**Becoming a Branch LGBT+ Officer in UNISON**

Self-organisation brings together members from under-represented groups – women members, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members.

The purpose of self-organisation is to assist the union to:

1. Promote the union’s equalities and bargaining agenda
2. Ensure equality issues are considered in all areas of the business of the union
3. Defend jobs, terms and conditions and services
4. Build its density and have a strong and dynamic presence in the workplace.

Working within UNISON’s agreed policies, self-organised groups (SOGs) have the right to:

* Meet to share concerns and aspirations and establish their own priorities
* Elect their own representatives
* Have adequate and agreed funding and other resources
* Work within a flexible structure to build confidence and encourage participation.

There are lots of resources to support self-organisation, including UNISON guidelines on ‘Organising for equality’ and [www.unison.org.uk/equality](http://www.unison.org.uk/equality). There is a host of LGBT+ specific resources at [www.unison.org.uk/out](http://www.unison.org.uk/out).

**It’s a good idea to sign up to receive the LGBT+ e-bulletin and Out in UNISON magazine.**

Where there is a recognised branch LGBT+ group, the group can elect a representative to the branch committee. Many branches create the post of branch LGBT+ officer to provide a point of contact for LGBT+ issues and members within the branch, whether or not there is currently a functioning LGBT+ group.

Training is available if you’re interested so you should speak to your branch / region to arrange this. It will next run nationally in Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022.\*

**What does a branch LGBT+ officer do?**

Together with any Branch LGBT+ Group:

* Be out and visible
* Champion UNISON’s commitment to LGBT+ equality
* Encourage LGBT+ workers to join UNISON
* Keep LGBT+ members informed and get them involved
* Organise branch LGBT+ meetings and events
* Represent the views of branch LGBT+ members at branch committee and if possible, at the regional LGBT+ SOG
* Share regional and national UNISON LGBT+ information in the branch
* Work in partnership with any employer LGBT+ staff network
* Build and improve links with local LGBT+ community groups and prides
* Encourage branch participation in the annual national LGBT+ conference
* Report on LGBT+ work at the branch AGM.

**What can you bring to the role?**

* A passion for trade unionism and LGBT+ equality
* A sense of humour
* Listening and communication skills
* Understanding
* Open minded / non-judgemental
* Time management / knowing your limits
* Resourcefulness
* Approachability
* Commitment to confidentiality
* Willingness to learn
* Determination

**Who can support you as branch LGBT+ officer?**

* Branch Secretary, Branch Equalities Co-ordinator and other SOG officers such as Black Members, Disabled Members and Women’s Officers’.
* Regional LGBT+ Group and its contact officer, Regional SOG conveners and Lead Officer
* National LGBT+ Committee and the National Officer for LGBT+ equality
* Workplace Equality Reps
* Accredited Stewards
* LGBT+ activists in other local branches – for possible joint organising
* Local pride and LGBT+ community groups
* Your members!

For more information on any of this, contact your Regional LGBT+ Group – contact details for the Regional Officer working with your regional group can be found on the UNISON website:

[www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/lgbt/group-structure-and-contacts/](http://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/lgbt/group-structure-and-contacts/)

Contact the National LGBT+ Group via out@unison.co.uk

Or contact: Mitchell Coe, National Officer, LGBT+ equality

* write to: UNISON, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY
* ring: 0207 121 5799
* email m.coe@unison.co.uk

**Other helpful resources**

You will find a number of other helpful LGBT+ organising resources on the UNISON website at [www.unison.org.uk/out](http://www.unison.org.uk/out):

* [“Are you a UNISON LGBT+ Member - How to get involved”](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjn_Mjlke_5AhXOEcAKHfuqBYAQFnoECAgQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unison.org.uk%2Fcontent%2Fuploads%2F2020%2F01%2Fhow-to-get-involved-2020-1.doc&usg=AOvVaw1bJFkB8rg3eNgA6_I1kY2W)
* [“Setting up a branch LGBT+ Self Organised Group’’](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi44t6Eku_5AhVDXcAKHYjUD_wQFnoECAwQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unison.org.uk%2Fcontent%2Fuploads%2F2020%2F01%2FSetting-up-a-branch-LGBT-Group-Nov-19.doc&usg=AOvVaw31RI7nYMwpyDIrKpxrh4sL)
* “UNISON practical guide to Organising for Pride”
* [‘‘Putting politics back into Pride’’](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/11/Pride-Recruitment-and-Organising-Guide-2020.pdf)

#### Regional LGBT+ Self Organised Groups – Contact Information

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