



For more information on equality at work and in the community refer to **Union Equality Reps Handbook** <https://tinyurl.com/39h2uscw>

Unite Branch Equality Officers and Workplace Equality Reps should have a Unite Equality Reps Credential. Please contact your Regional Officer.



## Contacts

### Regional Women's and Equalities Officers

North West	0151 559 2004
North East, Yorkshire and Humberside	0113 236 4830
West Midlands	0121 553 6051
East Midlands	0116 253 2020
London and Eastern	0208 800 4281
South East	01753 313 820
South West	0117 923 0555
Scotland	0141 404 5424
Ireland	Belfast 028 90 232 381 Dublin 01873 4577
Wales	02920 394521

## National

equality@unitetheunion.org  
020 7611 2500  
[www.unitetheunion.org/equalities](http://www.unitetheunion.org/equalities)  
Unite the Union, 128 Theobald's Road, Holborn, London WC1X 8TN  
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# Branch Equality Officers Guide



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Equalities is at the centre of our Industrial Strategy and it is put firmly on the bargaining table.

I understand the clear and urgent need for our union to action all Unite equalities policies to move forward. Branch Equality Officers by Rule should be elected in every branch. They play a very important role in building a strong campaigning union for all.



We continue to call for collective statutory rights for all union equality reps which can include Branch Equality Officers who make a real difference in the workplace, in the wider community and in the union.

*Sharon Graham*

**Sharon Graham**  
General Secretary

**Congratulations** on being elected a branch Equality Officer in Unite. The Union is built on the activities of its lay reps, and Branch Equality Officers, together with other Branch Officers, Union Equality Reps and other reps at the workplace, have an extremely important role to play in ensuring fair practices at work for all Unite's branch members. They also encourage all members to get involved, promoting equality for all, and organising more members. You are essential to the Union's organisation and I hope this guide will help you to carry out your duties and responsibilities more effectively.



This is a step by step guide and checklist to support Branch Equality Officers. It also contains a list of further information that may be of help and interest to you.

Sometimes issues are more complicated than they at first appear. If in doubt, never try to deal with complex issues on your own - take advice from your Regional Officer and your Regional Women's and Equalities Officer. And together we can make a real difference.

Welcome and thank you,

*Diana Holland*

**Diana Holland**  
**Assistant General Secretary**  
Equalities – Transport – Food and Agriculture



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The following 6 steps covered in this Guide are vital to ensuring Branch Equality Officers play the positive role needed in our union:

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Unite Equality Reps take the campaign for statutory rights to Parliament - April 2023



Union Equality Reps and Branch Equality Officers Conference held during lockdown 2021



## branch equality officer's role

In Unite Rules, every branch *"shall have for its management ...an equality officer..."*. This includes workplace, sector, national and geographical branches as well as retired members and Unite community branches.

### Your role as a branch equality officer is to:

- Know your branch and diversity of your members
- Ensure Unite equality agenda is recognised and is an integral part of the Branch
- Work with other branch officers and reps to promote equality and tackle discrimination and to recruit, organise and involve women, black and Asian ethnic minority (BAEM), LGBT+ and disabled members
- Disseminate relevant information
- Become involved in Unite campaigns
- Work with regional Women's and Equalities Officer and Education Officer
- Where you can, work with your negotiating committee to develop negotiating aims that will improve the workplace for women, BAEM, disabled and LGBT+ and young members
- Keep yourself informed and up to date

Remember, as an elected branch equality officer, you are entitled to support from your union, Unite.

## Step 1 know your branch

### NOTES:

- When and where does your branch meet? Are these times and places suitable for all members? Particularly consider the needs of women, black and Asian ethnic minority members, those with caring responsibilities and disability access.
- Who attends Branch Meetings? Do women attend? Do black and Asian ethnic minority members attend? Do disabled members attend? Do LGBT+ members attend? Do young members attend?
- Who is in the branch? Which women workers does it cover? Which black and Asian ethnic minority workers does it cover? Are disabled workers in the branch? Are there LGBT+ workers in the branch? Are members of all ages active in the branch? What about young members? Are there migrant workers? Agency workers? Part-time workers? Zero hours contract workers? Are they in the union?
- What kinds of issues does the branch discuss? Is equality on the agenda? Has the branch discussed any issues particularly affecting women, black and Asian ethnic minority workers, young workers, disabled workers, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans+ workers?
- Consider conducting a survey on members' views of the time and place of branch meetings, how meetings are publicised and the issues that are on the agenda.
  - o Check the views of all members are included, and that you identify any issues raised particularly by women, by BAEM, disabled, LGBT+ or young members, or any under-represented members.

- Arrange discussion of the results of the survey at the next branch meeting.
- Consider producing agendas and minutes in appropriate alternative languages or formats.
- Ensure discriminatory comments are challenged if ever they occur at meetings and ensure members are aware of equal opportunities clauses in the standing orders.
- Try to get your branch to allocate resources for equality issues to be pursued seriously.

## Step 2 know your members

- Find out where women, black and Asian ethnic minority workers, disabled workers, LGBT+ workers and young workers, are in the workplace and the jobs that they do.
- Talk to these members about issues that are important to them both in the local community and at work.
- Find out what views they have of the Union and its activities in the workplace.
- Find out if there are any particular problems they are facing in the workplace.

## Step 3 consider ways of extending involvement in the union

- Are there women, black and Asian ethnic minority workers, disabled workers, LGBT+ workers or young workers who are not members of the Union? Talk to them about what would encourage them to join.

### NOTES:

- Consider conducting a survey of women, black and Asian ethnic minority workers, disabled workers, LGBT+ workers or young workers on their views and experiences of issues such as childcare and caring, health and welfare (cancer screening, menopause, Sickle Cell Anaemia and Thalassaemia), harassment, discrimination, bullying, training, hours of work and access to buildings.
- Consider arranging a speaker or film/video at the branch on a subject you know potential or existing members would be interested in.
- Find out if women, black and Asian ethnic minority, disabled, LGBT+ or young members have friends and/or family in unorganised workplaces. If so, ask them to invite those friends/family to get involved.
- Encourage women, black and Asian ethnic minority, disabled, LGBT+ and young members to take up Union benefits and services, such as education courses, free legal advice and affiliated services – arrange a speaker.
- If existing members have gained something from their Union membership ask them to let others know and encourage them to join.
- Encourage active women, black and Asian ethnic minority members, disabled members, LGBT+ and young members to run for election to branch and workplace positions.
- Use the Checklists in the Union Equality Reps Toolkit on Involvement of Women, black and Asian ethnic minorities, Disabled Members, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans+ Members and Young Members. <https://tinyurl.com/waafrezp>

### NOTES:

## Step 4 work with others - know your community

- Get to know the other officers in your branch particularly your local shop stewards, workplace representatives, safety representatives, union learning reps, union equality reps, convenor, branch secretary, branch chair and committee members.
- Get to know your **Regional Officer and Regional Women's and Equalities Officer**  
[www.unitetheunion.org/equalities](http://www.unitetheunion.org/equalities)
- Make sure you have the contact details for your Regional Education Officer who can be good sources of help and advice  
<https://tinyurl.com/3mnjyrr4>.
- Make sure you know who the elected reps are to different Regional Women's, BAEM, Disabled, LGBT+ and Young Members Committees. Find out about equality campaigns and activities for eg International Women's Day, Black History Month, Disability History Month, LGBT+ History Month and Pride events, Young members activities.
- Find out about local, regional, national or international campaigns on equality in which the Branch could participate, raising its profile in the sector, the region/nation and the community.
- Where you can, work with your negotiating committee to develop negotiating aims that will improve the workplace for women, black and Asian ethnic minorities, disabled, LGBT+ and young members.

## NOTES:

## Step 5 keep informed

- Go on Unite education courses to help you extend your knowledge, confidence and skills.
- Keep up-to-date with Union Publications on the Unite webpages [www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org), such as Unite Works. See below for suggested further support.

### further support

- Unite Equalities  
[www.unitetheunion.org/equalities](http://www.unitetheunion.org/equalities)
- Union Equality Reps Handbook and Toolkit  
<https://tinyurl.com/waafrezp>
- Shop Stewards Handbook
- Safety Representatives Handbook
- Unite Guide to Dealing with Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying  
<https://tinyurl.com/49ufeb5u>
- Unite Guide to Family Rights at Work  
<https://tinyurl.com/4x5dbck9>
- Unite Pay Up Guide <https://tinyurl.com/re9t9hn7>
- Unite Women's Health and Safety guide  
<https://tinyurl.com/yxwbdnkz>
- Unite Race Equality Negotiators Guide and Race Forward Campaign  
<https://tinyurl.com/6exm2rkx>
- Unite Race Forward Action Pack  
<https://tinyurl.com/k8md9fa5>
- Unite Disability Equality at Work Negotiators Guide <https://tinyurl.com/rtuae6y4>
- Unite Pride - LGBT+ equality  
<https://tinyurl.com/55sf6xzb>
- Unite Trans+ Equality Guide  
<https://tinyurl.com/7hwy23w8>

## NOTES:

## Step 6 checklist for branch equality officers

Please complete the missing details for your Branch

**Branch**  
Number \_\_\_\_\_

### Branch Equality Office and/or Noticeboard

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Involvement in Unite Equality/other courses?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Branch Membership - NUMBER/PERCENTAGE

Total in Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Women \_\_\_\_\_ Men \_\_\_\_\_

Gender Identity (as defined) \_\_\_\_\_

BAEM \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_

Disabled members \_\_\_\_\_ LGBT+ \_\_\_\_\_

Young \_\_\_\_\_

### Branch Equality Officers in Retired Members Branches

What are the opportunities to encourage more women, BAEM, disabled and LGBT+ members to join the Retired Members' branch?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What activities or issues would be of interest for retired women, BAEM, disabled and LGBT+ members?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Branch Equality Officers in Community Branches

What are the opportunities to encourage more women, BAEM, disabled and LGBT+ people in the community to become members of the Community branch?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What activities or issues would be of interest for women, BAEM, disabled and LGBT+ people in the community?  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

NOTES:

## BRANCH EQUALITY OFFICERS IN WORKPLACE BRANCHES OR BRANCHES WITH MORE THAN ONE WORKPLACE

**Branch Membership checklist to support equality and workplace equality reps in the workplace or workplaces in the Branch**

### Total in Workplace:

Women Members \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Members \_\_\_\_\_

Men Members \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Members \_\_\_\_\_

Gender Identity (as defined) \_\_\_\_\_

Members \_\_\_\_\_ Non-members \_\_\_\_\_

BAEM members \_\_\_\_\_ Non-members \_\_\_\_\_

White members \_\_\_\_\_ Non-members \_\_\_\_\_

Disabled Members: \_\_\_\_\_ Non-members \_\_\_\_\_

LGBT+ members: \_\_\_\_\_ Non-members \_\_\_\_\_

Young members: \_\_\_\_\_ Non-members \_\_\_\_\_

### Shop Stewards/Workplace reps at the workplace

Total shop stewards/ reps:

Women \_\_\_\_\_ % \_\_\_\_\_ Men \_\_\_\_\_

Gender identity (as defined) \_\_\_\_\_

BAEM \_\_\_\_\_ % \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_

Disabled shop stewards/ reps: \_\_\_\_\_

LGBT+ shop stewards/ reps: \_\_\_\_\_

Young shop stewards/ reps: \_\_\_\_\_

Have they attended Unite Equality courses and other Unite education courses?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Unite Workplace Union Equality Reps**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Has Unite Membership Department been notified of this election?

Has a Unite Equality Representatives Credential been issued?

Have they attended Unite Equality courses and other Unite education courses?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Workplace Equal Opportunities Committee or Diversity Committee – is there one?**

If no – what about identifying steps to getting one set up?

If yes – What does it do? How often does it meet?  
Is it effective? What would improve it?

**Details of Unite members of the Committee**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unite position held \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Have they attended Unite Equality courses and other Unite education courses?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES:**

**NOTES:**

**KNOW THE WORKPLACE (or workplaces) IN YOUR BRANCH**

**Workplace Equality Audits**

- Find out if any have been carried out, and what issues have been highlighted. If not, encourage an equality audit to support building a stronger union and strengthening representation of all members.  
**Union Equality Reps Handbook**  
<https://tinyurl.com/yj55b2u7>

**Equality Impact Assessment**

- Find out if any have been carried out, and what issues have been highlighted. If not, the Unite Guide to Equality Impact Assessment will assist you.  
<https://tinyurl.com/4yxjt9f3>



