

TUO 24/2024

Branch Development Guidance for Branches and Link Officers & Officials

This is a tool to enable Branches/Section together with their Link Officers & Officials to discuss how it is going in your areas and what can/needs to be done to help out current activists/ reps and to grow and make our union stronger overall.

Some questions below may help your thinking but are not compulsory.

Ideas for questions:

Part 1:

- Do the branch/section (and exec) have meetings on a regular basis?
- How many reps does the branch/section have that does individual representations? And how many H&S reps does the branch/section have?
- How does the number of the above two types of reps compares to branch membership and what is the ratio or what would be the preferred ratio?
- Are most 'essential' exec roles filled, ie. Branch Chair, Vice-Chair, Membership Secretary, NEC Rep, Repping rep, H&S Rep, EROs.

Part 2:

- Does the branch/section exec get comms out to members on a regular basis?
- Do the NEC reps communicate with and are involved with the Exec or report back at branch meetings?
- Does the branch have a recruitment plan / are they undertaking recruitment activity - with focus on PQIP induction events in particular?
- Is the branch/section actively looking to get new members / active members into becoming reps?

On the next page you can find a plan for branches to work through to support with recruitment.

Discussions to be had and, as per questions Section 2 above, also gives an indication as well as some handy tips:

Questions	Tips	Actions for the branch
<p><i>How do you meet new starters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the branch invited to new starter events for all staff? For PQiPs? • Do you have members in offices who will approach new staff about joining the union? Do they need support with this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request all dates for set meetings from the employer • Can you cover these in the branch? • Are some of these events regional, could they be shared with other branches? • Have you let your link Officer and Official know? • Have you got copies of the recruitment PowerPoint? • Are you confident talking about general trade union wins through history (however big or small) and also the benefits that Napo brings for members? 	
<p><i>Are you visible in workplaces? Do you know all the workplaces in your branch? Do they all have a Napo noticeboard? Do you have a member there who is happy to update the notice board?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence Management Offices • Admin Hubs • Courts • APs • Prisons • Regional Head Office • Cafcass Offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request notice boards if these aren't already in place at local engagement meetings or for probation branches via PDU heads for example. • We will regularly send details to branches with updated posters that can be downloaded at https://www.napo.org.uk/organising-recruitment • Do a branch mapping exercise to see which members work where. More information about how to do a mapping exercise – can be found in the Organising Guide (page 2) at our Napo website at: https://www.napo.org.uk/organising-recruitment 	
<p><i>Are your branch meetings advertised in advance? Via email?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise branch meetings for the whole year. Advice on setting branch meetings is in a separate schedule below. 	

<p><i>Posters on noticeboards?</i></p> <p>Additional questions to consider:</p> <p><i>Is there time in branch/section meetings for members to raise issues as well as hear from Napo?</i></p> <p><i>Do you ask for feedback from members regularly and before engagement meetings with management?</i></p>	<p>Link in with Napo HQ on notice boards leaflets.</p> <p>Additionally again also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you got an interesting speaker attending perhaps that other branches also may find interesting and to share details of speakers around via your Link Officer and Official. 	
<p><i>Have you got recruitment materials?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember to give plenty of time for the materials to get to you and if you have an event where you think you'll need extra materials give Annoesjka plenty of notice, please email avalent@napo.org.uk 	

Organising Branch Meetings – a potential schedule for dates

We know that some branches struggle to arrange regular branch meetings, but it can be really helpful to have all the branch meetings scheduled for the year so members can have them in diaries.

We suggest the annual Napo Calendar is used as a basis to support this and which can also be found at <https://www.napo.org.uk/organising-recruitment>; realising there are other meetings that might also influence when to have branch meetings. You might want to consider when you're engaging with managers, for Cafcass this may be partnership meetings, for PBNi this may be planned meetings with management and in Probation England and Wales this could be meetings with local PDU heads or regional JCCs. There will be a balance between gathering information for these meetings from members and feeding back to members following these meetings. For these reasons there is only one suggested exec meeting, but you may well want to arrange these at additional times.

Suggested branch schedule / looking at Napo calendar significant dates:

Once you've agreed your dates as a Branch Exec, please do contact your Link Officer and Official so that they can attend if you would like them to or liaise with them from the start to arrange branch meetings for the year ahead if you need some assistance.

Months	Type of Meeting	Why?
Late January / Early February	Exec meeting	You might want an Exec meeting to consider any motions you want to put to the next NEC meeting tending to take place in March.
March (following the date of NEC meeting) / to around mid-April	Branch meeting	<p>This can include feedback from NEC reps, consider any issues that you might want to take back to the next NEC.</p> <p>This meeting would also be a good time to start considering motions and whether anyone wants to start writing motions for national AGM.</p> <p>Identify branch lead(s) for arranging attendance at AGM.</p>
Between mid-June / end of July	Branch Meeting and Branch AGM	<p><i>Probation Branches should hold their AGM by 31st July.</i></p> <p>A branch meeting at this time would also cover feedback from the recent NEC meeting (tending to be around mid-June) and agreeing any motions that the branch wants to put to the National AGM.</p> <p>Check the Napo calendar for the deadline for motions to be received by Napo HQ.</p>
Around mid-September	Branch Meeting	<p>Feedback from NEC reps</p> <p>Review AGM motions; consider any amendments from your branch. Finalise any plans for attending AGM.</p>
Around early- to mid- December	Exec / Branch Meeting	Follow up from AGM – you'll have received the Napo Operational Plan and there will be feedback from NEC.