



**UNITE THE UNION  
FOR THE COMMUNITY  
AND NOT FOR PROFIT SECTOR**

## UNITE

**Unite the union, is backing you all the way to improve your life at work.**

Whatever your job and whoever your employer – with Unite you can build workplaces that YOU need.

Unite is dedicated to promoting quality employment standards in the Community and Not for Profit Sector.

Based on the principles of individual and collective responsibility, Unite is dedicated to improving its members' standard of living and quality of life, reflecting the changing world of work as well as supporting workers through a programme of campaigning and organising.

We are here to advise, support, empower and assist you, so join now and become part of the biggest, yet specialist, trade union in the UK.



## THE UNION FOR YOUR SECTOR

With over 60,000 members in voluntary, community and not for profit sector organisations as well as 2 million across the whole economy Unite is the union for people like YOU.

Unite has members in organisations dealing with arts and culture, animals, children and young people, disability, community groups, training, environment, advice, faith organisations, the family, housing, health, overseas aid, professional standards, policy work, qualifications and accreditation, research, support for volunteering, women, and many, many more.

[www.unitetheunion.com](http://www.unitetheunion.com)



## WORKING TOGETHER

Unite is improving the ways employers deal with their staff, by working in partnership with them wherever possible.

Unite knows that organisations that respect and provide the best working environment for their employees and volunteers are also the most successful organisations. In workplaces where the potential within each employee is nurtured, trained and invested in; the net gain for the organisation is priceless. Research shows that where there is high employee morale there is less sickness and higher productivity.

Unite recognises that good employers, as well as providing better support for volunteers, also see how this benefits service users and beneficiaries. A better trained and motivated workforce, will bring far greater return to the organisations they work for and those that depend on them.

The Community and Not for Profit sector gives employers additional challenges. In environments where funding can be uncertain, where the stakes are high with regards to the service that is being delivered and where employees frequently interface with some of the most vulnerable in our society, a working environment that champions dignity and respect, good support and supervision is essential. Likewise, reducing stress and promoting good work-life balance practices are essential in giving and receiving the best from employees. Unite provides specialist support on these issues and works with all organisations, from the largest to the smallest to bring about positive cultural changes and strong partnership between staff, employer and the union.

## ADDING VALUE

Unite, in short, adds value to organisations enabling them to focus on their core business, whilst receiving quality and professional advice on employment matters, through a relationship of mutual trust and support. Such a relationship results in benefits for employers and its employees.

Members also benefit from having the individual advocacy and support of the union as they go through the twists and turns of their career and the life events that may accompany this. Whether sudden illness strikes, you need support in returning from parental leave, you have been selected for redundancy, you are looking to embark on a period learning and development, or simply things go wrong, it is only a trade union that can provide the right support and guidance at such times.



# WHAT IS A TRADE UNION?

Trade unions are in essence about ordinary people. Whether they work in a factory, the health service, local government, are skilled engineers or workers in financial services, or the growing Community and Not for Profit sector, many people have come to understand that they can achieve more in the workplace together, than alone. It is this belief and commitment to each other that gives trade unions their strength.

A simple definition of trade union is an association of employees who, through combined negotiation with employers, aim to improve the conditions in which they work. Without doubt this has been the historic reason for trade unions to exist – and continues to be a major reason for their relevance today.

Trade unions have also left a legacy through their history of campaigning for many of the employment rights that we take for granted today, whether health and safety legislation, job security, anti-discrimination laws, maternity pay or the national minimum wage. We continue to look for opportunities to provide even better workplace environments and through our partner unions across the globe campaign for justice for exploited workers.

Fairness is essential for an effective workplace. When the balance of power between employer and employee is misused, fairness is often forgotten. On their own, individuals stand little prospect of restoring the balance. Together through trade unions, there is a much greater chance that employees' voices are heard and grievances addressed.

**Trade Unions are there to ensure working people have a fair deal at work.**

# WHY DO WE NEED TRADE UNIONS?

Think of all the various issues that are important in the world of work. Each one is an aspect of what is termed 'employment relations'.

They include the following:

- Pay and working conditions
- Job security
- Redundancy procedures and provisions
- Health and safety
- Career development
- Training and skills
- Equal opportunities and non-discrimination
- Maternity and paternity leave
- Pensions

Add to these potential disciplinary problems and raising a complaint about your work, and it becomes clear that there is much more to being employed than simply the work itself.

Would you be able to deal with each and every issue? The chances are you might not. After all, it would be unreasonable to expect each employee to possess detailed knowledge of employment law, pay negotiations or health and safety regulations. How many understand the intricacies of pensions and human resource management? Quite simply, with the increased pressures in the modern working environment, employees cannot find the time, and often the energy, to master each element of employment relations.

Trade unions can and do.

[www.unitetheunion.com](http://www.unitetheunion.com)

## REPRESENTATION AT WORK

Through a system of elected workplace representatives, Unite ensures that in most workplaces, where it has members, our representatives take responsibility for dealing with any issues colleagues may have. These trained representatives deal directly with the employer on behalf of other Unite members in the workplace. Specialist representatives may also be elected to ensure that members' health and safety is protected at work, and now the provision to elect learning representatives also exists.

At the union's centre, research, legal, education and policy support teams exist to provide advice to members on everything from employment law, latest developments in your industry, to training information.

Trade union members draw on the collective expertise of their trade union. They have the support of a national network of officers, whose job it is to represent them on issues about which they are unsure. Combined with the collective strength of the union as a whole, this is a powerful way of making sure they are both treated fairly and that they work safely.





## CAMPAIGNING VOICE

Unite is campaigning on many issues that affect you in the Community and Not for Profit Sector.

### Funding

Funding of organisations in the third sector is the most crucial issue Unite is focussing on. Unite is calling for long-term and sustainable funding systems that cover the full costs of an organisations work.

The creation of an effective system of funding for community and voluntary organisations is crucial. Poor funding systems are the underlying problem to many other issues that exist in the sector. Funding insecurity, the increased culture of contracts and competition is resulting in transference of work between organisations and massive changes for organisations and their employees. Everything from bullying, and poor training to pensions and short term contracts can be attributed to the problem of funding in the sector. Unite is using its collective voice to work for change.

### Dignity at work

Everyone deserves to work in an environment free from bullying and harassment. Unacceptable behaviour, bullying and harassment can have devastating effects on the individual targets and on colleagues who have to witness it. It is bad for morale and leads to increased sickness absence and high staff turnover.

That is why Unite is campaigning, through its 'Dignity at Work' project, to eradicate bullying and harassment in the not for profit sector. Unite wants to ensure that every workplace has effective training, policies and procedures that tackle these issues.

### Promoting diversity

A major strand of trade union work is to provide equality of opportunity to all no matter gender, race, disability status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or for any other defining area. Unite recognises the worth of each individual for who they are and actively fights all forms of discrimination in the workplace whilst at the same time as taking steps to achieve the equality of opportunity for all.

### Work-life balance

Unite is campaigning to promote a better work-life balance for employees in the sector.

The long hours culture is prevalent across many organisations in the sector. Often it is difficult for workers to carry out their job in

contractual working hours. Employees in the sector are often so dedicated to the campaigns and services they work on that they sacrifice their time, family and health to get the job done.

Unite believes that better awareness among members and management of the positive impact that a flexible work life balance can achieve would benefit all working in the sector, and enable it to be more creative in the ways that people work.

### **Health and Safety**

Everyone has the right to work in a healthy, safe environment. The personal safety of workers in the sector is often put at risk in this sector and people are often lone workers which raises an agenda in itself. Unite offers the latest training, information and advice to representatives, members and employers to ensure that best practice is followed, creating healthier, safer working environments for everyone.

### **Workforce Development**

Training and development of staff is a key requirement of a vibrant, positive and effective organisation. The community and voluntary sector has suffered from the lack of fundamental ongoing training and development of its workforce, often due to poor funding and infrastructure.

Unite is campaigning for better opportunities for formal and informal skills development in the sector.

### **Pay and Pensions**

Many organisations in the sector have some poor pay and conditions. Low pay and poor pension provision are key issues that influence staff turnover and morale in the sector. These issues have further consequences.

Unite is working to help organisations improve this situation and raise standards across the sector, so that organisations, employees as well as service users can benefit.

## **UNITE IS BACKING YOU ALL THE WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFE AT WORK**

It makes sense to have someone on your side. And only a union with the massive financial, legal and industrial back-up of Unite can really provide the representation and influence in the workplace that YOU need. Our aim is to work in partnership with your employer to get you the best terms and conditions of service and provide the advice and support on any matter you may need related to your job.

As a member of the Unite you will get:

- Free advice and representation
- Free legal help
- Free health and safety and pension advice
- Free union education and training
- Discounts on insurance, travel, holidays and health care
- Dignity at work

Also we campaign on your behalf for equal access to learning and training.

You will also be part of a network of over 60,000 members working in not for profit organisations who work together to ensure that the sector and all who work in it thrives. 2 million people have already joined the Unite, won't you join them ... and encourage your colleagues to too?



## CONTACT US

For further information about the Community & Non Profit Sector of Unite the Union contact:

Rachael Maskell  
Unite National Officer  
Unite the Union  
35 King Street  
London WC2E 8JG  
  
0207 420 8978  
nonprofit@uniteunion.org

You can also join online  
[www.uniteunion.com](http://www.uniteunion.com)

