

No: 723/16

9th December 2016

TO: ALL BRANCHES

Dear Colleague

RETIRED MEMBERS – REVISED BRANCH MODEL CONSTITUTION

Further to LTB 664/16, we have received a number of enquiries from Branches in respect of the revised branch model constitution and its impact on retired members.

The purpose of this LTB is to now provide further information on the background to this issue and to explain the reasons behind the decisions of the NEC.

Firstly, whilst we understand and recognise that the content of LTB 664/16 has caused some concern amongst retired members, it is important that branches are made fully aware that the NEC, in the first instance, did not initiate or seek to raise this matter. The actions and decisions of the NEC were in direct response to a particularly difficult internal branch dispute that was vigorously pursued to CWU HQ, with the potential for a challenge to a higher authority.

The issue in question was a constitutional matter directly related to the rights, or otherwise, of retired members being able to vote for a position in local branch elections.

Following the deliberations of the President and the Vice President, it was agreed to obtain legal advice on the interpretation of the union's rules. The President made a ruling - and the subsequent actions and decisions of the NEC were made in full knowledge of the legal advice received. This led to the position as outlined in LTB 664/16, which set out the need to revise the branch model constitution.

Furthermore, branches should be aware, that this is far from being a straightforward issue and that there have been a number of inconsistencies between branches on how retired members participate in local elections and in the manner in which branches operate their retired members sections.

In due course it will now be the intention of the NEC to give the whole subject of retired members voting rights and their role within the union further consideration. The intention will be to bring forward an appropriate set of rule changes before annual conference to ensure a consistent position is adopted across the union.


The NEC values the role of retired members and wants them to remain active and engaged in the relevant work of the union. We are also committed under the Re-design project to look at new ways of enhancing this role, whilst remaining clear that the interest of working members and retired members must be served differently.

The NEC welcomes the opportunity for this debate across the whole union and we believe this to be in the interest of all union members, including our retired members - and that we continue to ensure that all members, working or retired, are protected.

In the meantime, the position outlined in LTB 664/16 holds the field and is based on the current rules of the union.

Any enquiries on the content of this LTB forward to gsoffice@cwu.org

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Ward." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dave Ward
General Secretary