

# **UNISON**

## **Job Brief: National Women's Officer**

### **Introduction**

As the largest trade union in the UK and biggest public service union in Europe, we're committed to improving the working lives of our 1.3 million members, and in particular our one million women members. UNISON campaigns for equality in the workplace for our women members – the majority of our membership – and for improvements to women's rights in the wider community.

Join us and you will find that we're equally committed to our staff, with family-friendly hours, excellent benefits and plenty of personal development opportunities.

UNISON is the trade union for members working in the public services, private, voluntary and community sectors and in the energy services. We employ 1200 staff, of whom about 400 work out of our head office in Euston, central London. The remainder work in our twelve regions across the UK, including Northern Ireland.

UNISON's National Women's Officer is a key specialist post in the Union, leading implementation of our cutting-edge policy and campaigning work on women. The National Women's Officer works as part of a team of equality specialists in head office, called the Membership Participation Unit. The Membership Participation Unit provides specialist policy advice to all parts of the union, including other paid officers and committees and groups of union members.

### **UNISON – a union with equality at its heart**

UNISON is committed to achieving equality at work, in society and within our own union. Equality is one of UNISON's founding principles. As a trade union our primary focus is the workplace, tackling discrimination and promoting equality. However we also work outside the union to promote a fairer more equal society.

Part of UNISON's approach to achieving equality is the organisation of groups of members who may themselves face prejudice and discrimination. UNISON is committed to ensuring that all our members are able to be involved in the union, and their voices heard.

The Membership Participation Unit (MPU) works directly with six national committees of UNISON members: for Black members; disabled members; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members; retired members; women members and young members. These committees work in partnership with other parts of the union to identify and promote our equality agenda. MPU officers also advise other national UNISON committees, including the National Executive Council and national negotiating bodies, on equality issues.

MPU works with UNISON's conference team to deliver a key annual event for each of the six groups of member's e.g. a conference or a residential development weekend.

## **Role of UNISON's National Women's Officer**

The National Women's Officer is a key specialist organising role within the Bargaining Negotiations and Equality Directorate. The role provides policy advice and guidance to the union including the lay member structures; providing support and guidance to regions, branches and full time officials. The role of National Women's Officer is generic in some areas and specialist in others. The post holder will be required to demonstrate significant knowledge of equality issues affecting women in the labour market, public sector and wider society and demonstrate experience working on women's equality.

The allocation of areas of work is the responsibility of the National Secretary and Head of the Membership Participation Unit. Areas of work are interchangeable and are regularly reviewed in discussion with the National Officer to meet the needs of the organisation and service to regions, branches and members.

The post will have lead responsibility for advising the National Executive Council, senior managers and other parts of the union on women's equality in and outside the workplace. They give a strategic lead to the union's wide ranging work on women's equality and work with others to develop and deliver policy, campaigns and organisational initiatives. A key part of this job will also involve working on women's equality issues across the BN&E Directorate and on general equalities work.

The National Women's Officer would work with UNISON's National Women's Committee to deliver an ambitious work programme, ensuring this is co-ordinated with the priorities and work of all other parts of the union. They progress women's issues at a national level. There is information about the work of UNISON women members on the website at <https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/women-members/>

The National Women's Officer encourages the activities of UNISON women members providing resources and organising advice. They provide advice to UNISON branches on promoting equality for women members, tackling discrimination in the workplace and recruiting women members into union membership and union activity. Although officers in MPU may advise individual members on their broad rights at work, detailed advice and representation of members with their employers takes place at local level.

There is a strong element of development work, supporting individuals and groups of women into union membership and activity.

In addition to working on women's issues, the post holder will be expected to develop specific pieces of work within the team to build knowledge and develop materials on the general equality policy of the Unit and across the union. They may from time to time be expected to cover other national officers within the Unit. The post holder will also work across the Bargaining Negotiations and Equality Directorate on allocated bargaining/negotiating projects.

UNISON works closely with other trade unions, the TUC and other partner organisations. The role involves working with the UNISON Campaign Fund and the Labour Link.

Candidates will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the challenges facing public sector workers, in particular, women workers and how trade unions can work to overcome

these. Candidates will have a personal commitment to trade unionism and a passion for equality.

## **The Role**

1. The National Officer is a key specialist organising role with responsibility for providing policy advice and guidance to the union including the lay member structures; providing leadership support and guidance to regions and branches; undertaking negotiations with employers and to represent the Union with outside organisations, including the media. The National Officer role includes:

- Providing policy advice and national guidance, as appropriate, to lay committees and other service group meetings and conferences.
- Initiating, organising and undertaking campaign activities at all levels and participating, as required, in UNISON-wide campaign activities.
- Initiating, developing, co-ordinating and implementing recruitment and organising plans and activities and improving women's participation in the union.
- Responding to government consultation documents and legislation.
- Providing support and assistance to regions and branches and advising regional organisers and staff, as appropriate, on matters of national or sector policy.
- Initiating actions and contributing to the development of European and International activities, as required.
- Providing advice to assist pay negotiations and conditions of service at national, regional and branch level for the membership.
- Maintaining relations with appropriate employers, employer representatives or organisations.
- Organising UNISON's National Women's Conference and assisting with other national and regional events.
- Representing UNISON on external and government bodies, as appropriate, at national level.

2. UNISON structures its work programme to provide for the systematic implementation of policies adopted by its democratic lay member structures. National Officers are responsible for contributing to the prioritisation of work plans and programmes arising out of the four key objectives determined by the National Executive Council:

- Meet the organising challenge posed by austerity measures, notably public expenditure cuts and increased outsourcing
- Protect and secure decent employment, pay and pensions for UNISON members

- Develop our campaigns in support of quality public services and forge alliances with other trade unions and community organisations
  - Ensure UNISON communications infrastructure and internal management systems are efficient and effective
3. The National Officer is a key deliverer of operational plans which ensure that the resources for their areas of responsibility are directed towards the achievement of the NEC's objectives and priorities. Plans identify priorities and establish progress or performance indicators to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of all work and achievements.
  5. The key aims of the union as detailed in our Rule Book seek to:
    - i) Extend and promote our influence in the workplace and in the Community.
    - ii) Promote, safeguard and facilitate participation by all members in the union's democracy, with special regard to women, members of all grades, black members, disabled members, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.
    - iii) Provide effective standards of service in the areas of representation and advice, information to members on the work of the union, the provision of financial benefits and the maintenance of educational facilities for members.
  4. To further these aims, the National Officer's role is to provide policy advice and guidance to the union including the lay member structures; to provide leadership support and guidance to regions and branches; to undertake negotiation with employers and to represent the Union with outside organisations, including the media.
  5. While the National Officer's post is a demanding position, requiring attendance at meetings outside of the conventional working day, UNISON is a strong supporter of the work/life balance ethos. Post holders will therefore prioritise their working arrangements in such a way as to demonstrate by example their personal commitment to these aims in partnership with senior lay officials.

The post involves occasional weekend and evening work and some travel outside London. UNISON is a strong supporter of the work/life balance ethos and staff take time off in lieu of work outside the normal working week

**UNISON**  
**NATIONAL WOMEN'S OFFICER**  
**MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION UNIT**  
**BARGAINING, NEGOTIATING & EQUALITIES**  
**REF: BNE/62**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Grade:</b>          | 3   |
| <b>Hours:</b>          | 35 per week   |
| <b>Location:</b>       | UNISON Centre, London NW1 2AY                                   |
| <b>Reports to:</b>     | National Secretary and/or Head of Membership Participation Unit |
| <b>Accountable to:</b> | National Secretary and/or Head of Membership Participation Unit |

**OVERALL SUMMARY**

The National Women's Officer is a key specialist organising role within the Bargaining Negotiations and Equality Directorate. The role provides policy advice and guidance to the union including the lay member structures; providing support and guidance to regions, branches and full-time officials. The role of the National Women's Officer is specialist; and the allocation of their areas of work is the responsibility of the National Secretary Equalities and the Head of the Membership Participation Unit.

The role will have responsibility for women members, advising the National Executive council, senior managers and other parts of the union on issues affecting women in and outside the workplace. They give a strategic lead to the union's wide ranging work on women's equality and work with others to develop policy, campaigns and organisational initiatives. A key part of this job will also involve working on specific issues across the BN&E Directorate and on women's equality work.

To act as a specialist adviser at senior level on equality and issues affecting women members and workers; to promote the recruitment, education, training and organisation of equality, representatives, self organisation and women members in UNISON. To support and work with the National Women's Committee, developing campaigns, policy and organisational initiatives across the union and Directorate.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Policy Development and Campaign Work**

- Providing policy advice and guidance, as appropriate, to lay committees and other service group meetings and conferences.

- Initiating, organising and undertaking campaign activities at all levels and participating, as required, in UNISON-wide campaign activities.
- Initiating, developing, co-ordinating and implementing recruitment and organising plans and activities.
- Responding to government consultation documents and legislation
- Assisting with policy research on women's equality
- Providing support and assistance to regions and branches and advising regional officers and staff, as appropriate, on matters of national service group or sector policy.
- Initiating actions and contributing to the development of European and international activities, as required.

### **Negotiations and Collective Bargaining**

- Maintaining relations with appropriate employers, employer representatives or organisations.
- Undertaking research and providing advice, assistance and information to facilitate negotiations at national, regional and branch level.
- Representing UNISON on negotiating and government bodies, as appropriate, at national levels.

### **Communications**

- Participating in appropriate meetings at all levels across the union.
- Representing UNISON, its members and aims and objectives to employers, the media, Government departments and other appropriate organisations and individuals.
- Communicating on a national and regional basis, and representing the interests of the union.
- Making speeches and presentations in a wide variety of settings.
- Initiating and undertaking appropriate training activities.

### **Managerial/Financial**

- Ensuring effective organisation of work, identifying priorities and providing assistance and guidance to support staff.

- Authorising expenditure on items within UNISON's financial standing orders and practices and relevant guidelines.
- Preparing budgetary submissions, and ensuring that activities are undertaken within the budgets allocated for activities and for assessing the financial implications of proposals and activities.

### **Administration**

- Preparing reports, agendas, minutes and correspondence, as appropriate. Operating within the administrative arrangements and timetables set, including ensuring the maintenance of suitable files and records.
- Undertaking all work within the aims and objectives of UNISON, particularly as regards initiating and developing equal opportunities strategies and programmes.
- Deputising, as required, for senior officers.
- Undertaking any other duties relevant to the key tasks and responsibilities identified above.

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**Person Specification and Selection Criteria**

UNISON is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnic origin, gender identity, family situation, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age. This person specification is designed to help members of Interviewing Panels judge the qualities of interviewees in a systematic and consistent way and in accordance with UNISON's equal opportunities policy. It is given to all job applicants for information.

**The Candidate**

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate a proven track record of working on women's equality, influencing and leading policy, campaigns and organising initiatives in a challenging and complex work environment. The candidate will possess an excellent mix of competencies and skills to enable UNISON to influence the social, political and public policy equality agenda and the challenges facing women members.

**Assessment code**

**A – Application Form**

**PI – Panel Interview**

| <b>Heading</b>                            | <b>Selection criteria</b>  | <b>Assessment</b> |
|---|--|-------------------|
| <b>1. Thinking</b>                        | 1.1 The ability to devise strategic initiatives and solutions in a large and complex organisation  | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|   | 1.2 Excellent analytical skills including ability to analyse complex information including law, statistics and financial information.  | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|   | 1.3 A high level understanding of, and ability to operate in, the political environment  | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|   | 1.4 A commitment to personal and staff development that supports the union's objectives  | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
| <b>2. Interpersonal and Communication</b> | 2.1 Highly developed interpersonal skills including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and ability to motivate</li> <li>• Commitment to corporate working</li> <li>• Ability to work with senior management</li> <li>• Team Working</li> <li>• Mentoring and coaching</li> </ul> | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handling difficult relationships</li> <li>• Handling complaints</li> <li>• Ability to work in partnership with lay members</li> <li>• Ability to develop co-operative working, both internally and externally</li> </ul> <p>2.2 Experience of promoting ideas in difficult situations and managing conflict</p> <p>2.3 Experience of influencing people at all levels internally and externally including the ability to influence and respond to national media using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation skills</li> <li>• Writing speeches, correspondence, reports newsletters etc</li> </ul> <p>2.4 Ability to work with national committee structures</p> <p>2.5 Awareness of and the ability to use Information and communications technology</p> | <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A</b></p> |
| <b>3. Initiative and Independence</b>   | <p>3.1 Track record of using initiative and independence over a broad area of activity involving decision making and discretion</p> <p>3.2 Experience of strategic campaigning</p> <p>3.3 Demonstrate experience of implementing decisions</p>   | <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p>                 |
| <b>4. Staff and Resource Management</b> | <p>4.1 Motivating and encouraging innovation including the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegate and supervise work</li> <li>• Build teams</li> </ul> <p>4.2 Demonstrable leadership skills gained in an organising environment</p> <p>4.3 Ability to work on and manage projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and evaluation</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Evidence of contributing towards budget management including</li> </ul>  | <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p> <p><b>A &amp; PI</b></p>                 |

|  |  |                   |
|--|--|-------------------|
|  | <p>monitoring progress and resource control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting clear objectives</li> </ul>                   |                   |
| <b>5. Physical Skills</b> <i>(with DDA modification where necessary)</i> | 5.1 Keyboard skills  | <b>A</b>          |
| <b>6. General Knowledge</b>  | 6.1 Understanding of and commitment to UNISON'S aims and objectives including the principles of equality and democracy                         | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|  | 6.2 Specialist knowledge of the key areas of employment law especially equality legislation  | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|  | 6.3 High level understanding of current women members, women's issues and workers, organising and equality issues                              | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|  | 6.4 Understanding of the UNISON bargaining agenda and priorities relevant to women members   | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|  | 6.5 Understanding of UNISON's organising agenda  | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|  | 6.6 In depth understanding of the role of trade unions and the national and local social and political environment in which the union operates | <b>A &amp; PI</b> |
|  | 6.7 Knowledge of ICT packages including Microsoft Office suite.  | <b>A</b>          |

**Other Information**

Please submit **four** copies of your completed application form.

Completed application forms must be received by Human Resources Department, UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY by no later than **5pm on Wednesday 19 September 2018** quoting ref: **BNE/62**.

Interviews will be held on 03 and 04 October 2018.