



Wales TUC Equality Representatives Survey 2009

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- Carried out by Nick Bacon and Kim Hoque from Nottingham University
- Surveys filled in by reps during early 2009
- Aim to get a picture of what equality reps do and the impact they have and what support they get
- Building the case for statutory rights for equality reps

Profile of Equality Reps

- Two thirds are female
- One third have a long term illness or disability
- 15% from BME groups
- 15% are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- Average age 48
- One fifth of equality reps are new activists
- Four fifths currently hold another union post

- Equality reps are more likely to be from under represented groups
- Equality reps help to increase the diversity of union representatives as a whole
- The equality rep post is a route for reps to get more involved in wider union activity

Workplaces

- 82% equality reps work in public sector
- 68% are in organisations of 5000+ employees
- 96% of equality reps are in workplaces where their union is recognised

- So, equality reps are more likely to exist in large organisations where a relationship already exists between union and employer

Time spent on role

- One quarter of reps spend 5+ hours a week
- One quarter spend less than 1 hour a week
- Equality reps are more likely to spend time on their role if their employer pays them for this
- One third spend more time on the role than the employer pays them for

Activities

- 85% provided advice to members including securing flexible working and investigating complaints of discrimination
- One third have encouraged their employer to improve equality practice and training
- One quarter have conducted equal pay reviews

Support for reps

- 85% have sufficient support from their union
- 67% have sufficient support from their branch
- Majority of employers provide sufficient facilities but do not provide reasonable time off
- 80% of reps do not have cover for their job or a reduced workload
- 56% of reps feel they need more training to carry out the role

Employers

- Only 22% equality reps have regular meetings with management
- 59% reps are usually consulted with on equality issues
- One quarter have formal equality agreements with employer
- Only one third of reps felt their employer valued their equality role

Impact

- Two thirds of reps have had an impact on at least one area of equality
- Where reps are given adequate time off, they are more likely to have a positive impact on employer equality practices
- Relatively few equality reps are 'single issue' reps

Conclusions

- Equality reps need statutory rights to time off
- More support is needed for reps to spend sufficient time on the equality role
- Managers need to engage with equality reps more often
- More training is needed for equality reps

Next steps

- Bilingual version of the report to be published in the new year
- Survey rolling out across UK
- Wales to pilot a further survey looking at equality reps and disability casework