

UNISON
NATIONAL OFFICER
(HEALTH AND SAFETY)
HEALTH & SAFETY UNIT
BARGAINING, NEGOTIATING AND EQUALITIES DIRECTORATE
REF: BNE/18

JOB BRIEF

Introduction

1. UNISON is Britain's leading public services trade union, with over 1.3 million members working in the public services, private, voluntary and community sectors and in the energy services. We employ 1200 staff, approximately 370 at our national centre in Euston, central London and the remainder in our twelve regions across the UK, including Northern Ireland.

The National Officer (Health and Safety) is part of UNISON's Bargaining, Negotiating and Equalities Directorate. This is made up of four sections: Health, Education and Children's Services, Local Government and Business and Environment. Each Section is led by a National Secretary and Senior National Officer, to whom National Officers report.

The sections within the Directorate are responsible for national negotiation on pay and conditions of service; co-ordination of policy development and campaigning on a broad range of issues and links these activities to the recruitment and organisation of members.

The sections co-ordinate local negotiations and provide specialist advice and support on professional issues to UNISON's membership. They also service national lay committees, seminars and national conferences.

The Role

2. The National Officer (Health and Safety) is a specialist post. Key tasks include organising, responsibility for providing policy advice and guidance to the union on all aspects of health and safety, including the lay member structures; providing leadership support and guidance to regions and branches on health and safety in the workplace; engaging with outside organisations such as the HSE, public health bodies, governments and to represent the Union including with the media. The National Officer (Health and Safety) role includes:
 - Providing health and safety 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 including digital campaigns and use of social media.
 - Initiating, developing, co-ordinating and implementing recruitment and organising plans and activities.
 - Responding to government consultation documents and legislation in respect of health and safety.

- Providing support and assistance to regions and branches and advising regional organisers and staff, as appropriate, on matters of health and safety policy.
 - Initiating actions and contributing to the development of European and International activities, as required.
 - Maintaining relations with appropriate external organisations including the TUC and HSE, employer representatives or organisations.
 - Undertaking research and providing advice, assistance and information to facilitate negotiations at regional and branch level.
 - Assisting, where appropriate, in providing a co-ordinated guidance in accordance with policy, to support negotiations at regional and local level.
 - Representing UNISON on government bodies, as appropriate, at national levels.
 - Researching and preparing claims and presenting them to employers and undertaking consultation with the membership, through the lay member structure.
 - Organising a national Health and Safety Seminar for approx. 250 activists including putting together the programme and developing and delivering plenary sessions and workshops. This takes place every 2 years.
3. UNISON structures its work programme to provide for the systematic implementation of policies adopted by its democratic lay member structures. The National Officer (Health and Safety) is 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 Million Voices campaign 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
4. The National Officer (Health and Safety) 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.
6. To further these aims, the National Officer (Health and Safety) 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 represent the Union with outside organisations, including the media.
 7. The National Officer (Health and Safety) will have considerable knowledge of current health and safety legislation and policy in an industrial relations environment. The role will require some experience of engagement with employers in a position of responsibility or other relevant experience of involvement in negotiations.
 8. While the National Officer (Health and Safety) 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.
 9. The role of the National Officer (Health and Safety) is a specialist post and the allocation of their areas of work is the responsibility of the relevant National Secretary. Areas of work are annually reviewed in discussion with the National Officer to meet the needs of the organisation and service to regions, branches and members.

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JOB DESCRIPTION

Grade: 3
Hours: 35 per week
Location: UNISON Centre, London
Reports to: National Secretary

Overall Summary

The National Officer (Health and Safety) is a specialist post. Key tasks include organising, responsibility for providing policy advice and guidance to the union on all aspects of health and safety, including the lay member structures; providing leadership support and guidance to regions and branches on health and safety in the workplace; engaging with outside organisations such as the HSE, public health bodies, governments and to represent the Union including with the media.

Key Tasks and 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 including digital campaigns and use of social media 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.
- 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.
- Organising a national Health and Safety Seminar for approx. 250 activists putting together the programme and developing and delivering plenary sessions and workshops. This takes place every 2 years.

Negotiations and Collective Bargaining

- Maintaining relations with appropriate external organisations, employer representatives or lay committees within the union.
- Undertaking research and providing advice, assistance and information to facilitate negotiations at regional and branch level.
- Assisting, where appropriate, in providing health and safety guidance and bargaining service in accordance with policy, to support negotiations at regional and local level
- Representing UNISON on government bodies, as appropriate, at national levels.
- Researching and preparing health and safety guidance for members and activists

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 including online webinars.
- 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.

Assessment code

A – Application form

PI – Panel interview

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling complaints • Ability to work in partnership with lay members • Ability to develop co-operative working, both internally and externally <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"> • Presentation skills • Writing speeches, correspondence, reports newsletters etc <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>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p> <p>A</p>
3. Initiative and Independence	<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 including use of social media and other digital tools.</p> <p>3.3 Demonstrable experience of implementing decisions</p> <p>3.4 Demonstrable ability to research and prepare guidance documents and respond to government consultations</p> <p>3.5 Demonstrable ability to represent the union on negotiating and government bodies</p> <p>3.6 Demonstrable ability to work effectively with the Lay member structure</p>	<p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p>

4. Staff and Resource Management	4.1 Motivating and encouraging innovation including the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegate and supervise work • Build teams 	A & PI
	4.2 Demonstrable leadership skills gained in a trade union environment	A & PI
	4.3 Ability to work on and manage projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and evaluation • Time management • Evidence of contributing towards budget management including monitoring progress and resource control • Setting clear objectives 	A & PI
5. Physical Skills <i>(with DDA modification as necessary)</i>	5.1 Keyboard skills	A
6. General Knowledge	6.1 Understanding of and commitment to UNISON'S aims and objectives including the principles of equality and democracy	A & PI
	6.2 Knowledge of key areas of health and safety law.	A & PI
	6.3 High level understanding of current health and safety legislation and key issues	A & PI
	6.4 Understanding of the UNISON bargaining agenda	A & PI
	6.5 Understanding of UNISON's organising agenda	A & PI
	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	A & PI
	6.7 Knowledge of ICT packages including Microsoft Office suite.	A