

Equality forums, terms of reference

The National Executive Committee (NEC) has established national and regional equality structures to represent the interests of:

- Black* members
- Disabled members
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) members
- Women members
- Young members

Purpose

Outside of annual delegate conference, the NEC is the body with the responsibility for developing detailed policies, through publications and campaigns. The NEC receives advice from its equality bodies on issues pertinent to members identifying with the relevant committee or forum.

Role of the national equality committees/forums

a) to act as a mechanism for providing specialist advice to the NEC on issues affecting Black, disabled, LGBT, women and young members;

b) to provide a link between union structures i.e. groups, regions (including networks), associations, national branches and the NEC in order to support the exchange of information in taking forward the union's equality, bargaining, organising and campaigning agendas.

Terms of reference

i. to provide specialist advice and make recommendations to the NEC on issues referred to the relevant equality structure by the NEC/ groups/ regions/nations/ associations and national branches;

ii. to provide advice and guidance to the NEC on strategies to address discrimination, under-representation, recruitment, organising, education and participation for Black, disabled, LGBT, women and young into the union's equality, bargaining, organising and campaigning agendas;

Composition

Representation on the committees/forums needs to be drawn from the widest possible base in order to be representative, to facilitate networking and to support the exchange of information. Each committee/forum has their own process for appointing/electing their representatives. NEC members are appointed to each committee/forum to liaise between the NEC and the committee/forum.

The Chairs of the National Women's and Disabled Members Forum are appointed by the NEC. The Chair, Vice-Chair and the Editorial Board of the National Black Members Committee are elected through a democratic process by members of the respective structure.

PCS PROUD National Committee and the National Young Members Committee are elected through a democratic process by members of the respective structure.

- **National Black Members Committee (NBMC)** - chair, vice-chair and editorial board consisting of 3 members are elected by the NBMC annually. Regional black members' network members including convenor, secretary, organiser, regional rep and NBMC rep are annually elected by network members. The number of elected roles differs in accordance to the needs identified by each network. Groups/ regions/ associations and national branches annually appoint a representative to the NBMC. Regional self-organised Network annually elects their representative to the NBMC.
- **National Disabled Members Forum (NDMF)** – The chair is annually appointed by the NEC. Groups/ regional disabled members' networks/ associations and national branches annually appoint a representative to the NDMF.
- **PCS PROUD National Committee (PNC)** is elected by PROUD LGBT members at its AGM. Committee roles include chair, secretary, assistant secretary, organiser, treasurer, equality officers (Black, disabled, transgender, women and young members), training officer, editor, web officer and regional and devolved administration (Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) representatives. Two auditors, and the Standing Orders Committee consisting of three members are also elected at the PROUD AGM.
- **National Women's Forum (NWF)** - The chair is annually appointed by the NEC. Groups, National Branches, Associations, Regions and Devolved Nations annually appoint/elect their representative.
- **National Young Members Committee (NYMC)** is annually elected by the young members' networks. The chair, vice-chair and equalities officer are elected by secret individual ballot at the national young members' forum. Regional network convenors are annually elected. The NYMC is supported by the NEC youth liaison committee which is appointed by the NEC and national president.

Representation at committee/forum meetings

It is important that all Committee/Forum members are able to fully participate in discussions and bring to their respective structure knowledge of problems/developments within the area they are representing i.e. Group, Region, equality strand etc. These members must identify with the committee/forum to which they bring knowledge and experience.

Except in the case of PROUD, the NEC advice to groups, regions, associations and national branches is:

- i. to find representatives within their respective structure, however if not possible to send a representative from outside of its executive committee; and
- ii. In the latter case, co-option should be considered.

In relation to PROUD, where vacancies arise a call for nominations from the floor of the PROUD AGM is permissible as is co-option by the Chair at any time following and between PROUD AGMs.

Frequency of meetings

Each committee/forum meets three times per year or in accordance with its constitution.

Servicing and working arrangements

The Secretary to each committee/forum with the exception of PROUD is a Full Time Officer appointed by the General Secretary. The Secretary is responsible for the overall administration of the committee/forum. The Secretary works closely with the chair of the committee/forum on agenda items for each meeting and ensures record of decisions are produced and referred to the NEC for endorsement.

For PROUD the situation is a little different: the PROUD Committee Secretary, who has similar duties to the secretaries of the other committees/forums, is elected by its membership at the PROUD AGM and is supported by a Full Time Officer. Due to PROUD's self-organised status, the PROUD meeting record of decisions may be sent to the NEC for information. Any issues that need NEC endorsement or support are submitted via the Equality department formally to the NEC.

The business at committee/forum meetings is conducted around discussion of particular items. Written reports from Committee and Full Time Officers, groups and regions are encouraged in advance of each meeting. Where written reports are not provided a verbal report is expected.

Annual Seminars

In order to ensure that the union's work around equality has a particular focus and to provide a mechanism for consulting and involving members from under-represented groups, it is agreed that:

- i. Annual seminars are provided for Black, disabled, LGBT, women and young members. Numbers for each annual seminar are set by the NEC in line with conference policy. An application and selection process is conducted should applications exceed available places.
- ii. Seminars should not be motion based but should involve educational, campaigning and organising activities; briefings and workshops i.e. part education, part briefing and part policy discussion. The NEC should receive a report of the seminar together with any recommendations arising from it.
- iii. Seminars are organised by the Legal, Equality, Education, Policy and Support (LEEPS) department and in the case of LGBT members, with PROUD. Approval for the programme, arrangements, target audience and budget should be subject to prior approval by the NEC.

**Black is used in the political context to apply to people from African and Asian Diasporas, including people of dual heritage.*