 CWU  
EQUALITY  
OFFICER  
TOOLKIT

# USEFUL CONTACTS

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## **CWU Equality, Education & Development website**

<https://education.cwu.org>

## **UNIONLINE Free Helpline for CWU members**

Tel: 0300 333 0303

## **CWU Bullying & Harassment Helpline**

Tel: FREEPHONE 0800 090 2303



# FOREWORD

Congratulations on being elected to the position of Equality Officer. You are now one of many CWU representatives, representing members and their interests all over the UK.

The CWU is committed to supporting our Equality Officers and making sure you have all the training and information you need to make your role a success!

This guide has been produced to help you get started with the basics and provides practical information to help you make the most of your role. It includes:

- Equality Officer role
- Equality Officers engagement structure
- Meeting arrangements
- Facilities and release
- Education, training and development
- Useful suggestions on getting started
- Campaigns and events

We hope you find it useful.

## CWU EQUALITY RULES

*“To actively oppose all forms of discrimination based on race, creed, religion, age, political affiliation, disability, marital status, sex or sexual or gender orientation in industry, in the union and society in general. To this end the CWU shall actively oppose any organisation, political or otherwise, whose aims are racist or fascist.”*

*“To promote and encourage proportionality and fair representation of all members in industry, the union and society in general.”*

## EQUALITY OFFICER ROLE:

The branch Equality Officer plays an integral role

1. To work with the Branch Secretary and map the diversity of the membership into the following groups:
  - a. Women
  - b. Black And Minority Ethnic (BAME)
  - c. LGBT+
  - d. Disability
  - e. Young Workers
2. To ensure equality is part of the union’s agenda and is an integral part of branch business
3. To support and be a leading role amongst other branch equality strand officers (women, BAME, LGBT+ and Disability).
4. To work with branch equality strand officers to promote equality issues, tackle inequality, and challenge discrimination and harassment at work.
5. To coordinate equality work within the branch and help develop and deliver the union’s national equality strategy, including regional and branch equality priorities and campaigns.
6. To support the development of the union’s equality work within the wider trade union movement, including building alliances with organisations that share the same values and interests as the union at a local level.
7. To work with Regional Assistant Secretaries and liaise with the relevant national, regional and branch representatives and lay members as appropriate, and act as a point of contact where necessary.
8. To promote proportionality and encourage members from under-represented groups to become activists and participate in CWU training and education.
9. To create a supportive atmosphere at work and in the union in which all members opinions are valued and members feel safe to speak up, without repercussion when they suspect harassment or discrimination at work.
10. To work with Branch Equality Strand Officers and prepare branch equality reports to be placed before the branch committee and the branch AGM.

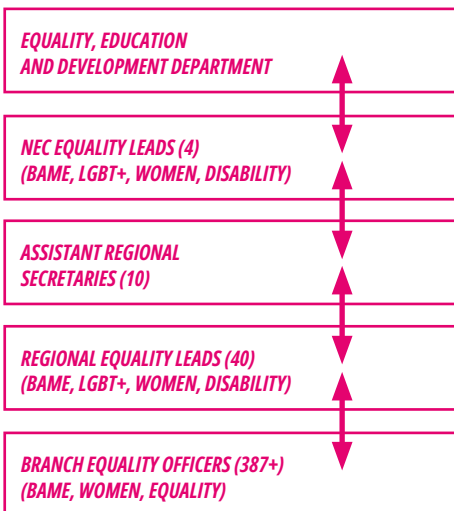




## EQUALITY LEADS ENGAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Equality Lead Engagement Structure mainstreams our equality work across all structures of the union and supports Equality Officers in achieving their aims and objectives.

**Table 1: CWU Equality Engagement Structure**



As shown in Table 1, the CWU Head Of Equality, Education And Development works with the elected National Executive Council (NEC) Equality Strand Leads.

The NEC Equality Strand Leads work with Regional Assistant Secretaries and Regional Equality Strand Leads.

In turn, Regional Equality Strand Leads work with Branch Equality Strand Officers. For example the Women's Regional Lead works with the Branch Women's Officer. Disability and LGBT+ Regional Leads work with Disability and LGBT+ Officers (where in situ). In the absence of a Branch Disability Or LGBT+ Branch Officer, Disability and LGBT+ Leads are to work with the Branch Equality Officer.

In addition, Regional Assistant Secretaries work with Branch Equality Officers who lead on equality within their remits of responsibility.

This structure enables Branch Equality Officers to lead and feedback on important equality issues or to seek support when needed.

It's Important to know who your Regional Assistant Secretary and Equality Strand Leads are and share contact details. You can do this by contacting your Branch Secretary or the Equality, Education and Development department who will be able to provide you with this information.

## MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

As Branch Equality Officer you are invited and encouraged to attend:

1. Regional Equality Sub-Committee meetings, 4 times a year.
2. Branch meetings and (if in situ) sub branch equality committee meetings as appropriate.
3. Branch Annual General Meeting.
4. Ad hoc workplace union meetings (agreed and arranged by local rep and branch).
5. Regional and national equality events, including CWU biennial equality day at general conference and in intervening years, the CWU national 2-day equality event.

## FACILITIES AND RELEASE

Currently there are no full legal rights for Union Equality Reps. However according to ACAS employers should:

*“Consider the role of Union Equality Reps and needs for time off, facilities and training. Union Equality Reps can for example: promote diversity management, help ensure legal compliance, conduct audits, raise awareness and engage employers on equality issues...”*

(ACAS guide to Trade Union Representation in the Workplace)

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission also encourages positive joint workings with equality reps and encourages employers to:

*“Consult with Union Equality Reps as a first step towards understanding the diverse needs of workers.”*

(EHRC Employment Statutory Code of Practice)

Therefore as the Branch Equality Officer you are advised to seek support from your branch to assist with securing release time and facilities to enable you to do your duties.

Release requests could be for:

- Keeping in touch with women members.
- Attending Union meetings.
- Training and education.
- Promoting union campaigns by organising and delivering specialist meetings and events.
- Assisting/advising the branch on women's matters.

Facilities could include:

- Access to safe spaces to listen to women members concerns and issues.
- Access to a desk.
- Access to computer and internet facilities.
- A specific email address for the Women's Officer position.
- A mobile phone or access to a telephone to facilitate a direct line to the Women's Officer.
- Access to workplace union notice boards to share equality information and updates.

Please use this template form to apply for facilities and release with your branch.

[www.cwu.org/reps/postal-resources](http://www.cwu.org/reps/postal-resources)

[www.cwu.org/reps/tfs-resources](http://www.cwu.org/reps/tfs-resources)

To access the form you will need the reps resources password. Please contact the Equality and Education Department to obtain access to the site.

## EDUCATION, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

The CWU provide a broad range of residential and online education and training courses for CWU activists, including equality courses and workshops. For more information on the different courses available to you and when they are due to take place please contact the Equality, Education and Development department at [equality&education@cwu.org](mailto:equality&education@cwu.org) to obtain a copy of the CWU's latest education prospectus.

Applications for courses must be made through your branch. Please contact your Branch Secretary to make a request.

## GETTING STARTED

### 1. Mapping the Membership

Mapping the diversity of CWU members is an important tool for Equality Officers. Not only can it help identify inequalities in the workplace, but it can also help to recognise occupational segregation, including the disproportionate representation of certain groups.

There are many ways in which you can map your branch membership or a particular workplace your branch covers. The most common method to use is via the CWU membership database. Due to GDPR controlled practices, Equality Officers do not have automatic authorised access to membership information. Equality Officers must work with Branch Secretaries to map membership diversity.

Here are the basic steps that Equality Officers can take to help with the process.

Note down the number of:

- CWU members
- Where they work (location and function)
- What grade they are

Using the above information identify

- Women members
- BAME members
- LGBT+ members
- Members with disabilities
- Young workers

Using all of the information you have gathered above you should be able to identify where your Branch's proportionality strengths and weaknesses are. You should then be able to draw up an action plan to address any inequalities or recruitment strategies to tackle under-representation.

For CWU membership recruitment, mapping materials please visit the CWU education website here:

<https://education.cwu.org/recruiting-cwu-members>

### 2. Proportionality - Extending Involvement in The Union

Equality of opportunity and proportional representation is one of the CWU's key priorities. As an Equality Officer you play a vital role in encouraging members to join the CWU and stand for union positions.

Here are some suggested activities for you to consider:

- Maintaining regular communication and engagement with members in the workplace (e.g. By one to one chats, notice boards, emails, regular meetings, agendas, social media groups)
- Keeping members informed of how CWU democracy works and the different roles members can stand for, including promoting CWU Unlock our CWU website dedicated to members who want to know more about the CWU structures and positions. Visit the website at <https://unlock.cwu.org/resource/committee-roles-and-structures/>
- Using mapping information, target campaigns and recruitment initiatives at underrepresented groups to encourage members to run for election during election periods or where vacancies exist.

- With the help and support of your branch, set up workplace recruitment surgeries to promote any vacancies and to ask members to get more involved in the CWU.
- Talk to members about what would encourage them to stand for union roles – identify and tackle any barriers that may prevent members from becoming more involved in the CWU.
- Encourage women, BAME, disabled, LGBT+ and young worker members and representatives to participate in CWU education and training courses.

### 3. Mainstreaming Equality

Mainstreaming equality effectively requires a culture where the needs of people with protected characteristics are not an afterthought – It means putting equality into practice. As Equality Officers you are encouraged to promote inclusive practices in your branch. By doing this, trade union activities become a vehicle for achieving real equality.

Here are some ways in which to develop good practice.

- Review times and locations of meetings including ensuring the venue is accessible for all.
- Avoid arranging union meeting and events on key faith dates or times when it may be difficult for some members to be actively involved.
- For meeting and events outside of work hours, actively offer support for childcare.
- Provide dyslexia friendly copies of any digital information shared with members and representatives.
- Always provide subtitles to any video communications shared with members and representatives
- Consider the need of using hearing impairment interpreters for face-to-face meetings.

### 4. Co-ordinating Equality

Branch Equality Officers play an important role in strengthening equality work in the branch and bringing together and joining up, the work carried out by other Equality Strand Officers.

It is not expected for Branch Equality Officers to be the font of all knowledge on every equality issue, nor carry sole responsibility for the branch's equality work.

Everyone shares responsibility for tackling prejudice and discrimination and promoting equality in the branch.

Here are some suggestions of how to co-ordinate equality.

- Build a branch equality subcommittee - to bring all equality strands together under a single inclusive and expanded subcommittee.
- Set up a WhatsApp group for Branch Equality Officers – to keep in contact and share equality information and news quickly and effectively.
- Create a branch equality action plan - working with other Branch Equality Strand Officers set out how you plan to promote equality and equitable outcomes for members.
- Create safe spaces – working with other Branch Equality Leads and your branch, organise safe spaces for minority groups to safely discuss their own issues through specialist meetings and events.



## CAMPAIGN AND EVENTS

It's important that you build relationships with other Branch Equality Officers and the membership and campaign on issues most important to them.

The CWU play an active role in campaigning for equality.

Some of our national policy campaigns include:

### Women:

- Ending period poverty
- Better workplace rights for women. E.g. Flexibility rights, women's health i.e. menopause policy and pregnancy protections.
- Ending violence against women and girls and eradicating sexual harassment.

### BAME:

- Jallianwala Bagh Massacre – Campaign to change the education curriculum to include colonial history, recognition and state apology.
- Care 4 Calais – to organise the collection of humanitarian aid for refugees, including busting the myths and raising awareness of the refugee's crisis.
- Justice for Ricky Reel, Grenfell and Windrush
- Black history month

### LGBT+:

- Enhancing LGBT+ rights nationally and internationally
- Promoting Pride and LGBT+ people in the workplace and in general society.

### Disability:

- Raising mental health awareness and better support
- Promoting Access to Work Scheme
- Better workplace rights. E.g. Cancer at work, reasonable adjustments etc.

Contact your Assistant Regional Secretary to find out which campaign you can get involved in and how to develop a strategy and plan for local action.



## EQUALITY CALENDER

### JANUARY

27 – Holocaust Memorial Day

### FEBRUARY

All Month – LGBT+ History Month

6 – International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

### MARCH

All Month – Women's History Month

8 – International Women's Day

21 – UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

31 – International Trans Day of Visibility

### APRIL

All Month – 'Pride

28 – International Workers Memorial Day

<sup>1</sup>Pride usually runs from April – September every year

### MAY

1 – International Workers' Day

15 – International Day of Families

17 – International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (DAHOBIT)

### JULY

Rally Durham Miners Gala

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival

Women Chainmakers Festival

14 – International Non Binary People's Day

### SEPTEMBER

23 – Bi Visibility Day

### OCTOBER

All Month – National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Black History Month

11 – National coming out day

### NOVEMBER

All Month – Disability History Month

13 – 20 – Trans Awareness Week

20 – International Trans Day of Remembrance

25 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

### DECEMBER

3 – International Day of Disabled People

10 – Human Rights Day

18 – International Migrants Day





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