



# Proposed change to Rule D by the national LGBT+ committee: Changing the National Executive Council's regional male seats to general seats

The National LGBT+ committee has proposed a change to rule D.2.2.1 at this year's National Delegate Conference. This factsheet sets out why we are proposing this rule change and why we need your support to have it carried at NDC.

## What is non-binary?

A non-binary person is someone who does not identify as solely male or female. They may identify as both, neither or something entirely different.

You can read more about non-binary identities on our factsheet: <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2022/07/2023-Non-binary-factsheet.docx>

## Why make the change?

As UNISON, we pride ourselves on putting equality at the heart of everything we do. Under the current rule, members who do not identify as either male or female are **prevented from standing** for our NEC regional seats in every region. This affects members who identify as non-binary or gender diverse because they are not solely male or female.

Basic fairness requires that any member has the opportunity to stand for NEC regional seats. Unfortunately, under the current rules, it is impossible for a non-binary member to stand for election to a regional NEC seat in most regions.

In all structures within UNISON bar the NEC, we have replaced male seats with general seats. The regional NEC seats are one of the last reserved male seats within the union. Not only is this unfair, it goes against our proportionality and fair representation rules.

This rule change, along with the change to remove unnecessary gendered language, will help future-proof our union. More young members identify as a gender outside the gender binary (male/female). We must update our language and structures for them to fully participate in our union.

## Speaking of fair representation...


Our rule book states that *"FAIR REPRESENTATION is the broad balance of representation of members of the electorate, taking into account such factors as age and low pay, the balance*

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**UNISON**  
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*between full time and part time workers, manual and nonmanual workers, different occupations, skills, race, sexual orientation, disability and **gender identity.***

Not all members identify as either female or male. If a member doesn't identify under the gender binary, they are unable even to run, let alone hold, one of the regional NEC seats. This clearly contravenes the rule book's commitment to fair representation.

## **Will this disadvantage men in our union?**

Men will still be able to stand for general seats, like they currently do in any other democratic structure in the union (regional committees, regional service group committees etc).

In the last national service group executive elections, where there are general seats, close to 80% of the people that were elected to general seats identify as male.

In addition to this, two regions already have regional general seats on the NEC and both of these are currently held by men.

This rule change ensures that men are still represented on the regional NEC seats, whilst allowing non-binary and gender diverse people, who are currently entirely excluded, from also having a voice.

## **What about the Black male seat?**

Unlike in 2018 when the National Women's Committee proposed a similar rule change, the national LGBT+ committee are **NOT** proposing to change the reserved Black male seat and will continue to advocate for more Black male voices within our union. Until more Black men are elected into general seats across the NEC, we believe the Black male seat should remain.

## **What about the NEC's rule amendment on getting rid of unnecessary gendered language**

Both rule changes seek to make our union more inclusive. By getting rid of unnecessary gendered language from our rule book we ensure that members are reflected in the rule book, regardless of gender.

Please support our rule change and the NEC's rule change on getting rid of unnecessary gendered language at NDC 2024 to make our union a more inclusive place for all our members!

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