

UNISON

NATIONAL OFFICER, DISABILITY EQUALITY **EQUALITY UNIT** **BARGAINING, NEGOTIATING AND EQUALITIES DIRECTORATE** **REF: BNE/60**

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.

National Officers are part of UNISON's Bargaining, Negotiating and Equalities Directorate. This is made up of four sections: Health; Education, Children's Services and Local Government; Business, Environment and Community; Equalities. Each BNE Section is led by a National Secretary who is a member of UNISON's Senior Management Group and is responsible for the overall strategic and operational management of the section. National Secretaries report to an Assistant General Secretary. National Officers report to the National Secretary.

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.

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 can be involved in the union and their voices heard.

The Equality Unit (EU) works directly with six national committees of UNISON members: Black members; Disabled members; Lesbian, Gay,

Bisexual and Transgender members; Women members; Young members and Retired members. These committees work in partnership with other parts of the union to identify and promote our equality agenda. The Equality Unit officers also advise other national UNISON committees, including the National Executive Council and national negotiating bodies, on equality issues.

The Equality Unit work with UNISON's Conference team to deliver a key annual event for each of the six groups of members e.g. a conference or a residential development weekend.

2 The Role

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 government, outside organisations, including the media.

The National Officer role includes:

- 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.
- Providing support and assistance to regions and branches and advising regional organisers and staff, as appropriate, on matters of national or sector policy.
- Ensuring that equal pay and equality considerations are central to all areas of work undertaken.
- 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 of membership.
- Maintaining relations with appropriate employers, employer representatives or organisations.
- Organising UNISON's National Disabled Members Conference and assisting with other national and regional events.

- Representing UNISON on external, negotiating and government bodies, as appropriate, at national level.
- Responsibility for policy analysis, development and briefing on equality matters, including government consultations and legislative changes.
- Undertaking research and providing advice, assistance and information to facilitate negotiations at regional and branch level.
- Undertakes other duties as required by the grade descriptor and/or job profile for this post.

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.

The National Officer is a key specialist organising role with the Bargaining Negotiations and Equality Directorate. The role provides policy advice and guidance to regions, branches and full-time officials. The role of the National Officer Disability Equality is generic in some areas and specialist in others. The post holder will be required to demonstrate significant knowledge of equality issues affecting disabled people in the labour market, public sector and wider society and demonstrate experience working on disability equality.

The allocation of areas of work is the responsibility of the National Secretary and the Senior National Officer in the Equality Unit. Areas of work are interchangeable and a 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 disability equality in and outside the workplace. They give a strategic lead to the union's wide-ranging work on disability equality and work with others to develop and deliver policy, campaigns and organisational initiatives. A key part of the job will also involve working on disability equality issues across the BNE Directorate and on general equalities work.

The National Officer Disability Equality would work with UNISON's National Disabled Members' 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 disability equality at a national level.

The National Officer Disability Equality encourages the activities of UNISON disabled members providing advice to UNISON branches on promoting equality for disabled members, tackling discrimination in the workplace and recruiting

disabled members into union membership and union activity. Although officers in the Equality Unit 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 disabled members into union membership and activity.

In addition to working on disability 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, from a diverse and intersectional perspective and how trade unions can work to overcome these challenges.

To further these aims, the National Officers 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.

National Officers have considerable knowledge of an industrial relations environment and some experience of negotiations with employers in a position of responsibility or other relevant experience of involvement in negotiations.

While the National Officers 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 allocation of their areas of work is the responsibility of the relevant National Secretary. Areas of work are interchangeable and are annually reviewed in discussion with the National Officer and Senior National Officer to meet the needs of the organisation and service to regions, branches and members.

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JOB DESCRIPTION

Grade: 3
Post Ref: BNE/60
Hours: 35 per week
Location: UNISON Centre (London Euston, NW1 2AY)
Reports to: National Secretary

Overall Summary

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 negotiations with employers and to represent the Union with government, outside organisations, including the media.

The post requires the successful applicant to have highly developed leadership, policy analysis and development, negotiating, research and advocacy skills.

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 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 general and disability 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 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 or as required by the grade descriptor and or job profile for this post.

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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.	
	1.3 A high-level understanding and experience of, and ability to operate in, the political environment	A & PI
	1.4 A commitment to personal and staff development that supports the achievement 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 • Handling complaints • Ability to work in partnership with lay members 	A & PI

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, coherent reports newsletters etc <p>2.4 Ability to work with national committee structures</p> <p>2.4 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</p> <p>3.3 Demonstrable experience of implementing decisions</p> <p>3.4 Demonstrable ability to research and prepare salary and other employment claims</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</p> <p>A & PI</p>
4. Staff and Resource Management	<p>4.1 Motivating and encouraging innovation including the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegate and supervise work Build teams 	<p>A & PI</p>

	<p>4.2 Demonstrable leadership skills gained in a trade union environment</p> <p>4.3 Ability to work on and manage projects including:</p> <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 	<p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p>
5. Physical Skills (<i>with reasonable adjustments where required</i>)	5.1 Keyboard skills	A
6. General Knowledge	<p>6.1 Understanding of and commitment to UNISON'S aims and objectives including the principles of equality and democracy</p> <p>6.2 Demonstrate Knowledge of key areas of employment law specifically relating to equal pay, disability and other equality law.</p> <p>6.3 High level understanding of current service group sector issues</p> <p>6.4 Understanding of the UNISON bargaining agenda</p> <p>6.5 Understanding of UNISON's organising agenda</p> <p>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</p> <p>6.7 Knowledge of ICT packages including Microsoft Office suite.</p>	<p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p> <p>A & PI</p> <p>A</p>