

Equality Act 2010

The Role of Union Equality Reps

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Context

- Labour commitment to equality from the Warick agreement
- Move from anti-discrimination to promotion
- Equality Act 2010 one of the last Acts of labour government
- Con-Dem stated commitment to equality
- 90% of Act started October 2010

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What are its aims?

- To protect from discrimination
- To promote equality for all
- To bring together, simplify and harmonise anti-discrimination laws

Previous Acts

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination act 1975
- Race relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Sexual Orientation Regs 2003
- Religion or belief Regs 2003
- Age Regs 2006
- Equality sections of other legislation

ALL GONE

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Protected characteristics

Protection from discrimination on 9 grounds

- Sex
- Race
- Age
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy & maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Gender reassignment

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Ensuring Equality Act means something within your workplace

- Equality Reps vital to this
- Equality Reps making a difference at local level
- Sadly no legislation for Equality Reps Yet!
- But that's not to say we shouldn't elect them
- All reps roles should have an underpinning knowledge of Equalities so as they can spot the issue's!

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Commitment from the top?

- Our General Secretary has a strong commitment to the Equality Agenda and establishing Equality Reps within the workplace
- It is important to progress equality issue's at work
- Not just woman's issue's but trade union issue's

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Why do Unite support Union Equality Reps?

- Equality Reps form part of Union's structures within the union rule book
- There is a need to increase the diversity of our reps and members
- Equality rep is part of a team of Unite workplace professionals that represents all of our members on all of their issues!
- Membership needs to reflect the changing demographics of the workforce
- Challenging inequality that exists within workplaces

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further extensions are needed to protect Union Equality Reps

Statutory rights for Union Equality Reps – but can use references in ACAS Code of Practice on time off

Mandatory Equal Pay Audits – but can use public sector duty, ACAS Code of Practice on disclosure of information and Equal Pay Questionnaire (although you do need somebody to be taking a case to issue this).

Who can become a Unite Equality Rep?

- Union Equality Reps can be existing workplace reps who specialise in Equality Issues
- Union Equality Reps can also be elected by members with the responsibility to deal with Equality Issue's at work
- Management has their HR Professionals so should the Union!

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What Does an Equality Rep Do?

- Equality Reps are responsible for all aspects of implementing the union's equality agenda at work
 - Such as ensuring reasonable adjustments are put in place for disabled members or that a member isn't singled out and treated unfairly due to their race or sex.
- Equality Reps become an expert on equality issues in the workplace

Equality Rep's also

- Consult and negotiate with the employer on Equality issue's
- Ability to mainstream equality issue's within the collective bargaining agenda
- Representation on the company equality committee and forums
- Right to represent members on equality issue's

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What are the Equality issue's at work?

- Equal Pay (Equality of Terms)
- Race Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination
- Age Discrimination
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Work-life balance
- Religion

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What are the Equality issue's at work?

- Fair treatment on promotion and recruitment
- Respecting diversity
- Fair treatment on redundancy and retirement
- Dignity at work
- Health Issue's
- Accessible workplaces
- Bullying and Harrassment (H & S at work)

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How do Equality Reps raise the issues of equality with their employer?

- Equal Pay Audits
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Company Strategic Plans
- Equality Monitoring and reviews
- Meeting diversity standards
- Compliance with legislation
- Public Sector duties to promote equality

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What Support Do Equality Reps have?

- TU Education and skill development
 - Courses for Equality Reps and 1 day workplace rep awareness courses
- Best practice and negotiators guide
- Support through mentoring & specialised women's organiser
- Personal Development
- Monthly newsletters & Together Magazine
- Web Access
- Information Updates
- Access to reps structures

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Equality at the Heart of Unite the Union

- Action at the workplace
 - Audits, Representation/Bargaining, Policies
- Action in the Wider Community
 - Anti-cuts campaigning, organising Political involvement
- Action in the union
 - Workplace reps, Union Equalities Reps
 - Regional and National Committees/Confs
 - Minimum proportionality in Unite

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Unite's equality campaigns

- Unite 4 Equal Pay
- Breast Cancer Screening
- Race Forward Campaign
- Disability Audits and Adjustments
- Mental Health and Stress
- Zero Tolerance to LGBT Harassment
- Organising LGBT Workers and Pride
- Decent Jobs for Young Workers, & No Unfair Age Rates

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In the Words of Gee Walker!

- Gee Walker is the mother of Anthony Walker who sadly lost his life in a brutal racist attack!
- Gee who is a wonderful, warm speaker went on to say “It’s time to implement meaningful policies that take action and don’t just give lip service, nobody can survive in a culture that is divided by race, hate and violence, the powers that be must listen to people and take control, change can happen, but it will only happen when we first see ourselves as human being’s regardless of gender, race, culture, status and religion”.
- Wise words from a woman who has suffered the very worst race hate from our society.
- This is another reason why Unite the Union takes Equalities very seriously.

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Codes of Practice, Guidance, Useful Information and updates

- “Equality & Human Rights Commission
 - Statutory Codes of Practice
 - Questionnaire Procedure
- www.equalityhumanrights.com
- 08456046610 helpline 8 am – 6 pm
- Government Equalities Office
- www.equalities.gov.uk
- <http://geo-newsletters.org.uk/subscribe>

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