

No. 230/25

24th October 2025

TO: ALL BRANCHES

Dear Colleagues,

BRANCH BALLOT PROCEDURES

Branches will be aware that when requested, CWU HQ has conducted ballots for Branch elections. Over the past few years an increasing number of Branches have used this option where they have required an election(s) to be held following the close of the nominations for a particular position(s).

There are still however a significant number of Branches who conduct their own elections. Although most are experienced in the processes involved, given the number of new Branch Officials, it is important to ensure updated guidelines for ballot procedures are reissued to Branches. This is especially relevant as we near the time when elections will be held and ballots required.

Branch Committees are responsible for agreeing and ensuring the publication of their own ballot timetables and regulations, but there is a need for clarification to be provided for certain elements of the balloting procedure.

The previous guidance has therefore been amended and updated to ensure there is clarity around particular matters, with the attached guidelines for Branch balloting procedures being endorsed at the meeting of the NEC on 22/23 October 2025.

Branches should ensure these are brought to the attention of members of the Branch Committee and adopted as elections are held in the future.

Any enquiries should be addressed to dwilshire@cwu.org or on 0208 971 7368

Tony Kearns
Senior Deputy General Secretary



Branch Ballot
Procedures Septem

Branch Ballot Procedures

The NEC have agreed the following mandatory guidelines for Branches to include when finalising regulations and guidance for ballots. **All ballots conducted in the future must adhere to the following guidelines:**

Branches are required to publish to members the procedures and guidelines that have been endorsed by the Branch Committee, including those to be balloted, prior to any elections taking place

1. Ballots for elections held within a branch can take place, by a ballot box in the Workplace, by Individual Member Ballot or be held electronically. The actual method is to be specified in the branch rules. Elections and ballots for Branch Officers must however be conducted on an individual member basis.
2. Where ballots take place in the workplace or by individual member ballot, all ballot papers must be numbered.
3. Branches should clearly differentiate ballot papers for different elections. The election being held must be clearly identified on the ballot paper together with the candidates involved. Different colour ballot papers can also be used if necessary.
4. A Returning Officer must be appointed by the Branch Committee and must not be a candidate in any election.
5. The Branch Committee should agree and publish to the members in advance of an election the opening and closing dates for nominations. Additionally, the closing date for the submission of biographical details and an election address must be advertised as well as the maximum number of words for each namely 100 for biographical details and 300 words for an election address. A ballot timetable must also be published once known. Changes to the timetable should be avoided unless there are exceptional circumstances.
6. Branches should ensure that if a workplace ballot takes place that the ballot boxes are locked and placed in a secure location where they cannot be tampered with.
7. Branches should invite Candidates to observe the counting of the vote, where this is practical.
8. Branches should ensure that the data files they are using for a particular ballot are accurate. For ballots being conducted on their own by a Branch a cut-off date for the membership to be included in the ballot should be published with the Branch guidelines.
9. Where a Branch is conducting a ballot, they should retain ballot papers for six months after the election(s) has concluded in case of complaints.

10. Branches should ensure that accurate ballot notices for elections are circulated in advance to all the workplaces covered by the election(s) and placed in visible locations within these units.
11. The services of CWU Headquarters can be utilised by branches to run Branch Ballots, with consequential changes to these regulations regarding Returning Officers and Candidates observing the count. In such cases the Branch will meet the cost of conducting the election.
12. Ahead of an election and as part of the guidelines Branches should publish the relevant part of their Branch rules in relation to candidate canvassing.
13. Once an election has concluded Branches should inform the candidates of the result and then publish the result to the relevant members.