

## **JOB BRIEF: NATIONAL SECRETARY**

### **Introduction**

1. UNISON is Britain's leading public service 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.
2. There are four National Secretaries responsible for the main occupational sectors and groups within UNISON. These jobs sit within the Negotiations, Bargaining and Equalities Directorate and will report to the Assistant General Secretary for this area.
3. Although these jobs are generic the current vacancy is with the Business and Environment Group. Business, Community & Environment represents over 150,000 members working in electricity, gas and water companies, the Environment Agency, Passenger Transport Executives and Bus Companies, British Waterways, regional and local airports, private contractors and the community and voluntary sector.

### **Strategic Development**

4. The National Secretary is a member of the Union's Senior Management Group (SMG). The SMG is chaired by the General Secretary and is responsible for the overall strategic and operational management of the Union. The SMG's role is to:
  - Assist the General Secretary in the development of organisational strategy and planning to achieve UNISON's internal and external objectives and priorities.
  - Co-ordinate functions and activities across the union to ensure effective campaigning, integrated working and efficient delivery of key services to regions, branches and members.
  - Work to build UNISON's public profile and external influence.
  - Communicate the work and achievements of the Union to our members and staff; to ensure regular communications with staff and between managers and staff, and provide effective mechanisms for developing staff and involving them in decision making.
  - Develop good management practice.
  - Develop performance standards and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.
5. UNISON structures its work programme to provide for the systematic implementation of policies adopted by its democratic lay member structures. Senior managers 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:
  - Recruiting, organising and representing members.
  - Negotiating and bargaining on behalf of members and promoting equality.

- Campaigning and promoting UNISON on behalf of members.
  - Developing an efficient and effective Union.
6. The National Secretary's role is to develop in partnership with senior lay officials, an operational plan for the relevant groups, to ensure that resources are directed towards the achievement of the NEC's objectives and priorities and maximise resources on recruiting, organising and negotiating on behalf of members, supporting branches and regions.
  7. 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 fair representation for women, 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.
  8. To further these aims, candidates must be able to demonstrate an ability to oversee the political development of the group and implementation of national campaigning objectives; they will have had considerable experience of handling the media and developing a media strategy, and will have excellent presentation and public speaking skills. They will also be expected to demonstrate an understanding and commitment to partnership working within an organisation, and a strong commitment to public service ethos.
  9. Candidates will also have knowledge of an industrial relations environment, with practical experience of leading major negotiations with employers at national level. They will be a competent advocate and possess strong interpersonal skills and an ability to interact with people at all levels. These include government ministers, regional and national politicians, civil servants, public and private sector employers, and a diverse range of occupational groups and other trade unionists.

### **Managerial**

10. It is essential that the person appointed to this role possesses a dynamic and enthusiastic style of management and leadership that is able to encourage and motivate a wide range of staff and lay member activists. The National Secretary provides leadership for the Service Group Team to ensure the efficient and effective deployment of resources in the implementation of national policy objectives and priorities.
11. Candidates will have worked as senior managers in the public or voluntary sector, for a trade union or for a political or campaigning organisation with similar aims and values to UNISON.

12. The Negotiations, Bargaining and Equalities directorate is currently undergoing a period of change to meet the Union's developing recruitment, organisation and negotiating agenda. Candidates will need to be skilled and experienced in leading major change management projects. They will have considerable experience of selecting, motivating, developing and managing staff to improve their performance.
13. The union is accredited under the Investors in People Standard. The National Secretary will therefore be highly committed to maintaining IIP standards and be able to show commitment to team and staff development, together with experience of developing team and individual work programmes, including setting standards, monitoring and evaluation.
14. While the National Secretary 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. Candidates will therefore be expected to 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.

**UNISON**  
**NATIONAL SECRETARY**  
**BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE GROUP**  
**BARGAINING, NEGOTIATING AND EQUALITIES DIRECTORATE**  
**REF: BNE/1**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

Grade: UNISON Grade 1  
Location: UNISON Centre  
Reports to: Assistant General Secretary  
Responsible for: Business and Environment Service Group

**Summary**

The post holder is a member of the Senior Management Group and through the General Secretariat she/he contributes to national strategic direction and promotes and delivers the Union's objectives and priorities. She/he is the manager of the national service group and responsible for ensuring the development and delivery of a strategic pay and bargaining strategy and for overseeing the implementation of national policy initiatives. Ensures effective management and deployment of staff and leads on strategic organisational change projects under the direction of the General Secretary. Fulfils Rule Book requirements and works in partnership with lay members.

**Key tasks and responsibilities**

- Direct, manage and develop the National Service Group and act as a Senior Officer in key negotiations for that group with employers, government and other national bodies.
- Advise the General Secretariat on matters relating to the service group and the development of the Union's strategy.
- Oversees the development and implementation of a national pay, bargaining and equalities strategy across specific groups.
- Responsible for campaigning and policy development relating to specific groups.
- Promote partnership working with lay members through the national lay structures to develop and achieve national priorities and objectives.
- Champions and leads implementation of strategic change.
- Manages and provides strategic leadership and ensures good management practice and that staff and resources are effectively deployed to maximise organising and recruiting members.

- Work collaboratively as required across all the main groups in the directorate and contribute to the management of staff and resources across the directorate.
- Builds UNISON's external public profile and influence and oversees implementation of key national campaigns.
- Develops and implements UNISON's collective bargaining and policy objectives and ensures the Union's influence is maintained and members' interests protected during major public service reorganisation and change.
- Responsible for ensuring the Union's objectives, priorities, achievements are effectively communicated to managers, staff, lay members and branches.
- Responsible for preparing, managing, reporting and monitoring of Service Group budget and resources within a framework set by the NEC and SMG. Ensures effective management of service group facilities, IT, e-communications, information, monitoring, quality assessment and reporting systems in line with national guidance.
- Responsible for development and implementation of the service group Staffing Plan to achieve Union's priorities and objectives. Ensures good management practice in the group, implementation of staff training and development programmes and annual training and performance review mechanisms including development reviews and regular staff/manager meetings to discuss progress on achieving work objectives and targets.
- Ensures Rule Book duties are carried out, including servicing of lay structures and delivery of proportionality and fair representation in lay structures in the group.
- Undertakes other duties as required by the grade descriptor and/or job profile of this post.
- May be required to work across different occupational groups within UNISON.

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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**

**ST - Selection Tests**

Heading	Selection criteria	Assessment		
<b>1. Thinking skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience of undertaking strategic planning, complex national negotiations, organisational development and management of change, including ability to evaluate and improve organisational performance.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to oversee the political development of the group and implementation of national campaigning objectives.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of promoting equality at a managerial and strategic level.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to and understanding of UNISON's aims and values and trade unions.</li> </ul>		<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to work in partnership with senior lay activists to achieve national and regional objectives.</li> </ul>		<b>PI</b>	
<b>2. Inter-</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent presentation, facilitation and public speaking skills.</li> </ul>			<b>ST</b>

<b>personal &amp; Communication skills</b>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of dealing with the media and developing a media strategy.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>		<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to communicate effectively with managers, staff and lay members at all levels including complex report writing and presentation skills.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to represent the Union externally at a senior level to national and regional organisations.</li> </ul>		<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to demonstrate emotional resilience, self awareness and self management.</li> </ul>			<b>ST</b>
<b>3. Initiative and independence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of developing, managing, monitoring, controlling and evaluating strategic services, systems, and/or structures.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to act as key advisor to senior managers and senior lay committees as appropriate.</li> </ul>		<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
<b>4. Staff Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management experience at senior level.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of managing multi-functional units or teams including managing strategic projects and co-ordinating the work of others.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of effectively managing systems and resources.</li> </ul>		<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to contribute effectively to the Senior Management Group and to lead the Service Group Team.</li> </ul>		<b>PI</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of selecting, motivating, developing and managing staff and their performance.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of developing work programmes including setting standards, monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience of managing and prioritising work under pressure (both self and others).</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	
<b>5. Resource Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience of securing, monitoring, controlling and reporting on complex budgets.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to ensure value for money and effective use of resources.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	
<b>6. Physical Skills</b> <i>(with DD modification where necessary)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to be mobile.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICT skills – draft own reports/correspondence/keep e-diary.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>		<b>ST</b>
<b>7. General Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to operate flexibly under the direction of the NEC, General Secretary and Senior Management Group.</li> </ul>		<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed knowledge of the political, economic, social and legal environment in which the Union operates.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed understanding of employment and trade union law.</li> </ul>	<b>A</b>	<b>PI</b>	<b>ST</b>

### **Other Information**

You will be required to live within reasonable travelling distance of the UNISON National Centre in London.

Please send a copy of the completed application form along with Recruitment and Disability monitoring form to [H.Recruitment@unison.co.uk](mailto:H.Recruitment@unison.co.uk) quoting ref: **BNE/1**.

Completed application forms must be received by no later than **Friday 26 March 2021**.

Interviews will be held on **Wednesday 14/ Thursday 15 April 2021**.