

Circular sent to: Branches, SOGs, EC, SOC, Divisional Councils.

General Secretary Code of Conduct - Guidance Note G

At the 2023 Annual Delegate Conference in Cork the following Rule Alteration was carried:

38. Rule Alteration (Item EM3)

Preface: To clarify the role of the General Secretary, as recommended in the Report by Baroness Kennedy KC

Rule 12 GENERAL SECRETARY AND STAFF

12.1 GENERAL SECRETARY

To delete entire Rule 12.1(a) and substitute:

‘General Secretary

- (a) There shall be a General Secretary, who shall be responsible and accountable to the Executive Committee and for assisting the Executive Committee with the carrying out of its duties as set out in Rule 9
- (b) The General Secretary shall at all times adhere to the General Secretary Code of Conduct (to be published as Guidance Note G).
- (c) The General Secretary shall immediately join TSSA should that individual not be a member when declared elected. The General Secretary shall be a TSSA member and remain a member throughout their term of office.
- (d) The General Secretary shall have the right to speak on any business at delegate conferences and Executive Committee meetings but may not vote.

Duties of the General Secretary

- (e) The duties of the General Secretary shall be:
 - (1) to advise on policy decisions to be taken by delegate conferences;
 - (2) to advise the Executive Committee on its decision making;
 - (3) to ensure that the decisions of delegate conferences and the Executive Committee are properly recorded;
 - (4) to ensure implementation of policy decisions of delegate conferences and the decisions of the Executive Committee;
 - (5) to pay particular attention to ensuring that TSSA polices relating to good governance, culture, values and ethics are implemented and complied with;
 - (6) to work under the direction of the Executive Committee to ensure the efficient and effective day-to-day management and administration of the TSSA and the direction of its paid staff, including overseeing the stewardship of TSSA’s property, finances and other assets;
 - (7) to be the principal representative of TSSA to employers, relevant industry organisations, Governments, political parties, other trade union bodies, and as directed by the Executive Committee;

- (8) to be the principal spokesperson for TSSA to the media;
- (9) where practicable, to attend all TSSA delegate conferences, and all meetings of the Executive Committee;
- (10) to carry out other duties as determined by the Executive Committee.

(f) At frequencies that the Executive Committee shall from time to time determine, the General Secretary shall provide reports to the Executive Committee regarding the following:

- (1) TSSA's culture, values, ethics and governance;
- (2) TSSA finances and relevant financial matters, TSSA properties, and TSSA assets;
- (3) Staffing matters, including policies and procedures, turnover, recruitment, resignations, retirements and dismissals, any settlement agreements, training, development and succession planning, grievances, disciplinary matters, pay and conditions, health, safety, welfare and wellbeing, staff structures and reorganisations, pensions, and employee relations;
- (4) Equality, diversity and inclusion matters;
- (5) The state of TSSA's member organisation including the effectiveness and functioning of Branches, Divisional Councils and SOGs, and the effectiveness and functioning of TSSA staff representatives;
- (6) The progress in implementing the decisions and policies of TSSA delegate conferences and the Executive Committee;
- (7) The overall industrial relations position in the employers and industries within which TSSA organises, including pay settlements and pension developments.

(g) The General Secretary shall present an annual budget to the Executive Committee for approval.'

End of General Secretary's office

To renumber existing Rule 12.1(b) as 12.1(h)

Mover Peter Pendle (Executive Committee)
Seconded Steve Coe (North East General)

Supported by Disability Working Group
 Retired Members' Group
 Women in Focus

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Rule 12.1 was therefore duly amended in the TSSA Rule Book. As set out in Rule 12.1(b) the General Secretary's code of conduct must now be published as Guidance Note G.

Baroness Helena Kennedy wrote the General Secretary Code of Conduct and this was published as Appendix 3 in the Kennedy Report (February 2023).

The General Secretary Code of Conduct, as it appears in the Kennedy Report, will now be published in full as Guidance Note G as is mandated in Rule 12.1.

General Secretary Code of Conduct

1. The General Secretary commits to upholding the highest values of the trade union movement including equality, fairness, justice, and dignity and respect for all, as well as to showing care and compassion to all the union's staff and members.
 2. The General Secretary commits to centring members in their decision making - always seeking to act in members' best interests. In doing so, the General Secretary commits to upholding the highest standards of integrity, operating truthfully and never making decisions based in their own, their family, their friends' or close colleagues' interests.
 3. The General Secretary commits to best endeavours to increase the diversity of the union's membership, particularly its activist members. In making this commitment, the General Secretary understands that institutional barriers to participation and activism, such as 'social drinking,' long hours, expectations of travel and male dominant behaviours, need to be dismantled.
 4. The General Secretary understands the importance and profile of their role as a figurehead and advocate, not just for the TSSA, but for the union movement, and so commits to best endeavours of exemplar conduct in both public and private life.
 5. The General Secretary commits to seeking, proactively and regularly, feedback from diverse groups - staff, members, volunteers and Executive Committee members - on their role modelling of these values and their operation of this Code of Conduct.
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The Process for amending Guidance Notes is set out as follows in Rule 3.3:

3.3 Guidance Notes

This Rule Book is complemented by a book of Guidance Notes and reference to it is made throughout this Rule Book.

Guidance Notes contain the administrative processes required to maintain the standards of and give effect to the Rules. Guidance Notes are binding on members and on organisations within the Association's structures (Branches, etc).

However, one or more of the processes and arrangements described in the Guidance Notes may be varied by the EC at any time in the following ways:

(a) at the request of a member or organisation to make allowance for specific circumstances;

(b) at the suggestion of a member or organisation that a generally applicable change is required;

(c) as a result of the EC's own deliberations regarding the efficient operation of the Association;

(d) as part of the three yearly review to be carried out by the EC in line with the Rule change cycle.

Any changes made to the Guidance Notes in the case of (b), (c) or (d) will:

- i. be opened up for consultation with Branches, etc;
- ii. require changes to be presented for ratification at the next Annual Conference;
- iii. need to receive a simple majority of those voting at Annual Conference.

The change to the Guidance Notes - the adding of the General Secretary Code of Conduct as written by Baroness Kennedy and mandated in Rule 12.1(b) will now be presented to the 2024 Annual Delegate Conference for formal ratification. Such ratification will allow TSSA to formally fulfil an important recommendation of the Kennedy Report.

If you have any questions or comments, then please let me know by 29 March 2024.

Regards

Will Boisseau

TSSA Support Services