

LEGAL EYE

Introducing the Prospect at Work Campaign

One of Prospect's national executive committee's key campaigning areas for 2016 is employment rights.

The last four years have seen a concerted attack by the government on employment rights and trade unions (see overleaf). In spite of this, unions make a real difference to members' working lives. In many ways the hostile political climate and reductions in the law demonstrate how crucial it is to build on union organisation.

The focus of the Prospect at Work campaign will be to:

- ✓ Challenge detrimental changes in employment law through submissions to Government, lobbying and parliamentary activity
- ✓ Inform and equip our Prospect reps to support members in the workplace
- ✓ Challenge unlawful actions by employers in tribunals and court



- ✓ Seek out strategic litigation, on areas such as performance management and equal pay
- ✓ Work with other unions and the TUC to defend rights
- ✓ Concentrate on opportunities to maintain and improve rights in Scotland, Wales, & Northern Ireland
- ✓ Gather information about the impact of employment law cuts, including a survey of branches
- ✓ Celebrate the work of our reps as 'workers' rights advocates'

A strong union base in the workplace can demonstrate the value and resilience of the union movement. Visit: bit.ly/PAW2016 for full details of the campaign



Prospect protests against the TU Bill in Edinburgh

February campaign activities

Prospect is kicking off with a month of campaign activities in February, these will include:

- ✓ A campaign meeting at Prospect for members and reps to discuss the TU Bill on 2 February;
- ✓ Legal officers attending a number of branch meetings to discuss employment rights and the campaign;
- ✓ Briefings from Prospect Legal;
- ✓ A 'knowledge call' for reps on the TU Bill;
- ✓ A survey to reps on employment rights (for a report to be produced for national conference in May);
- ✓ Social media activity.

Anti-TU Bill Meeting

As part of the campaign we are holding a meeting to discuss the impact of the Trade Union Bill. Come along to Prospect head office to hear from our expert speakers. You can join the debate about the Bill, understand the implications for Prospect and discuss how to campaign effectively.

The meeting will be at New Prospect House, 8 Leake Street, London SE1 7NN on 2 February 2016 from 5.00 to 6.30.

A lively debate will be led by two expert speakers:

- ✓ Sarah Veale, ex senior policy officer of the TUC & board member of the HSE and the EHRC, who is currently playing a key role in challenging the Bill through parliament;
- ✓ Binder Bansel, Head of the employment team at our solicitors, Pattinson & Brewer, an expert on collective labour law.

Spaces for this event are limited, but if you would like to attend please email paula.mitchell@prospect.org.uk by 26 January.



Prospect lobbying against the TU Bill in London

February WRelfies

During February we are encouraging reps and members to use social media to publicise the work of unions. To do this we will ask you to take Workers Rights Selfies (WRelfies). Campaign signs are available from: bit.ly/1SpNuXQ, for a collection of the WRelfies already taken please visit: bit.ly/WRelfies

♥ UNIONS

The February campaign coincides with the TUC's week of activities against the TU Bill on 8-14 February, which will include The World's Largest Workplace meeting (see below), encouraging members to sign the anti-TU Bill petition, keeping up the lobbying work, and focusing on the value of unions. For more information visit: heartunions.org/

The World's Largest Workplace meeting

On 9 February the TUC hosts a live broadcast for trade union members, including a Q&A with Frances O'Grady, TUC general secretary.

All members are encouraged to join to ensure it really is the world's largest workplace meeting!

For details visit: heartunions.org/

Attack on workers and unions

In the last four years the Government has made it much easier and cheaper for employers to sack workers. And with the introduction of fees in employment tribunals many workers are denied access to justice.

Just some of the draconian measures introduced since 2012 are:

- ✗ An increase in qualifying service to pursue an unfair dismissal claim from 1 year to 2 years
- ✗ The cap on unfair dismissal compensation has been lowered to one year's gross pay
- ✗ Protected conversations mean employers can make threats to dismiss workers without this being admissible in tribunal proceedings
- ✗ Consultation periods for large scale redundancies have been cut from 90 to 45 days
- ✗ The statutory questionnaire procedure under the Equality Act has been abolished
- ✗ Fees of up to £1,200 to bring a claim in the tribunal have, unsurprisingly, resulted in a dramatic fall off of claims of up to 70%

Following these earlier attacks on individual rights, the Government has now launched the Trade Union Bill. This will make it much more difficult to take industrial action and brings new and unnecessary burdens on unions. The Bill includes:

- ✗ Creating higher hurdles for industrial action, requiring a 50% turnout & vote in favour of action in all ballots, and additionally in certain essential public services

Want to know more about the TU Bill? Join Prospect's knowledge call

Prospect reps can join a mini training session by telephone with Marion Scovell, head of Prospect Legal, on **25 February 2016 – 12.30 to 13.30**.

We will discuss the details and progress of the Bill and consider what it means for Prospect.

If you would like to join the call, email Paula.Mitchell@prospect.org.uk to register an interest. Paula will then send you the joining instructions nearer the time.



A key part of the campaign is celebrating the fantastic job of our Workers' Rights Advocates.

The limits of the law reinforce the need to have strong and effective unions.

Prospect representatives offer advice and representation to members and make a real difference in the



Hijara Mahomed,
National Trust rep
and Workers' Rights
Advocate

workplace, ensuring fairness, equality, and employment protection. 'Prospect at work' is highlighting these successes by identifying and publicising the work of our representatives and the positive impact they have on workers' rights.

Our 'Workers' Rights Advocates' (WRA) are reps who have assisted members individually or collectively. See their profiles in the December issue of Profile, and the website at: bit.ly/ProspectWRA

If you would like to nominate a rep from your branch for this series please contact Marion.Scovell@prospect.org.uk

- 40% of those entitled to vote would have to vote in favour
- ✗ Restricting facility time
- ✗ Banning check off in the public sector
- ✗ Requiring members to opt in to payment of the political fund (as opposed to opting out as it currently stands in England, Wales & Scotland)
- ✗ Greater reporting requirements for unions to the certification officer
- ✗ Restrictions on facility time for the public sector.

This attack on employment rights and unions means workers have less statutory protection. There is a very real need for effective trade unions, who can resolve problems in the workplace, collectively bargain terms and conditions, and protect fundamental rights.

Member-Recruit- Member Stronger Together

Members who recruit a colleague can choose a £10 shopping voucher or make a donation to charity.

To find out more visit: www.prospect.org.uk/mrm



Subs from salary? Your membership could be at risk!

As part of the Trade Union Bill the government is withdrawing the ability for members to pay subs via their salary in the public sector. To find out more see the Prospect video at: bit.ly/1SraAds

You can protect your membership by switching to direct debit [online](#) or call our membership on 01932 577007



LEGALEYE

This is a special edition of our regular e-newsletter LegalEye, which features success stories from around the union as well as highlighting updates and changes relevant to members.

The most recent issue can be found at: bit.ly/LegalEye7