall of a national officer, a directly elected member of the Executive Committee, a member of National Council or a member of a standing committee or subcommittee, the member concerned shall step down and the National Council/Executive Committee shall organise a new election. The previous incumbent may appeal to National Conference and/or stand again if s/he so wishes.
- d. A national officer, national spokesperson or directly elected Executive Committee member may be recalled by the National Council. A recalled member has the right of appeal to National Conference.
- e. Regional officers can be recalled at a special aggregate meeting of all members in the region. A meeting to recall a regional officer must be called if requested in motions submitted by 25% of branches in the region in the course of a three month period.
- f. Branch officers and delegates can be recalled at a branch meeting specially called for the purpose (branch members must receive two weeks notice).

## **17 Accountability and conduct of members elected to external bodies and public office**

- a) All [Left Unity] members elected to positions on any external body will adhere strictly to the nationally agreed policies, priorities and principles of the party. Failure to abide by these principles and rules, or to engage in any behaviour which brings the Party into disrepute, will incur disciplinary action (subject to the party's disciplinary procedures).
- b) Members standing as official party candidates for public office will be expected to sign an undertaking agreeing to abide by the following code of conduct:
  - i. In cases where an elected position on a public body is carried out on a full time basis, [Left Unity] members will only draw a maximum of the median national wage, or such other proportion of average earnings as may be determined from time to time by National Conference, – donating the surplus to [Left Unity]. Where an elected position is a full time job [Left Unity] members will take on no other regular paid employment.
  - ii. Members elected to public office will publish details of all their expenses and how those expenses have been spent, and publish details of any outside activities for which they have received payment.
  - iii. Members elected to public office will participate in non-violent direct action campaigns and activities in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the party on the same basis as any other party member.
  - iv. No [Left Unity] member will continue in any single elected public office for more than two full terms, or such other period as shall be determined from time to time by National Conference.
  - v. No [Left Unity] member may stand as an official '[Left Unity] Candidate' without undergoing a democratic selection process at local, regional, or national levels, as determined from time to time by National Conference and supervised by the national Nominating Officer/Elections Co-ordinator.



- vi. All [Left Unity] members serving in elected positions shall provide regular report backs at the agreed appropriate, local, regional, or national level.
- vii. Party members standing for public office will be expected to resign their elected office immediately if they cease to be party members during their term of office.
- viii. People already in place in elected positions will only be allowed to join the Party on the explicit understanding that they will abide by the nationally agreed policies, priorities , tactics and principles, and Code Of Conduct, of [Left Unity].

## **18 Finance.**

- a) The following general principles regarding finance will apply:
  - i. All monies received by or on behalf of [Left Unity] shall be applied to further the aims of [Left Unity] and for no other purpose.
  - ii. Any bank accounts opened for a party accounting unit will be in the name of that accounting unit.
  - iii. Any cheques issued by a party accounting unit shall be signed by the Treasurer of that accounting unit and another authorised signatory.
  - iv. Notwithstanding any requirement by the Electoral Commission or other external authority for an independent external audit, the party's accounts will be independently audited, in conjunction with any finance standing committee National Conference may establish from time to time.
  - v. [Left Unity] may pay reasonable out of pocket expenses including travel, childcare and meal costs to members of national committees in order to assist them to attend. The payments must be recorded and paid on presentation of receipts that justify the expense.
- b) The following principles regarding **subscriptions** will apply:
  - i. No-one will be excluded through lack of money - subscriptions will be set at levels that will enable all members to participate in activities.
  - ii. Subscriptions will be fair and equitable.
  - iii. Any member who is more than six months in arrears, without contacting his/her Branch Treasurer, will be deemed to have resigned.
- c) Membership subscriptions will be determined from time to time by National Conference.
- d) Subscription income shall be divided between the national the regional organisations and local branches in such proportion as shall be determined from time to time by National Conference.

## **19 Alterations to the Constitution.**

Any changes to this Constitution must be proposed to a National Conference by the National Council, branches or in a motion signed by no less than 20 members. Any change must be agreed by at least two-thirds of those members present and voting. The proposed changes must be made public and included in the notice posted announcing the Conference in good time to allow proper consultation.