Achieving Equal Pay in the Workplace

Your Guide to Changing Policy and Practice

The Importance of Collective Bargaining

In workplaces where trade unions are recognised by the employers, discussions concerning pay and the terms and conditions of employment take place collectively and are coordinated with the support of trade union representatives. These discussions are known as 'collective bargaining' and it is in these discussions that any equal pay issues would be discussed.

Under collective bargaining agreements, all parties involved agree processes and procedures to ensure the smooth running of the collective bargaining meetings. From time to time, employment disputes occur between employers and employees and collective bargaining provides an agreed framework and procedures to help resolve these disagreements.

> Collective bargaining with a recognised union is the best way to secure equal pay, terms and conditions for employees who encounter prejudice, disadvantage or marginalisation. It helps to remove the threat of individuals being targeted or feeling harassed by management in pay disputes.

Collective bargaining also addresses general terms and conditions, improving standards for all employees, not just for the individuals who bargain for better conditions for personal gain. OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) research shows *(http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/81021/1/Healy%20and%20Ahamed%20(Forthcoming)%20Gender%20pay%20gap,%20voluntary%20interventions,%20and%20recession.pdf)* that where there is collective bargaining, the gap between women and men's pay is smaller.

If you're not already a union member, it's a good idea to join.



Many unions in Great Britain are part of the Trade Union Congress so you can use the TUC's union finder *(www.tuc.org.uk/join-a-union)* as one way to identify the most appropriate union for your industry/sector. If your union is not yet recognised, employees are advised to consider seeking advice on how to go about getting recognition. It may be possible to gain 'statutory recognition *(www.gov.uk/trade-union-recognition-employers/statutory-recognition)* ', even if your employer refuses to recognise your Union.