

Executive Summary – CWU Proportionality Report 2025

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) remains committed to fostering diversity, equality, and inclusion across its membership and leadership structures. The 2025 Proportionality Report builds on previous years' efforts to improve transparency and representation, focusing on four key diversity strands: gender, race (BAME), disability, and age.

Key Highlights:

Membership Trends:

- Total membership declined to 164,258 (down by 20,168 since 2023).
- BAME and disabled membership levels increased from 10% to 12% and 1% to 3% respectively.
- Women and young workers maintained stable membership levels.
- Retired members saw a sharp decline in membership rates by 4 percentage points.

Activist Representation:

- Overall number of CWU representatives decreased by 79.
- Gains in representation for BAME and disabled activists, particularly in learning representative roles.
- Losses in representation for women, young workers, and BAME women.

Branch-Level:

- Women are proportionally represented in some roles, particularly equality positions but underrepresented in industrial and health & safety positions.
- BAME and BAME women remain significantly underrepresented, especially in senior branch roles.
- Disabled members show improved representation, likely due to better self-declaration and aging demographics.
- Young workers are consistently underrepresented across all branch roles.

National-Level Representation:

- Women maintain proportional representation in some national roles (NEC & T&FSE).
- BAME, BAME women, disabled members, and young workers are largely absent from national executive and BT industrial teams.
- Structural changes and role reductions may have negatively impacted diversity at the national level where guaranteed seats do not exist.

Positive Developments:

- Increase in branches adopting Disability Champions (13%) and LGBT+ Champions (25%), reflecting cultural progress and demand.
- Improved data quality due to new membership systems and branch updates.

Challenges

- Structural changes (e.g., branch mergers, role reductions) risk undermining diversity efforts.
- Voluntary data disclosure remains incomplete, affecting accuracy and insight.

Strategic Priorities:

- Strengthen pathways for underrepresented groups into leadership roles.
- Improve data accuracy through member engagement and branch support.
- Embed proportionality into all levels of decision-making and governance.

CWU Proportionality Report 2025

The CWU remains firmly committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every member can thrive. We collect and analyse diversity data from our membership database to better understand the makeup of our union and identify areas where representation gaps persist. This insight enables us to take strategic action to amplify the voices of underrepresented groups and promote equality across all levels of our organisation.

High-quality data is the foundation of meaningful change. It allows us to identify trends, monitor progress, and target interventions where they are most needed. However, our current data set reveals significant gaps: These gaps can distort our understanding of representation and hinder our ability to respond effectively. Improving data coverage through voluntary member disclosure remains a top priority.

Due to the union's democratic processes and the introduction of significant structural changes, a proportionality report was not published in 2024. Recent structural changes include the removal of Regional Secretary positions and roles that previously formed the Regional Executive Committees. These have now been replaced by Regional Officials, and as a result, the previous format for regional proportionality analysis is no longer published.

Building on the progress made in previous years, our 2025 report continues to expand the scope and transparency of the data we publish. In 2022, we broadened our reporting to include a wider range of diversity groups and union positions. In 2023, we took a further step forward by incorporating the diversity composition of National BT Industrial Teams—an important move that allowed us to assess proportionality across more of our national decision-making structures.

This year, the report focuses on four key diversity areas: gender, race, disability, and age. The Equality, Education & Development Department has applied the definition that young workers are members aged 29 and under. This is based on Rule 8.12.1, which sets out the eligibility criteria for Young Worker elected posts.

From an intersectional perspective, we continue to highlight the experiences of BAME women, who remain significantly underrepresented in active union roles. There is still much work to be done to ensure these members are supported and empowered to participate fully in union life.

The report is structured into two sections:

1. **Membership Overview** – Analysis of CWU membership across key diversity groups including women, BAME, disabled, retired, and young workers.
2. **Representation Breakdown** – A comprehensive diversity profile of all elected CWU positions across the union's structure. Colour-coded tables identify proportional (green) and underrepresented (red) groups, with year-on-year comparisons provided.

The CWU recently introduced a new membership system, which has improved the quality of the data by requiring branches to update their reps' information. The data used in this report was

drawn from the CWU membership database, based on a sample taken in September 2025. While this is the most accurate data currently available, it is important to note that it relies on voluntary member and branch submissions and may not be fully complete. This highlights the importance of improving voluntary disclosure rates to ensure our data remains meaningful and reflective of our membership’s diversity.

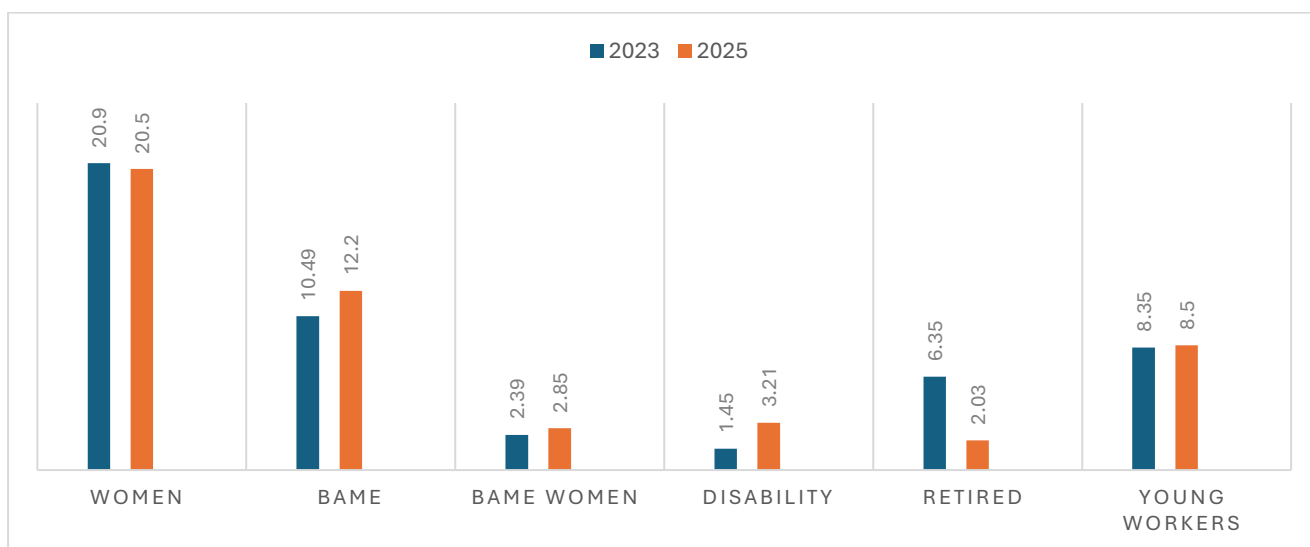
Recent branch mergers have reshaped the structure of the union, with **the number of branches now standing at 117, down from 124 reported in 2023**. This reduction in branch numbers can affect activist data, as merged branches often undergo internal restructuring and role consolidation. As a result, year-on-year comparisons must take these changes into account to ensure the data remains accurate and reflective of the current branch landscape.

Section 1: National Membership Diversity Overview

This section presents data on CWU membership across key diversity groups, including women, BAME members, BAME women, disabled members, and young workers.

As of September 2025, the total number of CWU members stood at **164,258**, reflecting a decrease of **20,168 members** compared to March 2023.

Table 1 below outlines the percentage representation of each group within the total membership between 2023 and 2025:



Women

- Representation remains stable at approximately 20%, despite the drop in total membership.
- This suggests that women have maintained their proportional presence, though the total number of women members has likely decreased.

BAME Members

- Representation increased from 10% in 2023 to 12% in 2025.

- This is a positive proportional shift, but given the overall membership decline, the actual number of BAME members may not have increased significantly.
- The rise may also reflect improved data declaration rather than a surge in new BAME members.

BAME Women

- Representation remains static at 3%.
- With falling total membership, this group remains disproportionately small, reinforcing the need for targeted engagement and support.

Disabled Members

- Representation increased from 1% to 3%, which is encouraging.
- This may reflect better data collection and increased member confidence in declaring disability status.
- However, the total number of disabled members may still be low, and further work is needed to ensure visibility and inclusion.

Retired Members

- Representation dropped significantly from 6% to 2%.
- This sharp decline suggests that retired members may be disengaging or leaving the union at a higher rate than other groups.
- It may also reflect broader demographic shifts or changes in union engagement pre- and post-retirement.

Young Workers

- Representation remains steady at 8%, despite the overall membership decline.
- This stability is promising, but further efforts may be needed to grow youth engagement and ensure long-term sustainability.

Summary

While the proportional make up in CWU membership has improved in some areas—particularly among BAME and disabled members—the overall decline in CWU membership means these gains may not reflect growth in total numbers and highlights the need to focus on keeping members engaged and improving how we collect diversity data.

Section 2: Activism - Diversity Breakdown

National membership data = Women members = 20%, BAME members = 12%, BAME Women = 3%, members with disabilities = 3%, young workers = 8%.

To assess whether CWU structures reflect the diversity of our membership, this section compares membership rates—broken down by equality strands—with activist representation across the union’s democratic structures. These comparisons help identify gaps in proportionality and areas for improvement. Activism rates from the CWU’s 2023 Proportionality Report have been included.

Table 2 provides an over view of CWU members in Branch and branch committee roles by gender, ethnicity (BAME), disability, and age (young workers). To highlight areas of proportional and under-representation, the table has been colour-coded: green indicates proportional representation, while red highlights under-representation.

Table 2

Branch role	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
Total Branch Positions and Committee members	5244	5323	829	841	15.81	488	471	9.31	75	79	1.43	325	221	6.20	172	180	3.28
Increase/Decrease	-79		-12			17			-4			104			-8		

Table 2 shows that there are 79 fewer CWU representatives holding CWU positions in 2025 compared to 2023. Among those no longer in post are 12 women, 4 BAME women, and 8 young workers. Despite this overall decline, there have been increases in the number of representatives

who identify as BAME or as having a disability. These changes may be attributed to improvements in members self-declaration, reductions in overall membership, or the impact of branch mergers.

Dual Roles

Currently, 996 (23%) of representatives hold more than one CWU position. The number of roles per person varies significantly, ranging from two roles—such as those held by NEC and PEC/TFS committee members—to as many as six roles in smaller branches.

Age demographics of representatives

Age Demographics of CWU Trade Union Representatives

- **3.39% are aged 20–29 years**
- **14.68% are aged 30–40 years**
- **23.16% are aged 41–50 years**
- **39.58% are aged 51-60 years**
- **17.09% are aged 61–70 years**
- **0.87% are aged 71–80+ years**
- **0.75% have not declared their date of birth**

According to the latest data, the age profile of CWU trade union representatives shows a significant concentration in age ranges, with 38% of representatives aged 51-60 years, 22% aged 41–50 and 14% aged 30–40, while only 3% are aged 20–29. This indicates a clear underrepresentation of younger members, which could pose challenges for long-term sustainability and succession planning. At the other end of the spectrum, 16% of reps are aged 61–70, and 0.8% are over 71, suggesting that a notable proportion of leadership is approaching retirement age. Additionally, 0.7% of members have not declared their date of birth, which limits the accuracy of demographic analysis. Overall, the data highlights a pressing need for targeted strategies to attract and retain younger representatives while ensuring knowledge transfer from older cohorts

Branch Positions

The following section provides an analysis of the diversity makeup across individual branch positions. CWU branches include a variety of elected positions, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. To effectively monitor and review activism participation rates among diverse members—and to identify any disparities across specific roles—branch positions have been grouped into the following six categories:

1. Branch Principal Officers
2. Branch Officers
3. Branch Learning Representatives
4. Branch Health and Safety Officers
5. Branch Industrial Relations / Workplace Representatives
6. Branch Committee Members (Only)

It is important to note that Branch Disability and LGBT+ Champions are not formal positions recognised under CWU rules. As such, they have not been included in this report. However, over the past 24 months, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of CWU branches introducing these roles. These positions have been growing year on year, reflecting a positive shift towards greater inclusion and representation across the union.

- 13% of branches now have a Disability Champion, up from 12% in 2023.
- 25% of branches have an LGBT+ Champion, compared to 18% recorded the previous year.

This upward trend demonstrates the union’s ongoing commitment to promoting diversity and ensuring that underrepresented groups have a voice within branch structures.

Branch Principal Officers

Branch Principal Officers include the Branch Chairperson, Branch Secretary, and Branch Treasurer, along with their respective deputies. These roles are responsible for managing the branch’s operations, overseeing administrative tasks, and supporting the work of other branch representatives and officers. As such, they play a vital leadership role within the branch and are central to promoting democratic engagement and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of CWU members in Principal Officer roles by gender, ethnicity (BAME), disability, and age (young workers). To highlight areas of proportional and under-representation, the table has been colour-coded: green indicates proportional representation, while red highlights under-representation.

Table 3

Branch role	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women 2025	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
Branch Chairperson	115	121	13	9	11.30	5	4	4.348	0	0	0.00	9	3	7.83	0	1	0.00
Branch Vice Chairperson	67	70	6	6	8.57	3	2	4.478	1	0	1.49	4	3	5.97	1	0	1.49
Branch Secretary	117	123	10	10	8.13	10	14	8.547	1	2	0.85	14	14	11.97	0	0	0.00
Branch Deputy/Assistant Secretary	145	154	29	33	18.83	14	14	9.655	3	3	2.07	18	18	12.41	1	3	0.69
Branch Section Secretary	31	31	4	3	12.90	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	4	4	12.90	0	0	0.00
Branch Retired Section Secretary	76	70	4	5	5.71	0	1	0	0	0	0.00	4	3	5.26	0	0	0.00
Branch Treasurer	112	114	25	26	21.93	0	4	0	1	1	0.89	7	3	6.25	2	3	1.79
Totals	663	683	91	92	13.73	32	39	4.83	6	6	0.90	60	48	9.05	4	7	0.60
Increase/decrease 2022-2023	-20		-1			-7			0			12			-3		

Table 3 highlights a decline in the total number of representatives holding branch principal officer roles, with 20 fewer individuals in these positions compared to 2023. Interestingly, despite a 4-percentage point drop in retired membership, the number of representatives serving as Branch Retired Section Secretaries has increased from 70 to 76. These changes may be partially explained by the impact of branch mergers and vacant posts being filled.

Women's Representation

- Women's representation has seen a slight decrease overall, moving from 92 in 2023 to 91 in 2025.
- There has been a notable increase in the number of women holding branch chairperson roles, rising from 9 to 13 over the same period.

BAME Representation

- Branch secretary roles have experienced the most significant decline in BAME representation, falling from 14 in 2023 to 10 this year.
- While BAME members were proportionately represented in this position in previous years, they are now under-represented.
- There has also been decline in BAME representation in Branch treasurer and branch retired section secretary positions. BAME Representation in these roles is now absent.

Bame Women

- BAME women remain underrepresented across all branch principal roles.
- Notably, there has been a slight decline in the number of BAME women holding branch secretary positions, decreasing from two in 2023 to one in 2025.
- This shift is largely attributed to an increase in BAME women's representation on the Postal Executive, which, while positive, highlights the need for more robust succession planning to ensure continued diversity in branch-level leadership.

Members with Disabilities

- There has been a 22% Increase in disability representation between 2023 and 2025, with notable growth in Branch Treasurer and Chairperson roles.
- This is likely driven by an aging membership profile, as older individuals are more likely to acquire disabilities.
- Improved reporting and self-declaration may also have contributed, reflecting greater confidence and awareness around disability disclosure.

Young Workers

- Young workers remain underrepresented across all branch principal roles, with notable declines in Assistant/Deputy Secretary and Treasurer positions.
- A slight improvement is seen in Chairperson roles, increasing from 0 in 2023 to 1 in 2025, but overall progress remains limited.

Branch Officers

Branch officer roles include Organising, Communications, Political, and Equality Officers. Each of these positions plays a vital role in supporting the branch's strategic and operational functions. Equality Officers, in particular, are central to promoting and advancing equality at the local level. Their primary responsibility is to lead on the CWU's equality agenda within the branch, ensuring that equality issues are actively addressed and embedded in branch activities. Meanwhile, Organising, Communications, and Political Officers focus on their respective areas of expertise, contributing to the branch's overall effectiveness and engagement.

Table 4 provides a breakdown of representation across these officer roles, specifically highlighting the participation of women, BAME members, BAME women, disabled members, and young workers. To support the identification of proportional and underrepresented groups, the table uses a colour-coded system: red indicates areas of under-representation, while green denotes proportional representation. For additional context, 2023 activism rates are also included.

Table 4

Branch Position	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women 2025	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
Branch Organiser	29	21	3	1	10.34	5	3	17.24	0	0	0.00	5	2	17.24	1	1	3.45
Branch Editor/ Communications Officer	5	14	1	5	20.00	1	2	20.00	1	1	20.00	0	1	0.00	0	0	0.00
Branch Equality Officer	96	102	38	45	39.58	23	22	23.96	4	4	4.17	14	15	14.58	1	2	1.04
Branch Political Officer	92	96	6	7	6.52	4	5	4.35	0	0	0.00	8	6	8.70	3	2	3.26
Branch Young Workers Officer	68	83	23	28	33.82	8	11	11.76	2	2	2.94	3	6	4.41	47	61	69.12
Branch Women's Officer	97	108	97	107	100.00	12	13	12.37	12	12	12.37	5	10	5.15	4	8	4.12
Branch BAME Officer	65	74	7	11	10.77	48	54	73.85	2	6	3.08	1	2	1.54	2	3	3.08
Totals	452	498	175	204	38.72	101	110	22.35	21	25	4.65	36	42	7.96	58	77	12.83
Increase/decrease	-46		-29			-9			-4			-6			-19		

Table 4 shows a net decrease of 46 members holding active branch officer roles compared to 2023. The most significant drop in representation among diverse groups is seen in young workers, with the number of Young Worker Officers falling from 77 in 2023 to 58 in 2025.

There are also notable reductions in Branch Communications and BAME Officer roles, both decreasing by nine. Despite the overall decline, there has been growth in Branch Organiser roles by eight. This is a positive development, particularly in the context of declining trade union membership.

Women's Representation

- Women's representation in Branch Officer roles has declined by 5% since 2023.
- The largest decline was in branch equality officer positions. Despite the decrease, women still make up 40% of branch equality role holders, indicating proportional representation is being maintained in this area.
- There has been a slight improvement in Organiser roles, increasing from 1 in 2023 to 3 in 2025. While this growth is encouraging, overall progress remains limited and highlights the need for continued focus on developing and sustaining the representation of women's voices in these key positions.

BAME Representation

- BAME representation in Branch Officer roles has declined from 110 in 2023 to 101 in 2025, suggesting a downward trend that may be linked to a broader national decline in membership.
- The most notable drop was in BAME Officer roles, suggesting a need to strengthen support and visibility for this specific position.

- Despite the overall decline, BAME members remain proportionally represented across most branch officer roles except for Political Officer and Young Worker Officer positions.

BAME Women Representation

- BAME women's representation in Branch Officer roles has decreased by 4 since 2023, primarily due to fewer BAME women holding the designated BAME Officer position.
- Despite this decline, BAME women continue to be proportionally represented across most Branch Officer roles.
- However, underrepresentation remains in key roles, specifically in Political Officer and Branch Organising positions, suggesting targeted support may be needed to improve diversity in these areas.

Members with Disabilities

- Representation of members with disabilities in Branch Officer roles has declined by 6, with the most significant drop seen in Young Workers and Women's Officer roles, where representation has halved.
- Despite this decline, members with disabilities remain proportionally represented across nearly all Branch Officer roles.
- Exceptions to this trend include the Communications Officer and BAME Officer roles, where representation of disabled members is notably lower.

Young Workers representation

- There has been a notable drop in young worker activists this year holding branch officer roles, with 19 fewer individuals compared to previous data recorded in 2023.

- The most significant decrease is in young workers occupying the designated "young worker" branch officer position -down by 14. Despite this, young workers still maintain proportional representation in this specific role.
- Outside of the young worker-specific role, young workers continue to be underrepresented in all other branch officer positions.

Branch Learning Representatives

Branch Learning Representatives include both Branch Lead Union Learning Reps and Branch Union Learning Reps. These roles are vital in fostering a positive learning culture within the workplace. They are responsible for organising local learning opportunities, encouraging participation among members and representatives, and supporting personal and professional development across the branch.

Table 5 provides a breakdown of representation among women, BAME members, BAME women, disabled members, and young workers in these roles. To help identify areas of proportional and under-representation, the table uses a colour-coded system: red indicates under-representation, while green highlights proportional representation. For added context, 2023 activism rates are also included.

Table 5

Branch Learning Representative Roles																	
Branch role	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
Branch Lead Union Learning Rep	52	45	15	11	28.85	6	3	11.54	2	0	3.85	7	5	13.46	1	0	1.92
Branch Union Learning Rep	97	111	17	25	17.53	18	19	18.56	3	4	3.09	14	12	14.43	0	1	0.00
Totals	149	156	32	36	24.16	24	22	16.11	5	4	3.36	21	17	14.09	1	1	0.67
Increase/ Decrease	-7		-4			2			1			4			0		

Table 5 highlights a net decrease of seven members actively serving as Branch Learning Representatives compared to 2023. The most notable decline in representation among diversity groups is within this role, with the number of Branch Union Learning Representatives dropping from 111 in 2023 to 97 in 2025. However, despite this reduction, the specific role of Branch Lead Union Learning Representative has seen a 14% increase.

Women's Representation

- Between 2023 and 2025, there 4 less active women serving as Branch Union Learning Reps, indicating a concerning drop in general representation within these roles.
- Despite the overall decline, there has been a positive increase in women taking on Branch Lead Union Learning Rep positions.

- Overall Women are proportionally represented in Union Learning Rep roles, indicating a balanced gender presence across the broader structure.

BAME representation

- Between 2023 and 2025, there has been an increase in BAME individuals holding Branch Union Learning Rep roles. This increase has been most notable in Branch Lead Union Learning Rep positions.
- Overall, BAME representation remains proportionate within Union Learning Rep roles, indicating balanced inclusion across the structure.

BAME Women

- Between 2023 and 2025, BAME women's representation in Union Learning Rep roles increased by 1.
- BAME women continue to be proportionally represented across all Union Learning Rep roles, including both standard and leadership positions.
- This growth, though modest, reflects progress in promoting intersectional diversity, particularly in ensuring that both ethnicity and gender are represented.

Members with Disabilities

- Since 2023, there are four more activists with disabilities holding Union Learning Representative positions, reflecting a positive step toward greater inclusion.
- Members with disabilities continue to be proportionally represented across all Union Learning Rep roles.

Young workers

- As of 2025, one young worker now holds a Branch Lead Union Learning Rep position, marking a notable improvement from 2023, when young workers were entirely absent from these structures.
- Despite this progress, young workers continue to be underrepresented across Union Learning Rep roles, highlighting the need for Succession planning and engagement strategies in Union learning rep roles.

Branch Health and Safety Representatives

Branch Health and Safety Representatives include both Area Health and Safety Representatives (ASRs) and Workplace Safety Representatives (WSRs). These representatives play a vital role in maintaining safe working environments by conducting regular workplace inspections, consulting with members and management on health and safety matters and ensuring that employers comply with their safety policies and legal obligations.

Table 6 provides a detailed breakdown of representation across key demographics — including women, BAME members, BAME women, disabled members, and young workers — within branch health and safety roles. To help identify areas of proportional and under-representation, the table has been colour-coded: green indicates proportional representation, while red highlights areas where representation is lacking. For context, 2023 activism rates are also included.

Table 6

Branch Area Health and Safety Roles																	
Branch role	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities holding		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
Branch Area Health and Safety Rep (ASR)	128	110	13	7	10.16	4	4	3.13	1	1	0.78	11	5	8.59	0	1	0.00
Branch Workplace Health and Safety Rep	931	939	140	127	15.04	62	73	6.66	9	11	0.97	40	24	4.30	22	15	2.36
Totals	1059	1049	153	134	14.45	66	77	6.23	10	12	0.94	51	29	4.82	22	16	2.08
Increase/ Decrease	10		19			-11			-2			22			6		

As illustrated, in Table 6 the total number of Health and Safety Reps increased slightly from 1049 in 2023 to 1059 in 2025. This includes both Area Health and Safety Reps (ASRs) and Workplace Safety Reps (WSRs).

Women's Representation

- Women holding ASR roles increased from 7 to 13, raising their representation to 10%.
- In WSR roles, women increased from 127 to 140, with a representation of 15%.
- Overall, women's representation rose from 134 to 152, but the percentage remains relatively low at 14%, indicating women remain under-represented in health and safety roles.

BAME Representation

- BAME representation in ASR roles remained static at 4, while in WSR roles it decreased from 73 to 62.
- Overall BAME representation dropped from 77 to 66, with a percentage of 6%, suggesting a decline and continued under-representation.

BAME Women

- BAME women in ASR roles remained at 1, and in WSR roles decreased from 11 to 9.
- Total BAME women dropped from 12 to 10, with a representation of 0.94%, highlighting significant under-representation.

Members with Disabilities

- ASR roles held by disabled members increased from 5 to 11, and WSR roles from 24 to 40.
- Overall, representation rose from 29 to 51, reaching 5%, showing positive progress.

Young Workers

- ASR roles held by young workers decreased from 1 to 0.
- WSR roles increased from 15 to 22, showing some improvement.
- Overall, young worker representation rose from 16 to 22, but remains low and under-represented.

Branch Industrial Relations

Branch Industrial Relations and Workplace Representatives include Area Delivery, Processing, and Distribution Representatives within the Postal constituency, as well as Workplace Industrial Relations Representatives in the T&FS constituency. These representatives play a crucial role in supporting CWU members by negotiating and consulting with both management and members on workplace issues, particularly those related to employment terms and conditions.

Table 7 presents a breakdown of representation across key demographics — including women, BAME members, BAME women, disabled members, and young workers — within these roles. To help identify areas of proportional and under-representation, the table has been colour-coded: green indicates proportional representation, while red highlights areas where representation is lacking. For added context, 2023 activism rates are also included.

Table 7

Branch Industrial Relations (IR) and workplace representatives																	
Branch role	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
Branch Area Delivery Rep	103	96	3	3	2.91	1	1	0.97	1	1	0.97	7	6	6.80	0	0	0.00
Branch deputy/assistant Area Delivery Rep	80	72	5	4	6.25	3	2	3.75	0	0	0.00	3	2	3.75	1	0	1.25
Branch Area Distribution rep	40	39	1	2	2.50	1	1	2.50	1	0	2.50	3	3	7.50	0	0	0.00
Branch deputy/assistant Area Distribution Rep	30	33	0	2	0.00	3	1	10.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Branch Area Processing Rep	43	44	0	1	0.00	8	8	18.60	0	0	0.00	2	1	4.65	0	0	0.00
Branch deputy/assistant Area Processing Rep	27	36	2	1	7.41	1	4	3.70	0	0	0.00	2	1	7.41	0	1	0.00
Industrial Relations Workplace Rep	1541	1532	158	142	10.25	115	109	7.46	9	10	0.58	37	34	2.40	16	21	1.04
Industrial Relations deputy/assistant Workplace Rep (Postal)	591	636	85	97	14.38	59	58	9.98	5	9	0.85	17	6	2.88	16	13	2.71
Workplace Rep (T&FS)	207	192	0	44	0.00	0	18	0.00	0	5	0.00	0	16	0.00	0	28	0.00
Workplace deputy/assistant Rep (TF&S)	48	15	7	6	14.58	2	1	4.17	1	0	2.08	1	1	2.08	1	0	2.08
Totals	2710	1852	261	302	11.14	193	203	7.12	17	25	0.63	72	70	2.66	34	63	1.25
Increase/Decrease	858		-41			-10			-8			2			-29		
Branch Committee Member only	263	287	64	73		23	20		7	7		22	15		8	16	

Table 7 shows there are now 853 more activists holding Industrial Relations Representative positions compared to 2023. This growth has been particularly evident in Workplace and Deputy Workplace IR roles, reflecting a positive trend in engagement and representation within these key areas of union activity. It's important to note that, due to branch mergers and a decline in overall membership, some representatives may now be holding dual roles. This consolidation of responsibilities helps maintain branch operations and may contribute to the increase in reported activism figures within certain roles.

Women's Representation

- There are now 41 fewer women in active Industrial Relations roles compared to 2023. This decline is most evident in the T&FS constituency, where the number of female workplace representatives dropped from 48 in 2023 to just 15 in 2025.
- In Area Delivery Representative roles, only 3 out of 103 role holders are women, equating to 2.91%, which highlights significant underrepresentation.
- In Deputy/Assistant Area Delivery Representative roles, 5 out of 80 hold holders are women — an increase of 1 compared to 2023 — bringing representation to 6.25%, though still below proportional levels.
- There have been notable increases in women's representation within the postal constituency, particularly in Deputy/Assistant Processing roles and Industrial Relations Workplace Representative positions.
- Overall Women remain underrepresented in Industrial roles.

BAME Representation

- There are now 10 fewer BAME activists holding Industrial Relations roles compared to 2023, with the decline primarily occurring in T&FS workplace representative positions.
- In Area Delivery Representative roles, only 1 out of 103 role holders is BAME, representing 0.97%

- Deputy/Assistant Area Delivery and Distribution Representative roles include 3 BAME members, showing a modest improvement in these specific areas.
- Despite some progress, overall BAME representation remains low and under-represented across Industrial Relations roles.

BAME Women

- BAME women representation fell by 8 between 2023 and 2025
- One BAME woman currently holds an Area Distribution Representative role, accounting for just 2.5%, which highlights under-representation.
- No BAME women are recorded in Deputy/Assistant roles, indicating a complete absence from these positions.
- Overall, BAME women remain grossly under-represented across Industrial Relations roles, underscoring the need for targeted action to improve inclusion.

Members with Disabilities

- Among Area Delivery Representatives, 7 members with disabilities are recorded in 2025, up from 6 in 2023, representing 7% — a positive increase.
- Similar growth trends have been observed in other postal area representative roles, including Area Processing and Deputy/Assistant Delivery and Processing positions.
- Members with disabilities are now proportionally represented across these postal representative roles, reflecting progress in inclusion and accessibility. This increase may also be partly attributed to the aging profile of representatives and the physical nature of the work, which can lead to a higher number of reps identifying as disabled over time.

Young Workers

- Young worker representation has decreased by 29 between 2023 and 2025, with the most significant decline seen in local workplace Industrial Relations positions across both the Postal and T&FS constituencies.
- There has been slight growth in Postal Deputy/Assistant Workplace IR roles, suggesting a positive trajectory in some areas.
- However, young workers remain significantly under-represented across Industrial Relations roles overall, highlighting the urgent need for succession planning and targeted engagement to ensure future sustainability of union activism.

Divisional representative Postal

Divisional representative positions within the postal constituency include both divisional representatives and their deputy (or sub-divisional) counterparts. These are senior industrial relations roles, elected to represent a division of branches and members. Their responsibilities include negotiating and consulting with senior management on workplace issues, particularly those related to employment terms and conditions.

Table 8 provides a breakdown of representation across key demographics — including women, BAME members, BAME women, disabled members, and young workers — within both divisional and deputy divisional roles. To help identify areas of proportional and under-representation, the table has been colour-coded: green indicates proportional representation, while red highlights areas where representation is lacking. For context, 2023 activism rates are also included.

Table 8

Divisional Role	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
Divisional Representatives																	
Divisional Reps	20	19	0	0	0.00	0	1	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	0	5.00	0	0	0.00
Deputy Divisional Reps	9	10	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Total Divisional Representatives	29	29	0	0	0.00	0	1	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	0	3.45	0	0	0.00
Increase/ Decrease	0		0			0			0			1			0		

Table 8 shows there have been stagnation or decline across most diversity metrics in divisional representative roles between 2023 and 2025. Women, BAME individuals, BAME women, and young workers remain entirely unrepresented, with no improvement over the two-year period. The only area showing progress is the inclusion of one member with disabilities in 2025, marking a small but notable step forward. These findings highlight an urgent need for targeted strategies to improve representation and inclusive decision making, particularly for women, ethnic minorities, and younger members.

National positions

Representation in National Positions

For the purpose of this report, CWU national-level roles have been categorised into three distinct groups: *National Positions*, *National Executive Members*, and *National BT Industrial Teams*. National Positions include senior leadership roles such as the President, Vice President,

General and Deputy General Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries (both industrial and non-industrial), and Officers and Heads of HQ Departments. National Executive Members refer to those serving on the National Executive Council, Postal Executive, and Telecoms and Financial Services Executive. The National BT Industrial Teams consist of lay members and executive representatives responsible for specific areas of BT business, such as Openreach.

Table 9 provides a breakdown of representation across key diversity groups—women, BAME individuals, BAME women, members with disabilities, and young workers—within National Positions. To highlight disparities, the table uses a colour-coded system: red indicates under-representation, while green reflects proportional representation. 2023 activism rates are also included.

Table 9

National Position	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding position		% of Women	No. of BAME holding position		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding position		% of BAME Women holding position	No. of members with disabilities holding position		% of members with disabilities	No. Young workers holding position		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
President	1	1	0	1	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Vice president	1	1	0	1	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
General Secretary	1	1	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Deputy General Secretary (T&FS)	1	1	1	0	100.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)	1	1	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Assistant Secretary (Postal)	4	4	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Assistant Secretary (TF&S)	6	7	2	2	33.33	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Heads/Officer of Department	3	5	1	1	33.33	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
Totals	18	21	4	5		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	
Increase/ Decrease	-3		-1			0			0			0			0		

Table 9 shows between 2023 and 2025, the total number of national role holders decreased slightly from 21 to 18. While representation of women showed a slight decline —falling from five to four individuals – women remain proportionality represented in national positions such as, heads of department, Assistant secretaries and in Deputy General Secretary post (T&FS). BAME, BAME women, members with disabilities, and young workers however remain entirely absent across both years.

Representation in National Executive Positions

Table 10 presents a detailed overview of the representation of women, BAME individuals, BAME women, members with disabilities, and young workers within National Executive roles. To support the identification of proportional versus under-represented groups, the table uses a colour-coded format—red indicates under-representation, while green highlights proportional representation. Additionally, 2023 activism rates are included.

Table 10

	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women 2025	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities holding role		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
NEC Members	24	34	7	10	29.17	6	8	25.00	3	3	12.50	5	5	20.83	2	3	8.33
PEC Members	14	17	2	3	14.29	3	2	21.43	1	0	7.14	1	1	7.14	0	0	0.00
T&FS Members	13	16	7	8	53.85	2	2	15.38	1	2	7.69	1	1	7.69	1	2	7.69
Total Executive roles	51	67	16	22	31.37	11	12	21.57	5	5	9.80	7	7	13.73	3	5	5.88
Increase/Decrease	-16		-6			-1			0			0			-2		

Table 10 shows that between 2023 and 2025, the total number of national executive role holders decreased from 67 to 51, reflecting the union’s strategic decision to restructure and reduce the number of positions in response to declining membership. This reduction in roles was accompanied by a notable drop in representation across several key diversity groups. The number of women in national executive positions fell by six, while BAME representation declined by one. Additionally, BAME women, members with disabilities saw no change, and young workers saw a further reduction of two. These findings highlight the unintended impact of organisational restructuring on diversity and proportionality. While guaranteed seats under union rules have helped maintain proportional representation on the National Council, under-

representation of women and young workers persists within the Postal Executive. Furthermore, young workers also remain underrepresented from the Telecoms and Financial Services Executive (T&FSE) committees.

BT National Teams

Table 11 provides a breakdown of National BT Industrial Team positions held by women, BAME members, BAME women, disabled members, and young workers. To support the identification of proportional and under-represented groups within each category, the table has been colour-coded: green indicates proportional representation, while red highlights areas of under-representation. Additionally, 2023 activism rates are included.

Table 11

National Teams (TFS)	Total Role holders		No. of Women holding role		% of Women	No. of BAME holding role		% of BAME	No of BAME Women holding role		% of BAME Women holding Role	No. of Role holders with disabilities holding role		% of Role holders with disabilities	No. of Young workers holding role		% of Young workers
	2025	2023	2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023		2025	2023	
Business	2	6	0	3	0.00	0	1	0.00	0	1	0.00	1	1	50.00	0	0	0.00
Consumer	5	5	1	3	20.00	1	0	20.00	0	0	0.00	1	1	20.00	1	1	20.00
Digital & Networks	3	5	1	1	33.33	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	1	33.33	0	0	0.00
Openreach	5	7	1	2	20.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	2	2	40.00
Totals	15	23	3	9		1	1		0	1		3	3		3	3	
Increase/Decrease	-8		-6			0			-1			0			0		

Table 11 shows a reduction in the number of positions across BT national teams between 2023 and 2025. The Business national team saw its seats reduced from six to two, the Digital and Network team from five to three, and the Openreach team from seven to five. These reductions reflect structural changes within the union, as well as efforts to reduce costs.

Women Representation

- There are now 6 less women holding positions on BT National teams.
- The Business team now has no women in post, highlighting a gap in gender representation in that area.
- Despite the overall reductions in team size, the Digital & Networks team has the highest proportion of women, with 33% of roles held by female representatives. This is followed by the Consumer and Openreach teams, each with 20% female representation.

BAME Representation

- Only 1 BAME individual holds a national team role, with Consumer being the only team with BAME representation, at 20%.
- Business, Digital & Networks, and Openreach has no BAME representation, indicating a significant underrepresentation across most teams.

BAME Women

- BAME women representation fell by 1 between 2023- 2025.
- There is now no recorded data for BAME women in any of the national teams.

Members with Disabilities

- Each of the Business, Consumer, and Digital & Networks teams has 1 representative who declared a disability.

- Openreach has no recorded representation of individuals with disabilities.
- This shows no change in disability representation from figures recorded in 2023.

Young Workers

- There has been no change on national teams for young worker representation.
- Openreach teams still have the highest number of young workers, with 2 individuals in post.
- Consumer has 1 young worker, while Business and Digital & Networks had none.

Conclusion

The 2025 CWU Proportionality Report highlights both progress and persistent challenges in achieving proportional diverse representation across the union's structures. While there have been encouraging increases in the proportional representation of BAME members, disabled activists, and BAME women in certain roles, overall diversity remains uneven—particularly in senior and national positions.

Structural changes, including branch mergers and reductions in national roles, have impacted the distribution of activist positions. These shifts, combined with a decline in overall membership, underscore the importance of accurate data collection, voluntary disclosure, and succession planning to maintain and improve representation during times of change.

Key findings include:

- **Women remain proportionally represented in several areas, but underrepresentation persists in industrial and health & safety roles.**
- **BAME and BAME women continue to face significant barriers to representation, especially in senior roles at all levels.**
- **Disabled members have seen improved visibility and proportionality, reflecting better self-declaration and inclusion efforts.**
- **Young workers remain consistently underrepresented across most structures, highlighting an urgent need for targeted engagement and leadership development.**

The CWU's commitment to diversity is evident in the growing adoption of Disability and LGBT+ Champion roles at branch level, despite these not being formally recognised under union rules. These developments reflect a positive cultural shift and a growing awareness of the need for inclusive representation.

Moving forward, the union must continue to:

- Strengthen pathways for underrepresented groups to access leadership roles.
- Improve data accuracy through enhanced member engagement and branch updates.

- Ensure that structural changes do not unintentionally undermine diversity efforts

By embedding proportionality into every level of decision-making, the CWU can build a more inclusive, representative, and resilient union for all its members.

September 2025