



GMB North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region

Regional Equality Forum Constitution



Introduction

This outlines the structures and operation of the North, Yorkshire and Humber Region Equality forum (REF) and the Self organised groups that are attached to it (SOG's). This will allow for transparent procedures.

Purpose

- To grow the union through campaigning in the workplace and in the community, engaging with members and non-members.
- To work with members of the Ref, Branches and Officers to develop campaigns, share information, best practice and highlighting trends on equality issues which affect GMB members.
- To encourage members to increase activity particularly around equality issues.
- To provide advice and develop policy for the GMB REGIONAL COMMITTEE/COUNCIL on matters concerning equality and inclusion in the workplace and wider society.
- To develop training and events around equality and inclusion issues in conjunction with GMB regionally and nationally.
- To work with the Regional Equality Officers (REOs) to develop Self Organised Groups (SOGs) from each equality strand

Membership of Regional Equality Forum

- a) Membership of the Equality Forum is open to the Regional Equality Officers or an alternative officer when needed, Branch Equality



Officers, members who identify with any of the five equality strands (Women, Disabled, Race, LGBT, Young,) strand delegates to the REC , Branch Officers with a dedicated equality strand role and any member who wants to advance the equality agenda.

- b) The Forum shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary from its members. This will take place once every calendar year at the last full Equalities forum.
- c) An Executive Committee shall be formed of the Regional Equality Officer, alternative officer, Forum Chair, Forum Vic Chair and Forum Secretary and the strand delegates that are elected to the REC bi-annually.
- d) The Regional Officers with responsibility for equalities will advise and guide the Forum and be responsible jointly for meeting the objectives with the chair and Vice Chair.
- e) The term of office for the REF shall be for 2 years, a member can only hold a maximum of 2 concurrent terms. If a Representative fails to attend REF meetings or to submit reports on his/her work and or accepted apologies for three consecutive meetings the REF may declare the post vacant by default unless a replacement delegate is sent.
- f) Nominations for the Chair or Vice Chair positions including self-nominations must be submitted in writing prior to the Regional Equality Conference no later than 2 weeks prior to the Conference. Where a single nomination is received by the due date the nominee shall be elected.
- g) It will be the responsibility of the Chair/Vice Chair/REO to ensure that the Regional committee/Council is kept fully advised of the work and views of the REF on appropriate issues.



Delegates to committees/conferences/REC/CEC

Anyone who is elected to any National or Regional body as a representative of the Forum or as a strand representative, is expected to attend the Forum and to report on the activities of the body they are on.

A delegate from the Regional Equalities forum to an elected body that does not fulfil this obligation will not be considered in following elections. (It is expected that of the 4 Regional Equality Meetings a year or delegates to national and regional bodies attend at least 2 and send in a report if unable to attend) or see e above. The REF will agree nominations to TUC Conferences/Strand Conferences.

Meetings

The Forum shall hold at least 4 meetings a year. Wherever possible, the meetings will be shared between the north and south areas of the Region. Dates to be set (subject to change) at the last forum of the calendar year.

The final forum meeting of the year will decide on the key campaigning activities for the following year and the main events that will be attended (attempting a fair geographical split). Subsequent working groups will be set up when required to organise these events/campaigns.

The final meeting of the year will where possible decide on nominations to the following years TUC/Labour conferences.

All decisions regarding delegates to conferences/events/which campaigns to focus on will be made at the Regional Equality Forum. If decisions are required outside the period of regular equalities meetings, then a meeting of the Equalities Executive shall be called which will have the authorisation to make decisions.

Self-Organised Groups (SOG's)

The Regional Equality Forum will, with members, begin to start a process of setting up Self Organised Groups for each of the following strands (LGBT+, Disabled, Women, BAME), these will feed into the Regional Equalities forum.



The Self Organised Groups (SOG's) will work alongside (not as a separate entity to) the Regional Equality Forum. It will be expected that SOG members report back to the Regional Equality Forum and Forum members (if appropriate) to attend the SOG meetings so that a cyclical process of information can be practiced. Ideas for campaigns can come from either SOG's or the forum. The relevant SOG will be expected to lead on campaigns that effect their strand.

REF Meetings

The REF shall meet at least quarterly, dates will be circulated at the beginning of the year. These meetings will be responsible for implementing decisions made at Congress, National Equality Conference, Regional Equality Conference and meeting the REF objectives.

In the event of a vote being required a simple majority of REF members present suffices.

Agenda items for REF meetings are to be with the REO at least 14 days prior to the meeting. The REO will issue a copy of the Agenda to REF members no later than 7 days prior to the meeting.

Guests and observers may attend REF meetings with the prior agreement of the Chair and REO in consultation with the REF. Guest and observers may not vote and may only speak to the meeting if invited to by the Chair.

General behaviour

Whilst observing the general rules of debate, the Forum tries to be as relaxed and informal as possible, in order to encourage participation. Wherever possible, the Forum will make decisions based on consensus. Should voting be necessary, each member shall have one vote. The Chair shall not normally vote but, in the event of a tie, shall have the casting vote.

The Forum considers itself to be a safe space, being accepting of and respectful of others. Whilst there maybe disagreements during debates and discussion, members of the Forum shall treat other members with respect. Disrespect, abuse and personal attacks will not be tolerated. Outside of the Forum members are expected to maintain a high level of respect for others.



Roles and Election of Chair, Vice-Chair and secretary

The Chair shall preside at all Regional Equality Forum meetings. The Vice Chair will carry out the role of the Chair in their absence.

Nominations and election of the chair and vice-chair will take place at the last forum of the calendar year.

There is a maximum of 2 concurrent terms in office.

The secretary will take the minutes of the forum meetings and send the minutes to the Regional Equality Officer within 2 weeks of the forum being held, the REO will distribute the minutes in a timely manner.

There should be a gender balance between the roles.

Finance

The Regional Equalities Forum relies financially on the support of branches and extra money for campaigning from the region.

Priority for campaigning will be given to areas where branches have donated financially to the equality agenda via the forum.

Support will be given to other areas where possible, branches who have received support will be asked to support the forum in the future.

Constitution Changes

Any changes to this constitution including numbers and members to the forum shall be made by an individual sending written notification to the REO and then by holding an extraordinary meeting of the forum.