



Mainstreaming Equality and Tackling Racism



# **Scottish Trade Unions' Approaches to Equalities: A Mapping Study**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background, Research Questions and Methodology

Promoting equal opportunities is an important element of the work of trade unions in Scotland. The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) has supported and informed trade unions' work in this area through its 'One Workplace Equal Rights' project, which seeks to tackle racism and promote equal opportunities in the workplace by providing accessible information on equalities issues and advice on rights at work. The research reported in this document forms an important element of the One Workplace Equal Rights project. The Employment Research Institute (ERI) at Napier University was commissioned to investigate Scottish trade unions' approaches to promoting equal opportunities through a programme of research undertaken between November 2004 and February 2005. The research sought to address a number of questions:

- What are the main equalities issues faced by members of Scottish trade unions, and what approaches have unions adopted to address these issues?
- How effectively are equalities issues articulated within the broader bargaining agendas pursued by Scottish trade unions?
- To what extent do Scottish trade unions face difficulties in connecting with particular groups of workers, and what strategies have been adopted to broaden membership and participation?
- To what extent do representative structures provide a voice for particular groups within the membership of Scottish trade unions, and what are the challenges associated with the establishment and operation of these structures?
- Are trade unions' own employment practices consistent with the union movement's commitment to promoting equal opportunities in the workplace?

The research was carried out in two phases.

**First**, a review of policy and research literature was undertaken covering the broad themes of: labour market inequalities; legal and policy approaches to promoting equal opportunities; and trade union approaches to promoting equal opportunities.

**Second**, a series of semi-structured interviews were undertaken with representatives of STUC-affiliated trade union organisations. All 42 STUC-affiliated trade union organisations were contacted and interviews were conducted with 26 representatives (a response rate of 62%). Interviews focused on: equalities issues and bargaining priorities; membership diversity; participation in lay activities; unions as an employer; and representative structures.

A summary of findings from the interviews conducted with representatives of STUC-affiliated trade union organisations is provided below.

## **Equalities Issues and Bargaining Priorities**

### **Equalities Issues**

The most commonly cited equalities priorities were associated with the interests of female members: closing the gender-pay gap; dealing with 'glass ceiling' problems by establishing career progression routes for women; and campaigning on 'work-life' issues such as leave entitlement and flexible working. Only six union respondents argued that disability was a key equalities issue while only two were specifically concerned with the race pay gap, one with institutional racism and one with career progression for minority ethnic groups.

### **Bargaining Priorities**

According to respondents, equalities issues were poorly represented within the broader bargaining agenda, which continues to be dominated by low pay, conditions of service, and pension rights. Although these issues can have, for example, 'gendered' aspects, the equal opportunities dimension appears to struggle to gain recognition within collective bargaining. A minority of respondents identified certain equalities issues as forming part of their broader bargaining agendas, with equal pay and work-life issues again most prominent.

### **Integrating Equalities**

A number of unions acknowledged the need to tackle inequalities faced by the women and minority members, but based much of their activity in this area on an individual rights-based approach, responding to individual complaints about discrimination or harassment rather than tackling the structural problems which cause inequalities. Some identified reluctance among local representatives in pushing the equalities agenda beyond responses to individual grievances. There was also a degree of nervousness about taking a *difference* approach as this required the creation of separate interest groups which some thought was divisive (see Chapter 2, Part 2.2 for a discussion of 'difference' based approaches to equal opportunities policy). A smaller group of respondents suggested that the only way for advancement was for equalities to be more fully integrated into the campaigning work and bargaining agenda of the union.

### **Equalities Issues and Bargaining Priorities: Issues for Unions**

- Concerns of particular interest to women members have been clearly articulated – but there is a need for unions to constantly review their equalities priorities to ensure that groups are not marginalised.
- There was considerable variation in trade unionists' understanding of the reasons for labour market and workplace inequalities. The STUC and other bodies must continue to raise awareness of the structural barriers and systemic discrimination that explain the individual disadvantage experienced by union members.
- Equalities issues were rarely identified as key bargaining priorities suggesting that trade unions may need to review their approach – progress in addressing the inequality experienced by many women, BME members and others will

arguably best be achieved by a process of mainstreaming responses to the *collective* disadvantage in the broader bargaining agenda.

- Trade unions need to consider the implications of approaching equal opportunities from a perspective of promoting *sameness* (i.e. ensuring that ‘everyone is treated the same’ through legislation providing equal rights and representing individual cases) – such an approach is effective at dealing with individual grievances, but may reproduce inequalities, by failing to challenge the underlying norms and prejudices which result in unfair treatment. There may be a need to engage with a more *difference* based approach, recognising the fundamental differences in the experiences of groups in the labour market, and so challenging the structural inequalities that explain these differences (See Chapter 2, Part 2.2 for a discussion of ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ based approaches to equal opportunities policy.)

## **Membership Diversity**

### **Recruiting Members**

Relatively few trade unions reported major problems in recruiting members from any particular group. A minority of trade union respondents thought that their organisations faced difficulties recruiting from the BME community in Scotland. Five respondents thought that their trade unions faced difficulties recruiting women. Three reported difficulties in recruiting young people. Respondents generally did not perceive difficulties around recruitment from groups according to sexual orientation (one); disability (one); or religion (none).

For many respondents, low membership numbers among different racial, gender or social groups were an inevitable reflection of the employment sector within which they operated. Clearly, representing existing members’ interests must be a key priority, but trade unions should be wary of accepting the labour market segregation, which excludes women and minority workers from the sectors and occupations that they represent.

The majority of union respondents identifying a problem in recruiting members from one or more groups believed their union’s image as ‘white-male’ or ‘white-female’ dominated to be a major factor. A small number of respondents suggested that apathy towards the equalities agenda (among local officers and members and even members of equalities groups) was a problem. It was noted that equalities issues had rarely provided the impetus for organising and recognition campaigns within workplaces.

### **Strategies to Promote Membership Diversity**

Relatively few respondents reported that their unions were pursuing policies to recruit from particular groups. A minority of respondents pointed to targeted awareness-raising campaigns and recruitment materials. A small number of respondents also reported that their unions maintained a presence at youth and LGBT events. Others suggested that their campaigning work on equal opportunities and the development of representative structures would attract a more diverse membership.

## **Monitoring Membership**

The majority of unions collected monitoring data on gender, race and age. Fewer unions reported collecting data on disability or sexual orientation, and none monitored religious affiliation. Respondents noted the sensitivities around collecting data on disability, sexual orientation and religion.

Many respondents representing unions who collected information on gender, race and/or age rarely analysed or used these data in their day-to-day work. Some union respondents questioned the usefulness of monitoring data, and were reluctant to be seen to be making policy 'by quota'. However, a number of respondents reported attempts by their unions to improve monitoring procedures and develop databases to better inform policy.

## **Membership Diversity: Issues for Unions**

- Few of the participating unions saw the engaging and recruitment of equalities groups as an important organising strategy to expand membership.
- Unions should take the lead in challenging wider patterns of labour market segregation which play a large part in producing inequalities in pay and rewards: a balance between representing existing and potential members must be struck.
- Educating lay representative on the equalities aspects of recruitment including the stereotyping of equalities groups as well as reviewing traditional structures and processes of branch organisation may help improve the image of the union to potential members.
- The effectiveness of different strategies to increase membership diversity should be assessed and good practice shared.
- Monitoring is fundamental to understanding equalities issues but few took the monitoring of their membership seriously. More and better monitoring and analysis of membership data could help trade unions understand current patterns of membership and help set targets for increasing diversity.

## **Participation in Lay Activities**

### **Participation of Women and Minority Groups in Lay Activities**

The majority of respondents identified BME members and women as being under-represented among lay post-holders. Far fewer respondents specifically identified LGBT members, the disabled or young people as being under-represented, and none mentioned the exclusion of older workers or particular religious groups. However, there was an acceptance that the paucity of membership data on these groups made it difficult to arrive at firm conclusions.

### **Reasons for Under-representation**

Trade union respondents again suggested that perceptions of union structures as white and male dominated were crucial to explaining why certain groups were under-represented in lay positions.

Practical barriers to more diverse participation relating to the location and timing of meetings and events were identified by seven respondents. A further three respondents noted that the jargon and proceduralism that can still be associated with trade union meetings also discourages participation at the most basic level – i.e. attending meetings.

A number of trade union respondents acknowledged that apathy among local representatives (three cases) and in some cases hostility from reps and members (six and four cases) also acted as a barrier to widening participation. It was suggested that with branch-level activities enjoying considerable autonomy, the acceptance of female, BME or other members seeking to participate in union activities varied.

Some of those trade unions acknowledging the under-representation of women, BME members and other groups in lay official positions had undertaken a range of activities to encourage broader participation, including: awareness raising drives; targeted literature; and 'befriending' campaigns.

### **Participation in Lay Activities: Issues for Unions**

- Unions' image both externally and internally should be reflected on in order to attract new members and to encourage activism among currently non-active groups, particularly women and minority groups.
- To this end, training for branch officers in the development and mentoring of potential new activists from equalities groups should be prioritised to prevent stereotyping and create a more welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Consideration could be given to the creation of new branch roles and procedures which might attract new members and stimulate activism.
- The development of good practice guides on the practical arrangements for branch activities could help remove barriers to broader participation in union activities.

## **Union as an Employer**

### **Union Workforce Diversity**

Just under half of all respondents suggested that both BME groups and women were under-represented within professional officer positions within their unions. Again, respondents suggested that a lack of information made it difficult to identify whether the disabled, LGBT workers or others were specifically under-represented.

### **Barriers to Employment and Progression**

Union respondents concerned about the under-representation of BME and female workers within their officer ranks cited a wide range of factors contributing to the exclusion of these groups, including: relatively closed recruitment practices (many unions recruit mainly internally from members or even lay officials); and low turnover among existing union staff.

An additional problem may lie in the working practices promoted, or at least accepted, by some trade unions. Some respondents noted that trade union representatives are required to spend time travelling and that working unsocial hours is not uncommon. It was suggested that this made career progression for those with care responsibilities difficult and, in some cases, near impossible.

### **Unions as an Employer: Issues for Unions**

- Further research (possibly in the form of 'equality audits') is required to establish the extent to which particular groups are under-represented in professional positions within trade unions.
- Trade unions should review their recruitment practices into professional positions and, where appropriate, seek to 'open out' recruitment to a wider field of potential applicants (for example, by relying less on internal, informal recruitment).
- Scottish trade unions should consider the development of programmes (ranging from support and mentoring services to positive action) for lay activists from under-represented groups who might seek a union career.
- Trade unions need to examine their own work cultures and practices. Where a rigid, long hours work culture restricts opportunities for women and other groups to progress into officer positions, this must be challenged and reformed.

## **Representative Structures**

### **Equalities Structures**

Scottish trade unions have made some progress in establishing representative structures for equalities groups. Of those respondents participating in the research, ten represented unions with general equal opportunities committees. At least half of respondents represented unions with regional or national BME and women's committees. Far fewer unions had committees for LBGT or disabled members, although the establishment of self-organising groups for these members has apparently become increasingly popular. Many unions with no representative structures had very limited membership in Scotland.

### **Mechanisms for Influencing Policy**

In some of the unions there was an equal opportunities representative on the National Executive Committee, often through a reserved place for women and minorities. The national and/or regional committees often reported to the NEC but the degree to which they influenced policy-making was questioned by some respondents. In many cases the role of these bodies was to make 'recommendations' or simply advise the NEC of their activities.

In all but two unions, the role of self-organising groups and networks appeared to be more about offering support rather than influencing policy. Many unions noted that there were problems with keeping self-organised groups and committees going either because of practical barriers in meeting up and/or apathy among members.

### **Representative Structures: Issues for Unions**

- This study could only touch upon the broad remit of the representative structures in place for promoting equalities issues. Further research is needed on the impact and effectiveness of these forums.
- Any review of the bureaucratic nature of the process of policy development should consider the mechanisms for articulating equalities issues and the routes for equalities groups to change and influence policy.

### **Good Practice in Equalities**

#### **Researching Equalities**

A number of trade union representatives cited innovative new practice in raising awareness of equalities issues among members. For a small number of trade unions carrying out research among members had recently played a particularly important role in informing policy and campaigning on equalities. Such research has focused on: the priorities and problems of BME members; harassment and dignity at work issues among women members; and the reluctance of women and minority group members to participate in union activities. For these unions, specific attempts to investigate the issues faced by members of particular groups have paid benefits, and have resulted in policy changes within unions and companies.

#### **Education and Awareness-raising Activities**

Raising awareness of equal opportunities issues among union members, reps and officers was a priority for many of the trade unions represented by our respondents. In some cases, respondents noted the continued need to reinforce messages on equalities among members, who were reluctant to cast themselves as 'victims' or to acknowledge the unfair treatment that they were subject to.

A number of trade union respondents pointed to specific learning opportunities on equalities provided for members, union officers and even employers. There were impressive examples of the UK-wide roll out of equal opportunities training developed by Scottish trade unionists, and innovative learning on equalities developed by unions in collaboration with employers.

#### **Campaigning and Working with Employers**

Trade union respondents identified a diverse range of equalities issues that had provided the focus for campaigning activities. Equalities representatives described major campaigns on: harassment and dignity at work; domestic violence; and parental leave rights and flexible working. In addition, a number of trade unions reported significant involvement in the STUC/EOC 'Close the Gap' campaign or their own campaigns on equal pay issues.

There was wide variation in the extent to which trade union respondents reported constructive partnership relations with employers. In some cases, especially in the public sector, trade unions reported a very positive engagement with employers on the equal opportunities agenda. There were also examples of strong partnership

working with employers in other sectors, for example: to campaign against student debt, a major source of incomes inequality for young people; to agree joint policies and guidance on dignity at work; on joint training on equalities; and the establishment of joint equality forums and diversity champion programmes in the workplace.

However, respondents also noted that there were limits to partnership work – while a minority of (mainly public sector) employers had been willing to work with trade unionists on, for example, equal pay issues, many employers continued to vigorously oppose progress in this and other areas, such as the establishment of family-friendly policies and reasonable adjustment changes under the Disability Discrimination Act.

### **Good Practice in Equalities: Issues for Unions**

- The STUC should work with trade unions which have successfully carried out research on different membership groups' issues, in order to spread good practice and highlight the benefits (in terms of informing campaigning and policy) of such research exercises to other unions.
- A number of trade unions have developed innovative approaches to delivering equalities training (sometimes in partnership with employers). The STUC and their partners should highlight examples of good practice in this area, and encourage trade unions to continue to invest in equalities training for members, lay officials and officers.
- Scottish trade unions should seek to learn from examples of constructive partnership working with employers, so that employers can be assisted to develop new approaches to equalities issues, in relation to recruitment and progression, dignity at work policies, equalities training and other issues.
- Despite rhetoric around equal opportunities and managing diversity, many employers continue to resist progress in areas such as equal pay, work-life balance and making reasonable adjustments in line with the DDA. Scottish trade unions must continue to campaign vigorously for reform in these areas, and to work together to maintain the pressure on resistant employers.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background to the Research

This document reports the findings of mapping research on trade unions' approaches to promoting equal opportunities in Scotland. The research was carried out by the Employment Research Institute (ERI) at Napier University, Edinburgh on behalf of the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC).

Promoting equal opportunities for people at work is a priority for policy makers in the European Union, UK and Scotland. In February 2005, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Cabinet Office announced an *Equalities Review* which will:

- Investigate the social, economic, cultural and other factors that limit or deny people the opportunity to make the best of their abilities.
- Provide an understanding of the long term and underlying causes of disadvantage that need to be addressed by public policy.
- Make practical recommendations on key policy priorities for: the Government and public sector; employers and trade unions; civic society and the voluntary sector.
- Inform both the modernisation of equality legislation, towards a Single Equality Act; and the development of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights combining the current Commissions.

Developing and promoting a workplace equalities agenda is also a focus for the activities of many trade unions in Scotland. The STUC has sought to support and inform the work of trade unions in this area through its *One Workplace Equal Rights Project*. One Workplace Equal Rights is supported by funding from the Scottish Executive and falls under the *One Scotland, Many Cultures Campaign*, which has a core objective of raising awareness of, and combating racist attitudes and behaviour, and highlighting the value of diversity. The project is also part-funded by EU Equal SWELL. Within this context, One Workplace Equal Rights seeks to tackle racism and promote equal opportunities in the workplace by providing accessible information and advice on rights at work. Working in partnership with agencies involved in equalities issues, One Workplace Equal Rights has delivered a range of capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, including training for trade unionists.

The research reported in this document forms an important element of the One Workplace Equal Rights initiative. The ERI at Napier University was commissioned to investigate Scottish trade unions' approaches to promoting equal opportunities through a programme of research undertaken between November 2004 and February 2005. Following this introductory chapter presenting the research questions (1.2) and methodology (1.3), the report is structured as follows:

**Chapter 2:** Review of policy and research on equalities issues

**Chapter 3:** Research findings

**Chapter 4:** Conclusions and implications for policy

## 1.2. Research Questions

The research objective was to map the nature and scope of trade unions' current approaches to promoting equal opportunities, uncover good practice, and identify the challenges faced by trade union representatives and officials in promoting equality in the workplace. Following discussions between the ERI research team and STUC officials, a number of research questions were identified:

- What are the main equalities issues faced by members of Scottish trade unions and what approaches have unions adopted to address these issues?
- How effectively are equalities issues articulated within the broader bargaining agendas pursued by Scottish trade unions?
- To what extent do Scottish trade unions face difficulties in connecting with particular groups of workers? What strategies have been adopted to broaden membership and participation?
- To what extent do representative structures provide a voice for particular groups within the membership of Scottish trade unions? What are the challenges associated with the establishment and operation of these structures?
- Are trade unions' own employment practices consistent with the union movement's commitment to promoting equal opportunities in the workplace?

## 1.3. Methodology

The research was carried out in two phases. First, a desk-based review of policy and research literature was undertaken covering the broad themes of:

- research on the labour market experiences of, and disadvantages faced by, particular groups, with reference to age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and race (2.1);
- policy approaches to promoting equal opportunities, the legal framework and prevalence of equal opportunities policies among employers (2.2); and
- a review of the literature on trade union approaches to promoting equal opportunities (2.3).

The second phase of the research involved a series of semi-structured interviews with representatives from STUC-affiliated trade unions. All 42 STUC-affiliated trade union organisations were contacted and interviews were conducted with 26 (a response rate of 62%). The unions participating in the research are listed in the Appendix. The interviews covered the following areas:

- Equalities issues and bargaining priorities (3.1);
- Membership diversity (3.2);
- Participation in lay activities (3.3);
- Unions as an employer (3.4); and
- Representative structures (3.5).

## 2. REVIEW OF POLICY AND RESEARCH

This chapter presents the findings of a review of policy and research literature covering labour market inequalities (2.1), equal opportunities policy (2.2) and trade union approaches in promoting equal opportunities (2.3). It should be noted that every effort has been made to include all equalities groups but coverage is patchy. Literature, research and data available on gender is readily available but is less so for race, disability and age while information on religious beliefs and sexual orientation is very limited indeed.

### 2.1. Labour Market Inequalities

This section sets the context in which trade unions operate outlining some of the key features of labour market inequalities. Starting with employment rates we move through labour market segregation, flexible working and conclude with disparities in pay and rewards. Data is presented for each of the equalities groups at the Scotland level where available.

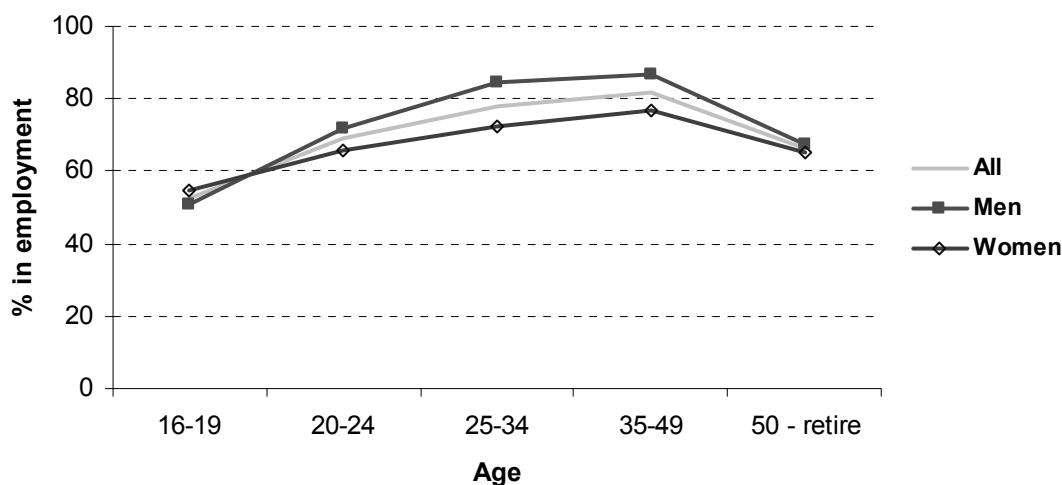
#### 2.1.1. Employment Gaps

The last few decades have seen a massive diversification in labour force demographics dramatically changing the pool of labour from which both employers and unions seek new recruits. However, employment gaps between men and women, whites and non-whites, and disabled and non-disabled workers persist.

#### Gender

For many years growth in women’s employment has been stronger than for men and women now comprise 47% of the workforce (Duffield 2002). Women’s employment rate is lower after the age of 24 but its pattern across the lifecourse is similar to that of men (Graph 2.1). The “M-curve” (dropping out of the labour market during child-bearing years and returning when older) which previously characterised the pattern of female employment appears to have evened out as full-time home-making has become economically and socially unattractive.

**Graph 2.1 % of men and women of working age in employment by age**



SOURCE: LOCAL AREA LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2003 (SCOTLAND)

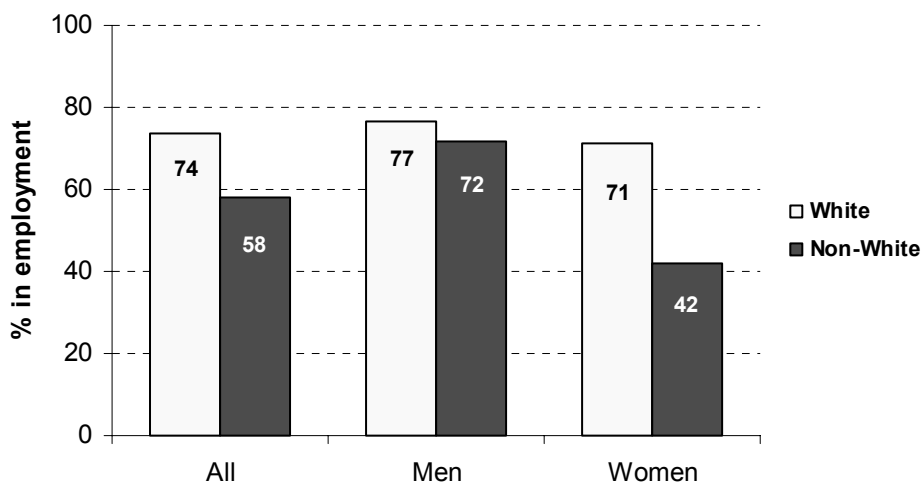
**Race**

According to the 2001 Census, the minority ethnic population in Scotland is around 2%, 6% lower than in the UK. The composition of Scotland’s non-white population is also different to the national picture: Pakistani, rather than Indian, is the largest minority ethnic group while the Black African and Caribbean populations are relatively small and the Chinese population is relatively large (Scottish Executive 2004a).

The non-white population has a younger age profile<sup>1</sup> and ethnic minorities (not including new migrants) are projected to account for over half the growth in Britain’s working age population over the next decade which holds important implications for union’s recruitment strategies (Cabinet Office 2003). In Scotland, where the population is both ageing and declining, low levels of immigration and a small minority ethnic population will contribute to the predicted contraction in the size of the workforce (Hollywood *et al.* 2003).

Overall, a higher proportion of the white population are in employment (see “All”, Graph 2.2). In the non-white population, Indians and Caribbeans have the highest employment rates (over 60%) while Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Other South Asians have the lowest (less than 50%), partly explained by much lower female employment among these groups. The *Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force* set up by the UK government aims to tackle this employment gap by prioritising, among other things, the employability of minority ethnic groups, initially by targeting under-achievement in school education (EMETF 2004).

**Graph 2.2      % of working age population in employment by ethnicity and gender**



SOURCE: LOCAL AREA LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2003 (SCOTLAND)

<sup>1</sup> This has been explained by higher birth rates and immigration being a relatively recent phenomenon.

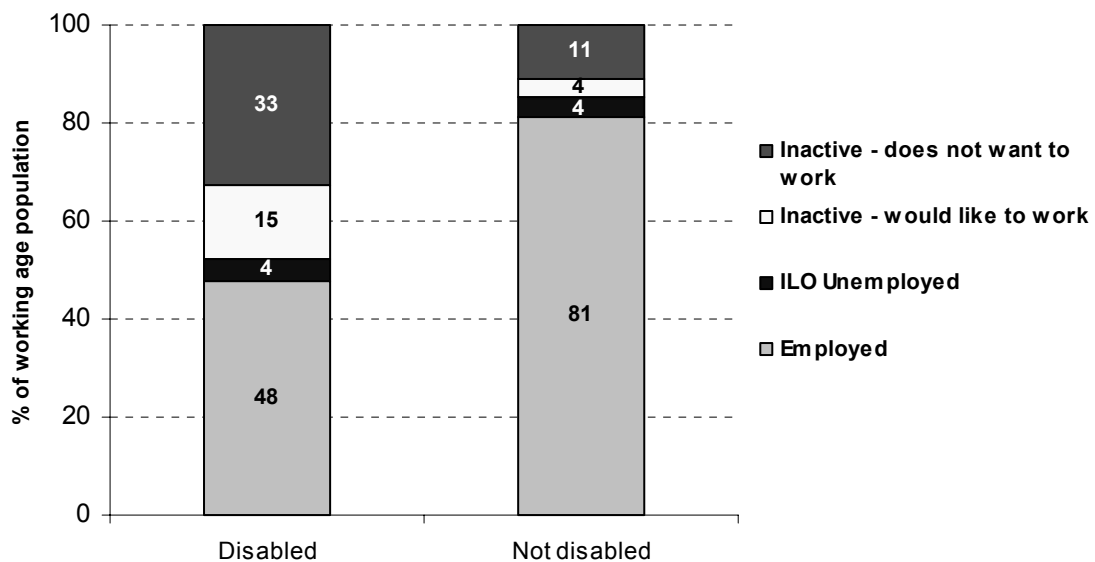
Self-employment in some minority ethnic groups is around twice that of the white population and is particularly common among Pakistani (32%), Chinese (23%), Indian (22%), Bangladeshi and ‘Other South Asian’ groups (20%)<sup>2</sup>. This phenomenon is thought to be a product of both “pull” factors, such as a cultural predisposition towards entrepreneurialism, and “push” factors, such as perceptions or experiences of discrimination in the mainstream labour market (Cabinet Office 2003).

Graph 2.2 illustrates the broad relationship between ethnicity, gender and employment. All women are less likely to be employed than men but this is more pronounced in the non-white population and there is a great deal of variation between ethnic groups. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are the least likely to be in employment and have the highest rates of women who have never worked, 46% and 40% respectively (Census 2001).

**Disability**

Graph 2.3 gives the economic activity among the disabled and non-disabled working age populations in the UK and shows much lower rates of employment in the disabled population (48% compared to 81%). Scotland’s employment rate for disabled persons is lower than the UK average at 45% but this gap has narrowed since 1999 when 37% of Scotland’s disabled working age population were employed compared to 45% in the UK (Scottish Executive 2004b).

**Graph 2.3 Economic activity of working age population by disability<sup>3</sup>**



SOURCE: Smith and Twomey (2002) using LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2001 (UK)

<sup>2</sup> Self-employment as a % of those in employment

<sup>3</sup> Using the Labour Force Survey definition, a self-reported measure of those who consider themselves to have a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act and/or a “work-limiting disability”.

However, there are important differences between the disabled and non-disabled economically *inactive* groups: a much higher proportion of the disabled working age population are economically inactive *and want to work* (15%) than the non-disabled economically inactive (4%) indicative of restricted job opportunities for disabled workers despite legislation designed to remove barriers to work (see also Riddell *et al.* 2005).

### **Age**

Graph 2.1 shows changes in the employment rate across the life course which peaks at 82% in the 35-49 year old age category. Employment rates are higher among Scottish young people (16 to 19 years) than in the UK as a whole (53% compared to 50%). However, employment in the 50 to retirement age population is *lower* in Scotland than in the UK (66% compared to 69%).

The employment rate of older workers has increased slightly in the last ten years but a longer term view shows declining activity rates, a trend which has particularly affected Scotland's older workers (Hollywood *et al.* 2003). Scotland has a higher proportion of over 50s who are economically inactive, a group which falls into two categories: one consists of early-retired professionals with generous pension provision, the other of skilled and semi-skilled workers made redundant or on long-term sick from declining traditional industries. In the context of Scotland's ageing and declining population, reducing old age unemployment and engaging with the needs of older workers will become an increasing priority for employers, unions and government.

### **Religion**

There is little detailed data on the employment experience of members of different religious groups. However, the Census does provide some broad information on economic activity by current religion. In the population aged 16 to 74 years, 43% stated their current religion was Church of Scotland, 27% said they had no religion, 16% were Roman Catholic and 7% "Other Christian". 1% were Muslims and less than 1% were Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish or Sikh. The employment rate is highest among those who have no religion (64%) and hovered between 51% and 56% for all other religions except Muslims (39%). There is a clear link between religion, culture and race: the majority of Muslims were Bangladeshi or 'Other South Asian' where female labour market participation is particularly low. Age may also skew the data as older people are more likely to subscribe to a religion and are less likely to work.

### **Sexual Orientation**

There are no labour market data on employment rates and sexual orientation.

### 2.1.2. Flexible Working

The growth in flexible working (which can be described as any arrangement that is not full-time and permanent) has been associated with a number of economic factors: the contraction of the manufacturing sector, where workplaces tend to be male-dominated and unionised; the expansion of the service sector; and employer demand on competitive grounds. Economic stability has slowed the trend towards the flexibilisation of labour but those already working flexibly (for example, part-time or on a temporary contract) are likely to experience poorer terms and conditions.

In recent years, the term 'flexible working' has come to be associated with the work-life balance and equalities agenda, gaining the more positive connotation of employee control over working hours. Despite rhetoric of a 'win-win' relationship between employer-led and employee-led flexible working, tensions remain. Dickens (1997a) notes that flexible working has the potential to promote equal opportunities by breaking down traditional working patterns and job territories but in reality many flexible jobs have lower earnings, less progression and limited access to benefits and training, particularly in flexible working posts occupied by women and ethnic minorities. Purcell *et al.* (1999) found that employees with greater autonomy and scarce expertise, can benefit from working flexibly but for manual and lower skilled workers, flexible working tends to mean insecurity and unpredictability rather than better work-life balance.

Most research on flexible working and equal opportunities focuses on part-time working and gender. The continuing gendered division of work and care and low availability of affordable childcare makes part-time work attractive for many women, most commonly among white women. The growth in female employment (2.1.1) has mainly come from the demand for part-time labour in the service industry: 43% of Scotland's female employees work part-time compared to 10% of male employees (Spring Labour Force Survey 2004).

Part-time working is also more prevalent among disabled workers than non-disabled (28% compared to 24%) (Scottish Executive 2004b) and among younger workers (56% aged 16 to 19) and older workers (30% aged over 50 years)<sup>4</sup>.

Women and minority groups are therefore more vulnerable to the poor terms and conditions that are still associated, playing a major role in producing inequalities in pay and rewards (2.1.4). Part-time workers tend to have less control over their working time, be occupied in unskilled positions and receive less training and lower pay (EFILWC 2001). Part-timers are also less likely to have access to occupational pension schemes and other benefits because they are concentrated in workplaces and occupations that do not provide such benefits (Fagan 2000). It is to labour market segregation we now turn.

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<sup>4</sup> Current data on flexible working and ethnicity is limited due to this information being temporarily suspended from the Labour Force Survey.

### 2.1.3. Labour Market Segregation

The UK’s labour market is segregated both *horizontally* and *vertically*: certain groups are over-represented in some industries and in lower or higher grades. For example, 91% of construction workers are male (horizontal segregation) and men are more likely than women to be managers (vertical segregation).

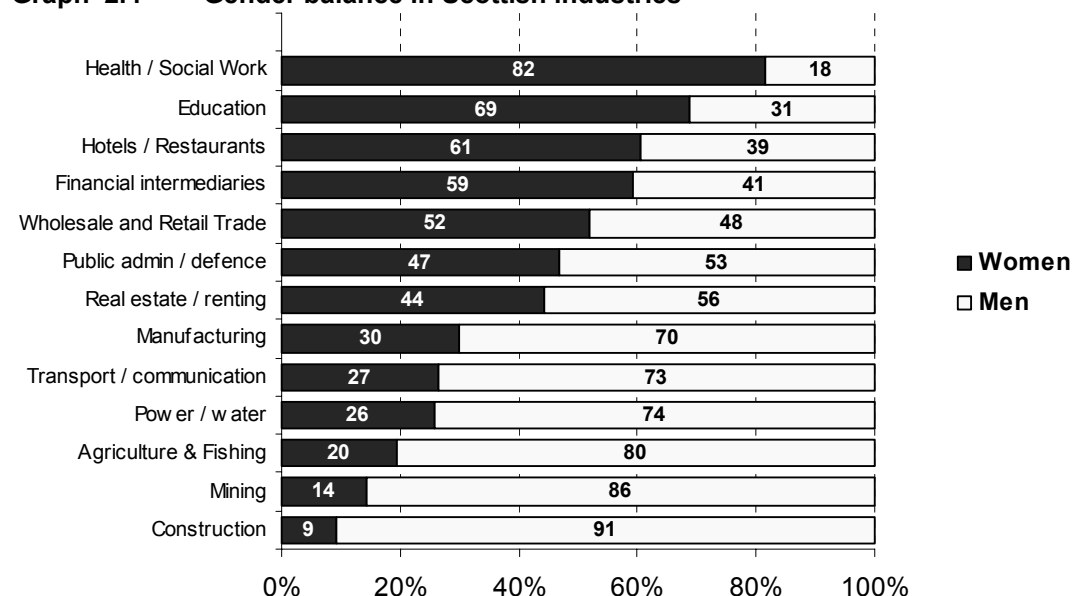
#### Gender

Despite years of non-discrimination legislation (2.2.2), women are still under-represented in higher grade jobs (the “glass ceiling”) and over-represented in the lower grades (the “sticky floor”). Only 36% of managers and senior officials are women compared to 79% of administrators and secretaries. There has been an increase in the proportion of women employed in professional occupations but within these professions they are still more likely to be working in lower grades (EOC 2004).

The reasons for the persistence of vertical segregation by gender are complex but work-life balance factors play an important role: working women still bear the main responsibility for home and family in the context of low state and employer support for childcare. Despite equal treatment regulations and a raft of family-friendly leave rights, negative attitudes to part-time working and taking family leave remain, particularly in senior roles. A Scottish study of lone and partnered mothers working in non-managerial / professional jobs found that mothers often took less demanding jobs to balance their working hours with family demands. While they accepted the need to make this compromise, several felt that they were working below their abilities (Backett-Milburn *et al.* 2001).

Graph 2.4 illustrates the horizontal segregation: 82% of employees working in the ‘Health and Social Work’ sector are women, as are 69% of those working in ‘Education’ and 61% in ‘Hotels and Restaurants’. In comparison, only 9% of employees in the ‘Construction’ sector, 27% in ‘Transport and Communications’ and 30% in ‘Manufacturing’ are female.

**Graph 2.4 Gender balance in Scottish industries**



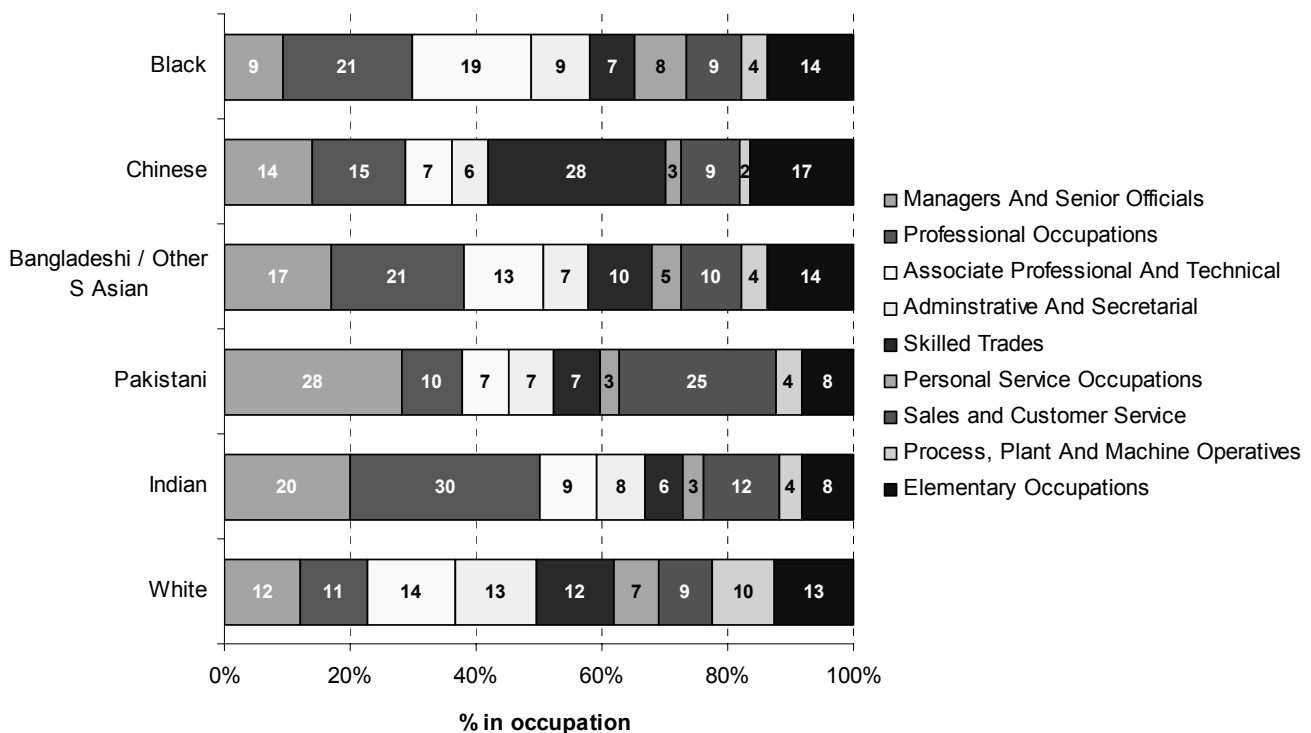
SOURCE: CENSUS 2001

Where men and women end up working is influenced by educational choices and judgments made at a young age, a process that remains persistently sex-stereotyped. Young people have equalities awareness in that when asked the suitability of certain occupations for each sex they respond with “suitable for both sexes”. However, they tend to fall into gender stereotypes when choosing the type of job they actually want to do (McQuaid and Bond 2004). Gottfredson’s (1981) suggests that career options are limited by individuals according to socialisation processes and societal expectations of what is appropriate based on gender, social class and ethnicity. Miller *et al.* (2004) highlight that this process is circular: that individual choice contributes to occupational segregation but perceptions of occupational segregation in turn influence individual choice.

**Race**

Horizontal segregation also occurs by race. The Census shows that white workers are more evenly distributed through the industrial sectors than non-white groups although a higher proportion of white workers are employed in manufacturing (13%) and construction (8%). Chinese workers are the most segregated with 51% working in hotels and restaurants compared to 6% of white workers. 45% of Pakistani workers work in the wholesale and retail industries compared to 14% of White workers. Both the hospitality and retail sectors have traditionally experienced low levels of unionisation, high levels of flexible working and lower pay. Indian and Black workers are over-represented in the health and social care sector (22% and 21% respectively).

**Graph 2.5 Vertical segregation by ethnicity**



SOURCE: CENSUS 2001 (SCOTLAND)

Graph 2.5 shows patterns of occupational (vertical) segregation by ethnicity. Perhaps surprisingly, a relatively low proportion of the white population work in managerial, senior official and professional occupations (12%). A relatively high proportion of white workers are employed as process, plant and machine operatives (10%), a product of over-representation in manufacturing industries. Indian workers are over-represented in professional occupations (30%) as are Bangladeshi, 'Other South Asian' and Black workers (21%).

### **Disability**

Analysis by the Scottish Executive (2004) suggests that disabled workers are proportionately represented across industrial sectors. However, Smith and Twomey's (2002) analysis of the UK Labour Force Survey suggests there is vertical segregation: a smaller proportion of disabled people work as managers, professionals, associate professionals and in the technical and sales and customer service occupations.

Overall, labour market segregation is the most important contributory factor to the gender pay gap (2.1.4) and possibly the most difficult challenge we face in creating labour market equality.

#### **2.1.4. Inequality in Pay and Rewards**

Labour market segregation (2.1.3), higher rates of part-time and other flexible working (2.1.2), lower and more fragmented participation in paid employment (2.1.1), combined with direct discrimination by employers conspire to produce lower pay and rewards for women and minority groups.

In 2003, female full-timers earned, on average, 18% less per hour than male full-timers. Using data from the British Household Panel Survey, Olsen and Walby (2004) have attempted to model the gender pay gap. Differences in lifetime working patterns (e.g. women having fewer years in full-time employment) account for 36% of the pay gap: each year of full-time employment was associated with an *increase* in wages but each year served in part-time employment was associated with a slight *decrease* in wages. Horizontal labour market segregation accounted for 10% of pay gap<sup>5</sup>: women who worked with other women were likely to be paid less while men who work with other men were likely to be paid more. Male dominated workplaces have tended to be unionised and have therefore enjoyed better pay and terms and conditions (Metcalf et al. 2001; Dickens 1997b) which is why women's prominence in the unionised public sector has made an important contribution to closing the pay gap. However, women and ethnic minorities are more likely to work in public sector jobs which are subject to the 'contracting out' which has had a detrimental impact on pay (Rubery and Grimshaw 2001; Busby 2003).

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<sup>5</sup> A further 38% can be explained by other factors associated with direct and indirect discrimination including how the work that women chose to do is valued.

Less analysis has been done on the race pay gap although average earnings for men in all ethnic minority groups were lower than their white counterparts in 2000 (Cabinet Office 2003). Indian men were the least disadvantaged earning 8% less than white men in 1994 but 3% more in 2000. Bangladeshi men were the most disadvantaged group earning on average 52% less than white men. The Family Resources Survey 2000/01 shows that, after housing costs, 21% of households that had a white head of household can be defined as a 'low income household'<sup>6</sup>. This increases to 30% for Indian, 31% for Black Caribbean, 49% for Black non-Caribbean and 68% of households whose head of household was Pakistani or Bangladeshi. The gap in average gross weekly earnings between the disabled and non-disabled populations is around 10% (Scottish Executive 2004b).

### **2.1.5. Labour Market Inequalities: Issues for Unions**

- Increasing labour market participation among the women, the BME population (particularly women in certain ethnic groups), older workers and disabled workers should help reduce poverty, close the income gap and, in the context of a declining population, may be crucial for Scotland's future economic growth, and ultimately unions' survival.
- The shift towards flexible forms of working may create new opportunities to work for women, older people and other groups. Trade unions must be closely involved with other partners in 'policing flexibility', even those branded as promoting better work-life balance, so that measures to promote equality in pay, conditions and status are linked to opportunities to increase participation for potentially excluded groups.
- Trade unions should continue to challenge the occupational (vertical) and sectoral (horizontal) segregation that characterises the Scottish and UK labour markets – this may involve renewed efforts to break down stereotyped views held by job seekers, employees and employers, and address both direct and indirect discrimination in recruitment and progression.
- Race and gender pay gaps continue to represent a major problem – despite recent progress in these areas (supported by the campaigning work of trade unions), 'closing the gap' must remain a key priority for the equalities work of Scottish trade unions. Again, a broad labour market, societal-level view must be taken if the underlying causes of pay inequality are to be overcome.

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<sup>6</sup> Low income household is defined as having less than 60% of the median disposable income.

## 2.2. Equal Opportunities Policy

There are a number of different approaches to tackling the labour market inequalities which have shaped union, employer and government policy. This section scopes the main theories of equal opportunities policy (2.2.1), the legislative framework (2.2.2), and levels of employer provision (2.2.3).

### 2.2.1. Understanding Equal Opportunities Policy

Rees (1998) identifies three models of equal opportunities policy. *Sameness* (or “liberal”), *difference* (or “radical”) and *transformation*. The *sameness* model’s aim is equal treatment in terms of access to work, rewards and benefits irrespective of race, gender, disability etc. The UK’s equality legislation and, perhaps as a consequence, some union activity, is largely based on this liberal approach. The sameness model has been criticised for its focus on the individual which fails to challenge the underlying norms and prejudices which cause inequality (Liff and Wajcman 1996).

The *difference* model asserts that workplace inequality is the result of structural inequalities at the level of the group, for example women or ethnic minority workers (Parker 2003). Unlike the *sameness* model, it does not assume that equality in rewards will automatically flow from equal treatment. Positive discrimination is advocated to overcome pre-existing inequalities although this type of action is mostly illegal. Critics of the *difference* model suggest that it gives certain groups a ‘leg up’ the ladder rather than challenging underlying inequalities (Jewson and Mason 1985).

The third model is that of *transformation*: where new standards for example in gender or race relations, are established by transforming the systems in which they operate. The gendered and racialised elements of institutions are made visible and equalities issues are placed at the heart of decision making. The *mainstreaming* of equalities is often associated with the *transformation* model although Booth and Bennet (2002) argue that mainstreaming requires the ‘three-legged stool’ of equalities policy: the ‘equal treatment perspective’ (*sameness*), the ‘women’s perspective’ (*difference*) and the ‘gender perspective’ (*transformation*).

Gender mainstreaming originated in UN development policies coming to prominence at the 1995 conference on women in Beijing before being adopted by the EU and later the UK and Scottish governments. Mainstreaming in government policy involves conducting an ‘impact assessment’ of proposed policies and where necessary ‘equality proofing’ the policy to ensure it meets equality objectives. Equality proofing usually involves gathering of baseline data on equality issues; developing guidance and delivering equal opportunities training; and the development of evaluation and monitoring procedures (Scottish Executive 2001).

Walby (2004) highlights a duality in the mainstreaming approach between the promotion of equality as an end in itself and making mainstream policies more effective by the inclusion of equalities issues. Despite a positive association being found between the goals of equality and economic prosperity, it remains a contested relationship. Perrons (2003) argues that in the UK the competitiveness of the economy takes precedence thereby endorsing rather than tackling labour market inequalities.

It is on this relationship that *Managing Diversity* is based. Managing diversity emerged in the early 1990s and asserts that organisations can gain competitive advantage by having a diverse workforce (Liff and Wajcman, 1996). Dickens (1997a) argues that policies introduced using this business case rhetoric are unlikely to improve the overall position of women and ethnic minorities in the labour market because they are contingent, selective and partial. Trade unions are also sceptical. Aside from the business case being at odds with trade unions' commitment to equal opportunities policies as a route to social justice and equality (Colling and Dickens 1998), managing diversity has also been seen as: a smokescreen obscuring the continuing problem of discrimination (Wrench 2004); a public relations exercise rather than a substantive policy agenda (Greene and Kirton 2002); skirting the central issues, such as low pay and occupational segregation (Colling and Dickens 1998); and underplaying the institutionalised disadvantage experienced by minority groups and women (Greene and Kirton 2002).

### 2.2.2. The Legal Framework<sup>7</sup>

The UK's legal framework on equalities issues is broadly based on the *sameness* model outlined above. Generally speaking there is a requirement to *desist* from doing negative things but no legal requirement to *do* anything to promote equality. It is an individual rights-based model with the aim of objective equal treatment (2.2.1).

Discrimination laws prohibit *direct* and *indirect* discrimination in the areas of employment, education, the provision of goods, facilities and services and in the disposal or management of premises. In terms of employment this tends to cover: applying for jobs; promotion and job changes; terms and conditions; disciplinary and grievance; termination of employment; and redundancy and pensions. The law also protects women and minority groups from harassment and victimisation (when a complaint has been made under the discrimination law). Defences to discrimination claims include: that the reasons for discrimination are proportionate; genuine occupational requirement; and in disability discrimination, that employers have made all reasonable adjustments (LRD 2004).

Below are very brief outlines of the various discrimination laws currently in force. The Department of Trade and Industry has recently announced (February 2005) that they intend to undertake a review of this raft of legislation in order to simplify it and make it fairer.

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<sup>7</sup> This section briefly outlines the nature of the UK's legal framework, it is not an authoritative statement of the law. More resources can be found on [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

### **Sex Discrimination**

The *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, marriage and gender reassignment. *Direct* sex discrimination is where a woman (or man) is treated less favourably than a person of the opposite sex in comparable circumstances is. Types of direct sex discrimination include sexual harassment and treating a woman adversely because she is pregnant. Indirect sex discrimination is where a condition or practice is applied to both sexes but it adversely affects a considerably larger proportion of one sex than the other e.g. a requirement to work full-time might be unlawful discrimination against women.

### **Equal Pay**

The *Equal Pay Act 1970* gives individuals the right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing like work or work that is proved to be of equal value. This law has failed to close to gender pay gap for a number of reasons. Firstly, a lack of transparency in organisations' pay systems makes it difficult to obtain information to make a claim. Secondly, in the light of labour market segregation (2.1.3) the requirement to find a *comparator* on the "equal pay for equal work" basis means the Act is powerless against the fact that women on low pay tend to work with other women on low pay (2.1.4). Further, rulings only cover the individuals who take the claims and tribunal hearings tend to be a long and often unsuccessful process.

### **Race Discrimination**

The *Race Relations Act 1976*, as amended by the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*, makes it illegal to treat a person less favourably on racial grounds covering all aspects of employment from recruitment to pay, and training to the termination of a contract. As for sex discrimination, it covers direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. However, a job may be restricted to people of a particular race or national origin, if these characteristics are a genuine occupational requirement but this only applies in limited circumstances.

The 2000 amended Act imposes a general duty on all major public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations and allows individuals to bring a legal case, if they feel they have been discriminated against by public bodies, or any other organisation, when applying for, or using any service or purchasing good. Enacting the EU Race Directive, the Race Regulations 2003 amended the 1976 Act still further introducing, among other things, new definitions on direct and indirect discrimination, new exemptions and a new burden of proof in tribunal or court proceedings<sup>8</sup>.

### **Disability Discrimination**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* gives disabled people employment protection which means that employers must not treat a disabled person less favourably because of their disability without a justifiable reason, and are required to make reasonable adjustments to working conditions or the workplace where that would help accommodate a particular disabled person.

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<sup>8</sup> For details on the Race Relations Regulations see the CRE website:  
[http://www.cre.gov.uk/legaladv/rra\\_regs.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/legaladv/rra_regs.html)

Howard (2004) suggests that firms are more likely to make an effort to retain an existing employee who becomes disabled than to assist a new recruit. Research among young disabled people revealed that 13% had been turned down for a job explicitly because of their impairment and 18% thought they had been turned down because of their impairment but had been given another reason (DRC 2003).

### **Age Discrimination**

The Employment Directive on Equal Treatment requires all EU Member States to introduce legislation prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of age which will be implemented in the UK in 2006. Age discrimination is possibly the most 'socially acceptable' form of discrimination. Anderson *et al.* (2004) found that 21% of workplaces considered age to be a legitimate and important factor in recruitment. Private sector organisations twice as likely as the public sector to think age was important (24% compared to 11%).

### **Religion**

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 protect people from discrimination on the grounds of all religions and beliefs. The new law means that an organisation's recruitment and selection procedures, as well as employment practices, such as dress codes and disciplinary procedures, must treat everyone fairly regardless of their religion or belief.

### **Sexual Orientation**

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 give protection from discrimination on grounds connected with sexual orientation. This includes orientation towards someone of the same sex, opposite sex or both sexes.

### **Related Policy**

Other employment rights related to equal opportunities include:

- The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 which aim to ensure that part-time workers are not treated less favourably than comparable full-timers for example in pay, access to training, holidays, leave policies and redundancy.
- The Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 aim to ensure that employees on fixed-term contracts are treated no less favourably than comparable permanent employees.
- Family-friendly statutory rights including: time off for dependents; maternity leave; parental leave; paternity leave; and right to request flexible working.

### 2.2.3. Employer Provision

The law doesn't require employers to adopt a formal equal opportunities policy but nonetheless many do. Anderson *et al.* (2004) found that 67% of UK workplaces with ten or more employees had some form of equal opportunities policy. Policies were more commonly found in:

- larger establishments (92% of those employing more than 500 employees compared to 64% of those employing 10 to 24 employees);
- the public sector (97% compared to 57% in the private sector);
- certain industries (e.g. education 92% compared to manufacturing 34%);
- organisations with union recognition (90% compared to 53%).

Nearly 60% of all workplaces had policies which specifically covered sex, ethnicity and disability while less than half of workplaces had policies covering religion, age and sexual orientation. Workforces with a high proportion of women were more likely to have a gender-specific policy and those with a higher proportion of minority ethnic groups were more likely to have a race policy.

The provision of an equal opportunities policy does not necessarily translate into equality of opportunity for employees and potential employees. Noon and Hoque (2001) define an effective equal opportunities employer as one that: has a formal policy that ensures equal treatment for target groups; maintains employee monitoring; and has procedures to positively encourage job applications from target groups. Hoque and Noon (2004) note that practice regularly falls short of employers' policy rhetoric and suggest reasons why:

- a lack of clear procedures for implementing policy;
- management only paying lip service to policy;
- line managers attempts to subvert the implementation of policy (which they can view as a threat to their authority); and
- the policy being seen as an end in itself, rather than as a means to an end.

### 2.2.4. Equal Opportunities Policy: Issues for Unions

- Trade unions should continue to engage with the academic, research and policy communities to better analyse and understand their own approaches to promoting equal opportunities (often based on the 'sameness' or 'individual rights' approach), and the impact this has on union members and employees.
- Trade union officers and lay officials are likely to benefit from opportunities to consider and review their unions' approaches and assumptions around equal opportunities policies – the STUC may have a role in facilitating such a process.
- Regulating on equalities and preventing discrimination have provided major foci for recent government legislation – it is important that trade unions continue to inform their members and officers regarding the impact and limitations of this legislation, and identify opportunities to work with employers towards a new 'climate' on equal opportunities in the light of the proposed review.

### **2.3. Trade Unions and Equal Opportunities Policy**

In this section we examine the inextricably linked issues of diversity in union membership (2.3.1) and equalities issues within the union agenda (2.3.2).

#### **2.3.1. Diversity in Trade Union Membership**

Historically, British trade unions have not adopted an inclusive approach to women and minority groups (Dickens 1994). Early literature on equalities issues in unions focused on explanations for the lower levels of unionisation among women (now less marked). Aldred (1981) and Ellis (1981) noted that women were more likely than men to be working in non-unionised employment while Beale (1982) pointed to practical obstacles to women's involvement in unions: time and place of meetings; other pressure on women's time and energy; and the more intensive nature of part-time work. Procedures based on an assumption of the 'typical man's working life' (Beale 1982); a culture of masculinity (Cunnison and Stageman 1993); and the equating of men's concerns with members' interests (Colling and Dickens 1989) are also thought to have contributed to the lack of interest in unions among women.

Since this time, there has been a dramatic decline in union membership. The British Social Attitudes Survey shows that the percentage of employees who are union members fell by a third between 1983 and 2001 from 49% to 31%. The TUC (2003) has identified a number of contributory factors including the structural labour market changes associated with lower levels of unionisation, for example, the feminisation of the workforce, growth in part-time work and private sector services (see 2.1).

There has been an increasing recognition of the need for unions to combat declining membership through the recruitment of previously marginalised groups. Many unions have seen the targeting of part-time and female members as crucial to increasing membership and data from the 2003 Labour Force Survey suggests that this strategy has been quite successful. 29% of both male and female employees were union members. Union density was 21% for part-time compared to 32% full-time employment but female part-timers were more likely to be union members than male part-timers (23% compared to 12%). In terms of ethnicity, union density was found to be higher among Black (30%), White (30%) and Asian employees (25%) and lower among mixed race (21%), Chinese and other ethnic groups (19%). Younger workers are also less likely to be union members. Only 11% of 16-24 year olds, compared to 26% of 25-34 year olds and 36% of the over 35s are members of trade unions.

These national figures are only indicative. If individual unions are serious about membership diversity, they must monitor in line with government recommendations on equalities mainstreaming (2.2.1). Wrench's (2004) work on race issues in unions found worker representatives and equality officers supportive of the idea of monitoring membership. However, the level and quality of monitoring is variable. A survey of TUC affiliated unions revealed that 81% kept statistics on the number of women members but only half kept statistics on black members, 47% on age, 34% on disability and 6% on LGBT members. Even fewer kept records on activism: 28% kept records on women shop stewards; 18% on ethnicity; 12% on young members; 6% on disabled stewards; and none on LGBT (TUC 2003).

### 2.3.2. Trade Unionism and Equal Opportunities

Hyman (2001) suggests that historically most unions have been biased in the composition of their officials and activists towards “high-status, male, native born, full-time employees” and that it is this core that has set bargaining priorities. The low status and low employment protection experienced by part-time workers can be, at least partly, attributed to unions who previously defended the male breadwinner, ‘family wage’ model of full-time employment when female employment was seen as a threat. Similarly, Fryer (1984) comments on the failure of unions to support and in some cases actively opposed, industrial action led by black workers in the 1960s who endured inferior conditions and pay to their white colleagues.

In more recent years women and minority groups have been covered by collective bargaining yet they are rarely involved in the process of negotiating collective agreements. Black members are less likely to actively participate in trade union structures and activities (STUC 2004) reflecting a long-held view that white-dominated unions are unable to address racism in the workplace (Lee 1984). Women are also less likely to hold decision-making positions within trade union organisations despite making up 40% of membership (Parker 2003; Kirton and Greene, 2002).

In the light of declining membership, unions must address the demands of groups which have been systematically excluded from positions of power (Colgan and Ledwith 2002). Trade unions have acknowledged the criticism that they should be more aware of the specific problems of groups within their increasingly diverse membership, and acknowledge the institutionalised discrimination and disadvantage faced by some groups (Wrench 2004; Greene and Kirton 2002). 94% of workers now believe that promoting equal opportunities should be a union priority (TUC 2003) and women and minority groups are more likely to identify campaigning on equalities issues as an important reason for joining a trade union (STUC 2004).

Increased diversity in union membership has revealed the limitations of traditional analyses of trade union democracy. It is no longer just about the balance of power between the leaders (representative democracy) and its members (participative democracy) but about divergence of interests *among* leaders and members as well as between them (Colgan and Ledwith 2002).

In the trade union context, liberal approaches to equal opportunities (*sameness*) have been concerned with equal access through institutional reform (e.g. adequate monitoring; literature and information targeted at minority groups) while radical approaches (*difference*) seek to directly empower potentially disadvantaged groups through their own committees, conferences, self-organising groups and reserved places (Kirton and Greene 2002) (see 2.2.1). This process began with women but increasing black members, disabled members and LGBT members and young/retired members have been recognised as groups with their own interests.

Heery and Kelly (1994) argue that having women officers makes a significant difference to the representation of women’s interests. Colgan and Fagan (2002) argue the *difference* approach employed to address inequalities in *representational* democracy (such as quotas and reserved places) can be problematic and have had limited effect. Hierarchical structures remain in tact as gender and minority posts are ‘added-on’ and those elected through this route are often seen as second-class.

Moreover, someone elected, for example, because of their gender, in fact represents a broad constituency which may limit their ability to raise “women’s issues” because they must represent both men and women (Healy and Kirkton 2000).

Limits to changes in representative structures have led marginalised groups to seek own routes to make their voice heard, increasingly through semi-autonomous self-organising groups. The emphasis here is on *participative* union democracy but, unlike traditional forms of union participation, the locus is not in the workplace because it’s in the workplace that women and minority groups have felt isolated and marginalised. Self-organising groups can be seen as ‘institutionalised factions’ which trade unions have been forced to accept given internal demands made by an increasingly diverse trade union membership (Colgan and Fagan 2002).

Briskin (1993) argues that success of self-organising depends on the balance between autonomy from the structures (maintaining a radical edge) and integration (too little means the group is marginalised). Self-organisation can offer a safe place for non-traditional activists to develop and debate and acts as a site for the development of a group agenda to take into the mainstream union agenda. Munro (1999 and 2001) argues for the importance of arenas in which women and other groups can discuss workplace concerns that previously would not have been considered by trade unions. Trade union equalities officers have also acknowledged the value of self-organising representative groups in providing a forum for BME trade unionists (Wrench 2004).

However, there has also been considerable debate to what extent women and other minority groups have specific workplace interests. Munro (2001) argues that workplace interests are gendered and racialised but that attempts to produce a catalogue of ‘women’s interests’ runs the risk of producing an over generalised list which has little resonance with most women’s experience of work. Issues of particular concern to particular groups of workers may not be labelled as ‘women’s issues’ or ‘black workers’ issues’, they may be ‘hidden’ within pay claims, job re-grading schemes, training and promotion, which is why unions must *mainstream* equalities issues into the normal collective bargaining agenda.

### **2.3.3. Trade Unions and Equal Opportunities Policy: Issues for Unions**

- Trade unions have made considerable progress in recruiting from a non-traditional base, particularly women, but continue to struggle to engage with some BME workers and other groups. Trade unions must continue to reinforce the message among local officers that equalities issues can be an effective recruitment and organising tool.
- In more general terms, trade unions need to ensure that the equal opportunities issues are communicated to, and discussed among, lay officials and officers and reflect on the efficacy of the structures in place to mainstream equalities into the broader union agenda.

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of interviews undertaken with representatives of 26 STUC-affiliated trade unions described in terms of their membership in Scotland (Table 2.1) and broad industry sector (Table 2.2). However, all quotes are anonymised to the post held by the respondent.

**Table 3.1 Participating unions by size of membership in Scotland**

Very Small (less than 1,000 members)	4
Small (1,000<2,000 members)	5
Medium (2,000<10,000 members)	8
Large (more than 10,000 members)	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

Each trade union was asked to identify an appropriate official who would be able to comment on equal opportunities issues and strategies at the Scotland level. Accordingly, the job roles and seniority of respondents varied from union-to-union. Major UK-wide trade unions often referred the research team to regional (i.e. Scotland) equalities officers, many of whom combined this role with other duties. A small number of more centralised UK-wide trade unions offered national (i.e. UK-level) equalities officers for interview, suggesting that these individuals had an overview of policy and practice in all regions (including Scotland). Large Scottish trade unions tended to refer the research team to 'national' (i.e. Scotland-level) officers with responsibility for equalities issues, while in some smaller trade unions, senior staff members, such as regional or national secretaries, acted as respondents. In all cases, respondents were identified as having responsibility for promoting equalities issues in Scotland.

**Table 3.2 Participating unions by industrial sector**

Cultural services	2
Education	4
Financial and commercial services	2
General	3
Health	3
Manufacturing	2
Public Services	6
Transport	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

### 3.1. Equalities Issues and Bargaining Priorities

In this section we look at the main equalities issues that our unions identified as important to their members and to what extent these issues are articulated in the broader bargaining agenda.

#### 3.1.1. Equalities Priorities

Unions were asked what they considered to be the most important equalities issues facing their members, the results are listed in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 Number of unions identifying key equalities issues**

Equal pay for women	14
Career progression for women	13
Work-life balance	13
Dignity at work/harassment and bullying	11
Equality in pension rights	6
Compliance with Disability Discrimination Act	6
Promoting fair recruitment by employers	4
Increasing diversity in the workplace	4
Equal pay for minority ethnic groups	2
Domestic violence	2
Institutional racism	1
Career progression for minority ethnic groups	1
Rights of temporary and part-time workers	1

The most commonly cited equalities priorities were primarily associated with the interests of female members. Only six unions saw disability as a key equalities issue, two were concerned with the race pay gap, one with institutional racism and one with career progression for minority ethnic groups.

The majority of union activity on equal pay related to the gender pay gap. Some of those engaged in this debate were familiar with the structural problems which contribute to the pay gap such as horizontal and vertical segregation (see 2.1.4).

*[The gender pay gap is] based on a job segregation issue – women are not getting into certain occupations. You have almost total job segregation [in one sector], but you also have women who do a multiplicity of jobs, each of which is graded at the lowest level. Added together these tasks should raise them up the pay scale, but that's not taken account of in our national agreement.*

**National Equalities Officer**

The persistence of discriminatory pay systems in traditional employment sectors were identified by two unions as in need of reform:

*We represent predominantly manual workers ... a major campaign is about to be launched on equal pay for women manual workers, who have historically been denied access to bonus schemes that predominantly male manual occupations have benefited from.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*The grading structures were inherited from [a previous employer] which was male dominated. We are pushing employers to conduct Pay Audits to look at grading structures and recruitment and selection.*

**National Equalities Officer**

Another union emphasised the importance of establishing pay audits in closing the pay gap. They have identified equal pay test cases but underlined the limits of the individual rights approach to equal pay (see 2.2.2).

*The problem with equal pay cases is that they have still not impacted on employers' approach to pay issues in general. We have approached employers to encourage them to undertake Equal Pay Audits but they have been reluctant. They are terrified to learn that they may have pay gaps.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Thirteen unions, both public and private sector saw the lack of career progression among women as a key equalities issue. A public sector union identified that the 'glass ceiling' was problematic, mainly due to women being less willing and/or able to work the long hours considered necessary for promotion:

*Women have to work themselves to death to prove themselves worthy... There are specific issues that we can tackle, for instance ensuring that women are not discriminated against because they supposedly can't keep up with the amount of work that men do. A lot of women can't do the twelve hour days because [of their commitments at home].*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

However, a similar union with similar issues in career progression for women appeared to have failed to engage with the underlying causes of lack of female progression, simply blaming lack of interest:

*I think that's just the way things are, gender is not an issue. It's because there is a greater proportion of men who apply for the job. Women aren't applying for those positions.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

### 3.1.2. Bargaining Priorities

Unions were asked what the current most important bargaining priorities were, the responses are given in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Number of unions identifying current bargaining priorities**

Pay	21
Terms and Conditions	19
Pensions	13
Preventing redundancies	8
Equal pay for women	7
Work-life Balance	6
Dignity at work/harassment and bullying	2
Equal pay for minority ethnic groups	1
Rights of temporary and part-time workers	1

These results suggest that despite being able to cite the equalities issues facing their members, few respondents considered specific equalities issues to be a core element of their union's bargaining agenda. Many interviewees noted that there was little space in bargaining priorities for equalities issues:

*There has been little proactive campaigning on equalities in Scotland during the last two years... it's a kind of holding position – a lot of what we do is just supporting STUC initiatives and making sure that we have a voice within the union at a national level.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*Equalities issues are generally low on the bargaining agenda.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*Like most other unions, we have never gone on strike over an equalities issue.*

**National Equalities Officer**

Specific equalities issues rarely appeared on the bargaining agenda so how did unions deal with the equalities issues that they had identified, and to what extent are these integrated into broader union policy and bargaining?

### 3.1.3. Integrating Equalities

The representative structures in place to facilitate policy development are discussed in 3.5. Here, we limit our attention to how the unions struggled with the concepts of *sameness*, *difference* and *mainstreaming* (see 2.2.1 and 2.3.2).

A very small number of interviewees took the view that pursuing an equalities agenda was not worthwhile at all: that their organisation, in views more commonly found in the 1960s, was gender/colour/disability-blind.

*There is no suggestion that women see themselves as a group within the union ... you will hear no political correctness from me.*

**Regional Equalities Representative**

*I take the view that if you've got a problem, you've got a problem. It doesn't matter about gender or race.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Another, larger, group of unions acknowledged the need to tackle inequalities faced by the women and minority members but on an individual rights basis. They responded to individual complaints about discrimination or harassment rather than tackling the structural problems which cause inequalities. Some identified reluctance among local representative to pushing the equalities agenda beyond reacting to individual grievances.

*Officers are faced with members who are distressed. It's hard to ignore that, they will see the unfairness, and that something needs to be done about it. Under a harassment banner, it's easier to get union reps to deal with those issues – they see that no one should be treated like that. This is why the 'dignity at work' agenda has been easier to establish: reps are willing to act when they see direct discrimination. Broader equalities issues, such as a real understanding of low pay, are more difficult to establish.*

**National Equalities Officer**

*Some reps tend to focus efforts and activities in resolving day-to-day grievances – some of them don't see the equalities agenda as part of that but I think it's changing.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

There was a degree of nervousness about taking a *difference* approach because it requires the creation of separate interest groups which some thought divisive.

*I wouldn't like to be in a position where I ghettoised members, as if ethnicity for example was the only issue they were interested in. I think that in itself could cause problems.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Some interviewees saw that the only way for advancement was for equalities to be fully integrated into the work of the union. This group was distinct from the small number of unions who expressed colour/race blind attitudes above who did not see

inequalities as a problem at all. Rather, they were keen to move towards a *mainstreamed* approach.

*Colleagues will phone me and say: 'Can you deal with this, it's a women's issue?' I'm happy to deal with it, but it's not a women's issue or a BME issue, it's a Trade Union issue... It's important that the movement as a whole has a better understanding of these groups. Equality Officers' main job should be to make themselves redundant.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*Equalities issues have got to be built into campaigns on pay and conditions. Then employers can't avoid the issue... If you want to achieve equality you have to bring people into the equalities issue who aren't necessarily directly affected by it, who haven't experienced any negative consequences. That's the group you have to convince.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

However, it is hard to see how this will be achieved without the political voice of women and minority groups being heard in the union. Given the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of union business, how is this to be achieved without appropriate platforms for equalities issue to be raised? Evidence of the low status of equalities issues in the bargaining agenda suggests that this integration is a long way off (3.1.2). Only one example of genuine equalities mainstreaming was found. A union whose members face redundancy are negotiating on the basis that the cuts will disproportionately affect women and black members who are segregated in the geographical areas and lower grade jobs where the proposed cuts are taking place.

#### **3.1.4. Equalities issues and Bargaining Priorities: Issues for Unions**

- Concerns of particular interest to women members have been clearly articulated in the equalities agenda being pursued by Scottish trade unions but there is a need to constantly review equalities priorities to ensure that the problems faced by other groups are not marginalised.
- The considerable variation in trade unionists' understanding of the reasons for labour market and workplace inequalities, suggests that the STUC and others must continue to raise awareness of the structural and systemic factors that contribute to individuals' experience of disadvantage and discrimination.
- Equalities issues were rarely identified as key bargaining priorities suggesting that trade unions may need to review their approach to representing the needs of particular groups within their membership. Progress towards addressing inequalities experienced is arguably best achieved by mainstreaming *collective* disadvantage in the broader bargaining agenda.
- Trade unions need to consider the implications of focusing on a *sameness* approach to equalities (i.e. individual equal treatment). Alone this approach cannot address the underlying causes of inequality. The STUC has a role to play in reinforcing the message that the unfair treatment and disadvantage experienced by women and minority groups is best understood as a collective, rather than individual, problem.

## 3.2. Membership Diversity

This section looks at the extent to which unions face difficulties in connecting with certain groups of workers, strategies to broaden membership and the monitoring of the membership demographics.

### 3.2.1. Recruiting Members

Relatively few trade unions reported major problems in recruiting members from any particular group. Specifically, respondents generally did not perceive difficulties around recruitment due to sexual orientation (one trade union representative reporting problems); disability (one); or religion (none). Three trade unions reported difficulties in recruiting young people to their membership while no one reported problems in recruiting older workers. 9 out of 26 union respondents did, however, think their organisation faced difficulties recruiting from the BME community in Scotland. Those reporting such problems were more likely to be medium or large general and public sector trade unions.

Twelve of the participating trade unions had 70% or more of their members from one gender (eight male-dominated, four female dominated) yet only four of these unions reported problems recruiting from the minority sex, in all cases these were male-dominated unions. None of the female-dominated unions viewed the under-representation of men, in their union or the sector in which they operated, as a problem. Of those respondents reporting no difficulty in recruiting women, some (mainly large, general unions) acknowledged that a rapid increase in female membership in recent years was the result of a series of amalgamations rather than positive efforts to recruit women members.

**Table 3.5 Number of unions identifying problems recruiting from groups**

BME	9
Women	5
Young people	3
LBGT	1
Disabled people	1
Men	0
Older people	0
Religious groups	0

In total, only twelve trade union respondents reported difficulties in recruiting from any of the groups mentioned above. Half of all respondents, in trade unions across a range of occupational areas and sectors, explained their union's membership demographic as simply 'reflecting the workforce in the sector'. Clearly, representing existing members' interests must be a priority but trade unions should be wary of accepting the labour market segregation which excludes women and minority workers from the sectors and occupations that they represent, given that unionised

workplaces deliver better pay and conditions (2.1.3). Indeed, four of the trade unions interviewed did view increasing the diversity of the workforce from which they draw their members as a key equalities issue (Table 3.3).

The majority of union respondents identifying a problem in recruiting members from non-traditional groups believed image to be a major factor. Respondents suggested that the image of a 'white-male dominated' (three cases) or 'white-female dominated' (two cases) union discouraged the emergence of a more diverse membership.

*It's partly because of members' experience of the people who are organisers or lay activists as being still predominantly male, almost exclusively white and middle aged. There are issues about the identity of the union and how it's seen.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Other reasons offered for recruitment problems offered by trade union respondents were 'apathy among local officers and members' (three cases) and 'apathy among workers from 'equality' groups' (two cases). Equalities representatives suggested that the general lack of grassroots activity hampered the development of any drive to expand the reach of union membership. One respondent suggested that equalities issues had rarely provided the impetus for organising and recognition campaigns within workplaces (whereas low pay regularly provided the focus for organising drives). Another equalities officer suggested that many local representatives had yet to accept that the equalities agenda could play an important part in growing union membership and organising in non-unionised workplaces.

*Equalities is a good organising tool. Some unions haven't realised that, including this one. But this union is starting to realise it.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

For one regional equalities officer, the lack of progress on the recruitment and representation of 'equalities groups' at the local level reflected a crisis in the branch system on which many unions continue to base their activities. It was suggested that the rigid formality of traditional branch structures, along with the lack of proactive campaigning within certain branches, hindered attempts to 'reach out' to excluded groups.

*The union rule book still provides for the basic building block of the union to be the branch. The truth is that lots of branches don't meet, if they do meet very few people attend the meeting, the meeting may not be held at the best time. There is a recognition within the union that the branch structure is not just letting down women workers, black and ethnic minority workers, disabled workers – it's letting down all workers. There's a willingness to rethink the whole of the way we organise. Leading activists have been protective of the branch structures, but there is a realisation that communicating just through the branches is not going to reach the people we need to reach.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Two respondents suggested that apathy among workers from 'equality' groups was a barrier to the emergence of a more diverse membership. Both respondents recalled anecdotal evidence of problems recruiting in British-Asian dominated workplaces, and suggested that 'cultural differences' was one explanation. Although a lower proportion of Asian workers do belong to a trade union (to some extent reflecting their greater propensity to work in sectors characterised by low union penetration), it is important that trade unionists avoid such stereotyping.

### 3.2.2. Strategies to Promote Membership Diversity

Despite much discussion around the ageing membership and the need for unions to draw members from diverse groups (2.3.1), few respondents reported that their unions were pursuing actions to recruit from particular groups. Three unions had a presence at youth and LGBT events to promote their work while two unions devolved this responsibility to local level or self-organising groups. However, a number of respondents reported that their unions had developed awareness-raising materials and targeted literature at particular groups (for example, recruitment materials in multiple languages).

**Table 3.6** Number of unions with strategies to increase membership diversity

Awareness raising campaigns	7
Targeted literature	7
Changing representative structures	4
Targets for recruitment	2
Campaigning on EO issue to demonstrate commitment	2

### 3.2.3. Monitoring Membership

The collection and monitoring of equalities data is recommended by government as a crucial part of progression towards the *mainstreaming* of the equalities agenda as it allows the impact of policies on different groups to be understood (2.2.1). Union respondents were asked whether their unions monitored the demographics of their membership. As Table 3.7 shows, the majority of unions collected information on gender, race and age.

**Table 3.7** Number of unions collecting demographic information on membership

Gender	23
Race	19
Age	16
Disability	11
Sexual orientation	2
Religion	0

Many commented on the sensitivity of collecting information from members, particularly on disability, sexual orientation and religion. One union had said they had to 'educate' their members on the importance of monitoring who they thought reluctant to divulge such information:

*Sexual orientation is difficult. We ask the question, but it's meaningless in one sense. It's meaningful that it's asked, but there's no way to determine whether it's remotely accurate.*

**National Equalities Officer**

*There is some voluntary information on the application form but in relation to religion and sexual orientation, it would be anathema to us, we would never ask those questions. Members can tell us age, disability, ethnicity and gender on the application form but I have no idea how many people identify these aspects.*

**National Equalities Representative**

Many of the unions who collected information on gender, race and/or age did not analyse and use these data, whilst others suggested monitoring was not important at all.

*To be honest ... monitoring isn't our highest priority – there are more important things.*

**National Equalities Representative**

*No, monitoring is not a big issue. To my mind, unless it was specifically a discrimination issue you were dealing with you wouldn't need that background data.*

**National Equalities Officer**

There was also a degree of scepticism about the more general value of monitoring. A small number of respondents held the view that seeking to respond to trends in membership monitoring data amount to 'making policy by quota' and was contrary to the collective ethos of trade unionism. Other unions saw the advantage of using membership demographics but had not yet put in place programmes to improve its use. A small number of unions were in the process of improving monitoring systems, but noted that this was easier for new members as there were substantial gaps in the data on long-term members. Respondents representing some larger unions identified database compatibility problems when amalgamating with other unions.

*We collect the information but we don't analyse and act upon it. It's a great missed opportunity. We have all this information about the profile of the membership: we could compare region to region, industry to industry... but we tend not to take enough notice of that information when we plan recruitment and organisation work.*

**National Equalities Officer**

### **3.2.4. Membership Diversity: Issues for Unions**

- Few of the participating unions saw the engaging and recruitment of equalities groups as an important organising strategy to expand union membership.
- Unions should take the lead in challenging wider patterns of labour market segregation which play a large part in producing inequalities in pay and rewards: a balance between representing existing and potential members must be struck.
- Educating lay representative on the equalities aspects of recruitment including the stereotyping of equalities groups as well as reviewing traditional structures and processes of branch organisation may help improve the image of the union to potential members.
- The effectiveness of different strategies to increase membership diversity should be assessed and good practice shared.
- Monitoring is fundamental to understanding equalities issues but few took the monitoring of their membership seriously. More and better monitoring and analysis of membership data could help trade unions understand current patterns of membership and help set targets for increasing diversity.

### 3.3. Participation in Lay Activities

Unions were asked whether women and minority groups were well represented among members who participate in lay activities. Where they were under-represented, the reasons for lower participation, both attitudinal and practical, were sought.

#### 3.3.1. Participation of Women and Minority Groups in Lay Activities

Relatively few respondents considered that the uneven gender and ethnic balance in their unions' membership reflected problems in recruiting from particular groups. However, trade union representatives were much more aware of the under-representation of certain groups within the lay structures which have traditionally provided the context for activism.

**Table 3.8** Number of unions identifying under-representation of particular groups in lay positions

BME	18
Women	16
Young people	2
LGBT	2
Disabled people	2
Older people	0
Religious groups	0

As Table 3.8 shows, 18 of our 26 respondents identified BME members as being under-represented among lay post-holders. These respondents represented medium-large scale general, manufacturing and transport trade unions (seven cases), medium and larger public service and education unions (ten cases) and financial and commercial services unions (one case).

16 respondents suggested that women were under-represented in trade union lay positions (the majority representing general, manufacturing and transport unions). Respondents reporting difficulties in encouraging female participation at this level represented financial and commercial (two cases); transport (three); manufacturing (two); general (three); education (three); and health and public service unions (three). Conversely, two respondents (representing a large, general union and a large, education union) suggested that (white) women were relatively over-represented within lay positions.

Far fewer respondents reported the under-representation of young people (two cases), disabled (two) and LGBT workers (two) in lay posts. In the case of disabled workers, LGBT members and religious groups, it was suggested that there was rarely sufficient data to judge whether these groups were well represented within the body of lay officials.

### 3.3.2. Reasons for Under-representation

When asked to consider why certain groups were under-represented in lay positions, trade union respondents again suggested that perceptions of union structures as white and male dominated (reflecting the over-representation of older, white male members in both lay and professional positions) were crucial. The perception of many (especially manufacturing, transport and general) trade unions as ‘male, pale and stale’ was acknowledged as a key barrier to widening participation.

**Table 3.9 Number of unions identifying reasons for under-representation of particular groups in lay positions**

Union perceived as ‘white male/female’ dominated	10
Location and time of meetings	7
Negative attitudes of local representatives	6
Negative attitudes of members	4
Jargon and proceduralism at meetings	3
Apathy among members of ‘equalities groups’	3
Apathy/lack of activity within local unions	3

Practical barriers to more diverse participation relating to the location and timing of meetings and events were identified by seven respondents. The selection of inappropriate meeting locations such as pubs (which may present barriers for some women and those with certain religious beliefs), meeting times that fail to acknowledge caring responsibilities, and the absence of crèche facilities were all raised as potential issues. A further three respondents noted that the jargon and proceduralism that can still be associated with trade union meetings also discourages participation at the most basic level i.e. attending meetings. It was noted that if BME members, women and others are not engaged and enthused about attending trade union meetings then there is little prospect of these groups being represented within lay official structures.

*I don't think that women, ethnic minority members or whoever are put off more than white males from attending the branch. They can all face being bored. Meetings go through minutes, have procedural discussions. The tolerance level of women and other groups is probably the same as everybody else's... If you don't go to the branch [meeting] you won't become active – it's the gateway to other activities.*

**National Equalities Officer**

Many trade unions have already undertaken measures to improve the accessibility of union activities (in terms of practical arrangements for meetings and reducing jargon and proceduralism), but these findings suggest that there remains a need for further and continuing action in this area.

A number of trade union respondents acknowledged that apathy among local representatives (three cases) and in some cases hostility from reps and members (six cases and four cases respectively) also acted as a barrier to widening participation. A national equalities officer representing one large, manufacturing union spoke of close-knit groups of mainly white, male activists at the local level, who could at times make young people, women and BME members seeking to play a role in local meetings feel 'unwelcome and uncomfortable'. Other respondents suggested that women seeking to actively participate in local branches could be 'characterised in unflattering terms' by some male branch members. Although it should be acknowledged that the majority of respondents did not raise these issues, a common theme was that, with branches enjoying considerable autonomy, the encouragement offered to female, BME or other members seeking to participate in union activities varied considerably.

*Each area has its own local secretary, and I think it depends on the effectiveness of that person and that association. In some associations, young people and other people would not find the atmosphere welcoming. We can't compel local secretaries to do things as it's all on a voluntary basis.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*In the rule book there's a section on ethnic and gender balance, which says we will promote it. How many officers have actually looked at that and are out enforcing that, I don't know.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*Some regions are good and very proactive. Others don't want to know. It's patchy... A lot of the issues around equalities are all about policing. You can make the agreement, develop the policy but are they implemented, are they policed?*

**National Equalities Officer**

Finally, apathy among certain groups of workers was raised as an important barrier to participation. One respondent reported survey research carried out among women members suggesting that there was little desire for a change in existing post-holding arrangements: "[Women members] are happy with the blokes that are doing the job at the moment". A number of trade union respondents suggested that, like most members, women and members of other groups tended to take little active interest in the day-to-day operation of the union.

*They've paid their money, they've got their representation and that's enough. If there is a problem, they know the union's there, but that's as far as they want to go.*

**National Equalities Officer**

It may be unsurprising that in trade unions where equal opportunities issues have been weakly represented within the bargaining agenda, and where incumbent lay and professional post-holders are predominantly white and male, there is little enthusiasm among under-represented and potentially disadvantaged groups to participate in lay activities.

Some trade unions acknowledging the under-representation of women, BME members and other groups in lay official positions had undertaken a range of activities to address this problem. Of these, six had developed specific awareness raising campaigns targeted at under-represented groups, while four had produced literature designed to encourage greater participation among women and/or BME members. One respondent described a 'befriending' campaign developed to encourage LGBT members to attend and participate in union activities. Other trade union respondents hoped that broader campaigning work on equalities issues and the development of representative structures would convince members of under-represented groups of the value of actively participating in union activities.

### **3.3.3. Participation in Lay Activities: Issues for Unions**

- Unions' image both externally and internally should be reflected on in order to attract new members and to encourage activism among currently non-active groups, particularly women and minority groups.
- To this end, training for branch officers in the development and mentoring of potential new activists from equalities groups should be prioritised to prevent stereotyping and create a more welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Consideration could be given to the creation of new branch roles and procedures which might attract new members and stimulate activism.
- The development of good practice guides on the practical arrangements for branch activities could help remove barriers to broader participation in union activities.

### 3.4. Unions as an Employer

In this section we explore the role of trade unions as employers themselves, the diversity of their workforce and the barriers to progression for women and minority groups.

#### 3.4.1. Union Workforce Diversity

Just under half of all respondents acknowledged that both BME groups and women were under-represented in professional positions and many reported problems in promoting women and BME groups in professional positions, including: financial and commercial unions (two cases); transport (one); manufacturing (one); general (three); education (three); and health and public service unions (one). Respondents suggested that a lack of information made it difficult to identify whether the disabled, LGBT workers or others were specifically under-represented.

**Table 3.10** Number of unions identifying under-representation of particular groups in paid officer positions

BME	12
Women	12
Young people	1
LGBT	0
Disabled people	0
Men	0
Older people	0
Religious groups	0

#### 3.4.2. Barriers to Employment and Progression

Unions concerned about the under-representation of BME and female workers within their officer ranks cited a wide range of factors contributing to the exclusion of these groups. Table 3.11 below lists the barriers identified.

The relatively closed recruitment practices of unions-as-employers (i.e. that many unions recruit mainly internally from members or lay officials) was mentioned by six respondents. Such closed recruitment practices were seen as replicating and reinforcing the under-representation of minority groups and women. There is evidence that some trade unions have sought to address the problem of closed recruitment practices, and the white-male domination of officer posts. Two trade union respondents noted that 'race audits' had been commissioned by their organisations to identify gaps in equal opportunities policies and areas where procedures could be improved.

**Table 3.11 Number of unions identifying reasons for under-representation of particular groups in professional/paid positions**

Recruitment from members/lay officials	6
Work-life balance issues attached to union work	6
Low turnover of existing staff	5
Union perceived as 'white male/female' dominated	4
Negative attitudes of members	3
Apathy among members of 'equalities groups'	3
Apathy/lack of activity within local unions	2

A serious problem may lie in the working practices promoted, or at least accepted, by some trade unions. Of those respondents acknowledging problems recruiting women to professional union posts, six raised the issue of working hours and work-life balance. It was noted that trade union representatives are required to spend time travelling and that working unsocial hours is not uncommon. A number of respondents suggested that this made career progression for those with care responsibilities difficult and, in some cases, near impossible.

*The hours are a big barrier. I can be in here first thing in the morning and then still be here at eight o'clock at night. There can also be a lot of work during evenings and weekends.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*The hours and the shift patterns with this job mean that you can be out at eleven at night or seven in the morning. If you've got children that can be difficult. I think that's why there are less women officers.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*It's difficult to find a lot of trade union officers who are women, particularly if you do the 'hard end' jobs. In terms of the front line officers dealing with people, it's more difficult for women, especially if you've got children. There is a flexible working policy and we are trying to find ways to address it but I don't think it's a doable job within a nine to five contract.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

A number of other trade union respondents noted attempts to introduce flexible working arrangements. However, there is an obvious anomaly in trade unions espousing family-friendly strategies and flexible arrangements that allow progression opportunities for women in the workplace, while retaining a rigid, long hours work culture within their own organisations. Just as there is an inherent problem in the exclusion of equal opportunities issues from the broader bargaining and organising agendas by trade unions, and the acceptance of low participation rates among under-represented groups as 'reflecting the sector', so the adoption of 'traditional', non-flexible work practices by some trade unions-as-employers fundamentally undermines the drive for equality within unions and workplaces.

These contradictions were acknowledged by a number of respondents. Indeed, some equalities officers expressed frustration at the pace of change and the contradiction between the campaigning work of trade unions and the less-than-fully-inclusive practices of some trade unions when acting as employers.

*We're very harsh on the employers, which is quite right. But perhaps we're not harsh enough on ourselves.*

**National Equalities Officer**

*In terms of how we are perceived by the outside world, with reference to the contribution we make to the equality debate around employment, it's very impressive. But when you look at this organisation and its employment practices, it's a mirror image of what we are trying to fight. We replicate that which we criticise. But we are not exceptional in the Trade Union movement...*

**National Equalities Officer**

Five respondents said that very low turnover of staff working in the union movement was a barrier to increasing workforce diversity, particularly in smaller unions.

*The reality is that there's very little turnover. We're a small union and officers tend to stay around for some time. There aren't many opportunities for people with different backgrounds to come in.*

**National Equalities Representative**

Perceptions of trade unions as white and male dominated and apathy among the membership were again raised by a small number of respondents as barriers to the emergence of a more diverse trade union workforce. While many unions did have formal equal opportunities policies as employers, these findings suggest that some have considerable progress to make towards employment practices that reflect the ethos of inclusiveness and equality that informs their work as campaigning organisations.

### **3.4.3. Unions as an Employer: Issues for Unions**

- Further research (possibly in the form of 'equality audits') is required to establish the extent to which particular groups are under-represented in professional positions within trade unions.
- Trade unions should review their recruitment practices into professional positions and, where appropriate, seek to 'open out' recruitment to a wider field of potential applicants (for example, by relying less on internal, informal recruitment).
- Scottish trade unions should consider the development of programmes (ranging from support and mentoring services to positive discrimination) for lay activists from under-represented groups who might seek a union career.
- Trade unions need to examine their own work cultures and practices. Where a rigid, long hours work culture restricts opportunities for women and other groups to progress into officer positions, this must be challenged and reformed.

### 3.5. Representative Structures

Unions were asked about the structures in place to deal with equalities issues and the mechanisms for those structures to feed in to mainstream union policy.

#### 3.5.1. Equalities Structures

Unions were asked about the structures they had in place for those concerned with equalities issues to meet and develop policy. Ten unions had a general equal opportunities committee and three held a broad equal opportunities conference.

**Table 3.12 Number of Unions with Equalities Structures**

	Committees*	Self-organised Groups / Networks	Conferences	Reserved Executive Places
Race	14	6	8	5
Women	13	6	10	5
LBGT	8	7	6	2
Disability	6	7	5	1
Age**	4	4	6	1
Religion	0	0	0	0

\*REGIONAL AND/OR NATIONAL \*\* YOUTH OR RETIRED

Table 3.12 shows that the most common equalities forums were regional and/or national committees for black and women members. Overall, unions with representative structures dealing with specific equalities issues were in the minority. No unions had representative structures which dealt with religion. Perhaps as expected, the larger unions were more likely to have representative structures dedicated to promoting equalities issues. However, it should be noted that many unions with no representative structures had few formalised structures in Scotland at all.

#### 3.5.2. Mechanisms for Influencing Policy

In some of the unions there was an equal opportunities representative on the National Executive Committee, either through a reserved place for women or other minority group. The national and/or regional committees often reported directly to the NEC but the degree to which they influenced policy making was questionable. In many cases it appeared that their role was to make 'recommendations' or simply advise the NEC of their activities.

*The minutes of the equal opportunities committee go to the NEC for endorsement so people see those and the NEC might ask questions and take it on board.*

**National Equalities Officer**

In some cases the equalities committees could raise a motion at the annual conference, a route also open to individuals (on their own or through the branch network). However, there were perceived barriers to presenting equalities motions at conference.

*At conference, propositions are passed and there is broad support for the equal opportunities agenda, but there are practical barriers to the promotion of this agenda, due to the difficulties in achieving even more basic benefits for members in terms of pay and conditions.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

In all but two unions, self-organising groups and networks appeared play a supportive rather than policy-making role. Many unions noted that there were problems in keeping self-organised groups and committees going because of practical barriers in meeting up and/or apathy among members. However, most who made these comments noted that there was a duty on the union to ensure that these groups were adequately encouraged and supported.

*Membership of the committees and activity is variable – this is due to apathy among target groups and failure of local reps to ‘sell’ the work of committees.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*Self-organising groups and committees are hampered by lack of engagement from equalities groups.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*The benefits of committees are limited by apathy in membership. The BME committee requires encouragement to meet, use its budget, send delegates to the to the Black Workers Conference at the TUC. There’s a lack of policy action as a result.*

**Industrial Relations Officer**

The lack of adequate mechanisms to integrate equalities issues into the broader union agenda could be contributing, at least in part, its low priority status in the bargaining agenda (3.1.3).

### **3.5.3. Representative Structures: Issues for Unions**

- This study could only touch upon on the broad remit of the representative structures in place for promoting equalities issues. Further research is needed on the impact and effectiveness of these forums.
- Any review of the bureaucratic nature of the process of policy development should consider the mechanisms for articulating equalities issues and the routes for equalities issues to change and influence policy.

### 3.6. Good Practice in Equalities

#### 3.6.1. Researching Equalities

The discussion above highlights some of the problems and challenges that trade unions face in promoting equalities in the workplace and advancing the agenda in their own practices and structures. However, our interviews with equalities representatives in 26 STUC-affiliated unions also identified considerable progress in campaigning on key issues, working in partnership with employers and developing union training and services.

A number of representatives cited innovative practices to raise awareness of equalities issues among their members. Five trade unions had conducted research among its members the results of which had played an important role in informing policy and campaigning on equalities. Such research focused on: the priorities and problems of BME members (in one case resulting in new partnership work with employers to promote fair recruitment practices); harassment and dignity at work issues among women members; barriers to women's career progression; and the reluctance of women and minority group members to participate in union activities.

These specific attempts to investigate the issues faced by particular groups have resulted in policy changes within companies, and informed new campaigns and changes to the way that unions work. For example, one trade union, having identified harassment as a significant problem for women members, has established a dedicated women's contact officer within its previously male-dominated structure, while developing (in partnership with employers) a range of guidelines and new codes of practice for management, trade unionists and staff on dignity at work issues.

#### 3.6.2. Education and Awareness-raising Activities

Other trade union respondents pointed to specific learning opportunities on equalities issues provided for members, union officers and even employers. For example, one teaching union has developed a professional level qualification in partnership with an employer which includes a core element on equal opportunities.

*Some people have found it very empowering. We have to move beyond the idea that equality work is about 'just being nice to people'. It is a challenging, self-empowering, analytical field of study.*

**National Equalities Officer**

Another trade union respondent (large financial and commercial) highlighted the development of a three day course on equal opportunities targeted at union officers and reps. The in-depth programme was developed in Scotland and will be rolled out across the union's other UK regions. Other trade unions have collaborated with employers to deliver learning on equalities. One union, having piloted role-play-based equalities training for its own officers, has successfully engaged an employer (and secured resources from the same employer) to facilitate the development of a joint equalities training programme for staff, management and union reps. The innovative format of the role-play-based training, combined with enthusiastic and practical support from management, mean that this initiative has the capacity to reach a high

proportion of union members and other workers, deliver learning in an accessible way, and ensure that key messages on equalities are received and disseminated by both managers and trade unionists.

Similarly, a respondent representing a transport union noted that his trade union had successfully engaged with an employers' federation to develop a joint code of practice on dignity at work, guidelines on combating bullying, and multi-media learning tools to reinforce these messages among union members and reps. In more general terms, half of the 26 trade union respondents interviewed were able to point to specific programmes or learning services offered by their union focusing on equal opportunities or targeted at potentially disadvantaged groups. Many others reported that equal opportunities formed an element of training provision for trade union lay or professional officers.

Raising awareness of equal opportunities issues among union members, reps and officers was therefore a priority for many of the trade unions represented by our respondents. In some cases, respondents noted the continued need to reinforce messages on equalities among members, who were reluctant to cast themselves as 'victims' or to acknowledge the unfair treatment that has become an accepted part of too many workers' daily lives.

*They don't believe themselves subject to discrimination. They think that it's about merit, how many hours you can put into things.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Efforts to raise awareness of social and cultural barriers to progression, and race and gender-based disadvantage in terms of promotion, pay and pension rights were seen as a priority for these equalities officers. Similarly, raising awareness among union officials and representatives to guard against complacency was seen as necessary. One respondent noted that since the implementation of the Equal Pay Act, some unionists seemed to relax their emphasis on race and gender-pay gap issues.

*A lot of them find it hard to believe there's a problem.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Clearly, trade unions must consistently reinforce key messages relating to equal opportunities among members, union reps and officers, and especially employers. Some STUC-affiliated unions have taken a leading role in developing innovative solutions in this area, while in a number of cases the commitment of trade unions to investigating members' concerns and working with employers to inform workers has produced positive outcomes. Creating opportunities for trade unionists to learn from these examples of good practice and share experiences should remain a priority for organisations such as the STUC.

### **3.6.3. Campaigning and Working with Employers**

As noted above, trade union respondents identified a diverse range of equalities issues that provided the focus for campaigning activities. Equalities representatives described major campaigns on: harassment and dignity at work; domestic violence; and parental leave rights and flexible working. In addition, a number of trade unions

reported significant involvement in *Close the Gap*<sup>9</sup> or their own campaigns on equal pay issues.

There was wide variation in the extent to which trade union respondents reported constructive partnership relations with employers. In some cases, especially in the public sector, there was a sense that employers did not have to be convinced of the value of engaging with the equal opportunities agenda. For example, for a respondent from one trade union, local authority employers were seen as leading the way on equal opportunities.

*The local authorities are the employers. Our view is that the local employers tend to stick to their [equal opportunities] policies and are quite often at the forefront of implementing new initiatives.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Another trade union respondent working in the same sector agreed that working with employers on the equalities agenda was like “pushing at an open door”. Elsewhere, there were occasional examples of strong partnership working with employers, for example: to campaign against student debt, a major source of incomes inequality for young people; to agree joint policies and guidance on dignity at work; joint training on equalities; and the establishment of joint equality forums and diversity champion programmes in the workplace.

However, one trade union respondent noted that a strong union presence was often a prerequisite for convincing employers of the value of partnership working but that there were limits to this approach. They suggested that while a minority of (mainly public sector) employers had been willing to work with union on equal pay issues, many employers continued to vigorously oppose progress in this area. Similar concerns regarding the failure of partnership working to reach into potentially more costly areas of policy such as equal pay were raised by representatives of other major unions across a range of sectors.

*To be honest it's still a battlefield. On equal pay issues, employers are mortified by the fact that they may be discriminating against their staff. They don't believe it. There's huge resistance.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

*Employers don't think they have got a problem. People think 'this is the way it's always been'. They think that women don't apply for higher paid jobs and that's the problem.*

**National Equalities Officer**

Even where substantial individual victories had been won, for example in equal pay cases, a number of trade unions reported resistance from employers to a more consistent approach to a guarding against pay discrimination.

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<sup>9</sup> Close the Gap is the STUC/EOC-led campaign on the gender pay gap. The campaign seeks to enable employers to carry out equal pay audits, encourage the development of effective action plans on equal pay in the workplace, engage with unions in making equal pay a priority, and empower women to challenge pay discrimination.

*The problem with equal pay cases is that they have still not impacted on employers' approach to pay issues in general. We have approached employers to encourage them to undertake Equal Pay Audits. But they have been reluctant. They are terrified to learn that they may have pay gaps. A couple of local authorities showed interest, but then backed off.*

**Regional Equalities Officer**

Some employers were also judged to be resistant to progress in other areas, such as work-life balance. A respondent representing a large manufacturing union suggested that employers continued to fear the spread of family-friendly policies on the grounds that if allowances are made for one group 'everyone will want it'.

*The idea that there's an enlightened self-interest, that it's good for you [employers] in terms of retaining your workers if you offer family friendly policies or flexible employment opportunities, by and large has not got through.*

**National Equalities Officer**

Similarly, large unions operating in the private sector reported resistance on the part of some employers to making reasonable adjustments for disabled workers, with the threat of legal action sometimes necessary to force changes in accordance with the Disability Discrimination legislation.

*There has been a bit of progress, but more due to legislation than any enlightenment among employers.*

**National Equalities Officer**

For many trade union respondents, there was a gap between the equal opportunities rhetoric deployed by some employers, and the reality of their recruitment and employment practices. This was clear in the somewhat sceptical approach taken by some trade unionists to the 'managing diversity' agenda (see 2.2.1). One respondent representing a large general union noted that while the concept of embracing difference at the heart of 'managing diversity' was welcome, transferring 'good intentions' among HR professionals into action in recruitment and advancement was more difficult, that "there's still a long, long way to go". It was suggested that while concepts like managing diversity were popular among HR specialists (especially in large, public employers), decision makers were often reluctant to follow through with measures to promote more open recruitment and progression.

*HR roll it out, and then no one takes any notice – it gets shelved.*

**National Equalities Officer**

The same respondent noted that managing diversity fails to acknowledge and address the fundamental causes of inequality and disadvantage faced by certain groups in the workplace and labour market.

*It's an individualising rather than a collectivising agenda. It's a buzzword. It doesn't lead to achieving equality as far as I can see.*

**National Equalities Officer**

#### **3.6.4. Good Practice in Equalities: Issues for Unions**

- The STUC should work with trade unions which have successfully carried out research on different membership groups' issues, in order to spread good practice and highlight the benefits (in terms of informing campaigning and policy) of such research exercises to other unions.
- A number of trade unions have developed innovative approaches to delivering equalities training (sometimes in partnership with employers). The STUC and their partners should highlight examples of good practice in this area, and encourage trade unions to continue to invest in equalities training for members, lay officials and officers.
- Scottish trade unions should seek to learn from examples of constructive partnership working with employers, so that employers can be assisted to develop new approaches to equalities issues, in relation to recruitment and progression, dignity at work policies, equalities training and other issues.
- Despite rhetoric around equal opportunities and managing diversity, many employers continue to resist progress in areas such as equal pay, work-life balance and making reasonable adjustments in line with the DDA. Scottish trade unions must continue to campaign vigorously for reform in these areas, and to work together to maintain the pressure on resistant employers.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Scottish trade unions have made considerable progress towards the development of policies, procedures and campaigns to promote equal opportunities within the union movement and in the wider workplace. New representative structures and flexible approaches to engaging with members from more diverse groups (e.g. through the establishment of self-organising groups) have changed the way that many people experience trade union membership and services. Meanwhile, a complex and diverse equalities agenda has begun to be articulated by Scottish trade unions, ranging from equal pay and progression for women, to work-life issues and dignity at work.

However, for many trade union equalities representatives, equal opportunities issues continue to be marginalised within a broader bargaining agenda dominated by low pay, conditions of service and pension rights. Some trade unions were nervous about taking a *difference* approach to equalities, treating women, minority ethnic groups or disabled people as a separate group with specific interests. Even in unions with equalities campaigns and structures to take equalities issues forward, the main route tended was to deal with cases at the individual level – focusing on specific examples of unfair treatment experienced by members on the grounds of their race, gender, disability or other personal characteristics. It is unsurprising that local trade union representatives often adopt this approach – much of their day-to-day work relates to grievances raised by individual members who believe that they have been subject to unfair treatment (based on either group-related prejudice or personal animosity). But there is arguably a reluctance to acknowledge that the unfair treatment experienced by members of these groups cannot be understood solely as an individual problem. The race and gender pay gaps, for example, reflect systemic, institutional discrimination at the labour market and workplace level, and can be understood as a *collective* problem rather than the sum of arbitrary and individual cases of unfair treatment.

Many of our interviewees asserted that much-needed breakthroughs on issues such as the gender and race pay gaps and the ‘glass ceiling’ are likely to come from taking this wider view and of *mainstreaming* equalities issues into the process of collective bargaining which is central to unions’ strength in the labour market. However, there was only one example found where equalities had been mainstreamed into the main bargaining agenda, for the majority of unions this seemed a long way off. Continued work to raise awareness of equal opportunities issues and promote discussion of the fundamental inequalities that characterise workplace and labour market relations in the UK may be of value in progressing this agenda.

A number of Scottish trade unions have begun to grapple with the issue of the under-representation of particular groups within their membership, lay officials and professional staff. However, relatively few trade unions have been able to fully address problems in recruiting membership from particular groups, partly due to gaps in monitoring data, but also a lack of interest in membership diversity. Some stereotyped views on the predisposition to union participation were found despite admissions for unions themselves that they suffered from image problems (as a white-male club) and patchy commitment from workplace representatives in increasing membership diversity.

There was also a widespread acceptance that membership tends to 'reflect the sector' within which unions operate. A minority of unions had engaged in the issue of labour market segregation and saw increasing diversity of the workforce as part of their equalities priorities. Given limited resources and the traditional remit of unions, it is understandable that many trade unionists prioritise the concerns of paid-up members. However, union membership and unionised workplaces deliver better pay, conditions and status from which, through the process of labour market segregation, women and minority groups have been excluded. The question therefore arises: can unions claim to promote social justice an equality and be satisfied with a membership that 'reflects the sector' in which they operate? Trade unions still have work to do in connecting a commitment to equal opportunities with their approaches to promoting fairness at work (especially during the recruitment process) and diversity in their own membership.

Trade unions appeared much more aware of the under-representation of particular groups (and especially women and BME workers) within the ranks of their lay and professional officers than in their membership generally. In many cases, trade unionists explained this as an 'image problem' that union representative positions are perceived as being white and male dominated, which is, in many cases, largely accurate. Some cited low turnover in these roles as a major barrier to increasing diversity. In a minority of cases deeper problems were identified: apathy, and even resistance, at the local level to recruiting a more diverse active membership and officer group; and a long-hours culture among union staff precluding the involvement of those with caring responsibilities (most often women). This directly contradicts the commitment to progressive flexible working and other work-life balance policies that forms a major theme for unions' equalities campaigns. Diversity in the workplace, and in the membership and leadership of trade unions must be linked priorities for the union movement. There is a continuing need to raise awareness of the manner in which these priorities involve action on a number of fronts, from engaging with employers on fair recruitment procedures, to re-thinking how unions themselves recruit their members and organise their work.

Despite the many challenges highlighted in this report, there is strong evidence of good practice across a range of unions and sectors. Larger unions have moved to establish extensive monitoring systems that should better inform their work with equalities groups, while the continued development of representative structures and self-organising networks may provide a clearer voice for groups that have traditionally struggled to express themselves through the standard union branch system (although, as noted above, unions will have to think about how representative committees and groups can best communicate with trade union decision makers and influence policy). Trade unions have also reported important successes in campaigning on key equalities issues and, where possible, engaging with employers to tackle discrimination and promote diversity and dignity at work.

Scottish trade unions have made substantial progress in identifying and responding to the equalities issues faced by their members. Through the targeting of campaigning, the representation of members' concerns and the reform of union structures and policies, a more representative and responsive form of trade unionism is emerging in Scotland. However, there remains considerable progress to be made if trade unions are to integrate and mainstream equalities issues within the bargaining agenda, while also better representing an increasingly diverse Scottish workforce within their membership, leadership and structures. *One Workplace Equal Rights* has made a valuable contribution to promoting equal opportunities issues within trade unions and workplaces. The continuation of this work has the potential to have an important and positive impact on the development of trade unions' equalities strategies. It is hoped that the research reported in this document will help to inform the STUC's future activities in this crucial area of policy.

## APPENDIX

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### Trade unions participating in the interview phase of the research

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Accord  
AMICUS (AEEU/MSF)  
AMICUS (GPMU)  
Association of Locomotive Engineers and Fireman  
Association of University Teachers  
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy  
Community  
Community and District Nurses Association  
CONNECT  
Educational Institute for Scotland  
Fire Brigades Union  
First Division Association  
GMB  
Musicians' Union  
National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers  
National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers  
Public and Commercial Services Union  
PROSPECT  
Rail, Maritime and Transport Union  
Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association  
Scottish Society of Playwrights  
Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists  
Transport and General Workers Union  
Transport Salaried Staffs' Association  
UNISON  
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

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