## Dear Rep,

Thank you for expressing an interest in, or volunteering to be, one of our representatives.

There are many ways you can contribute to the work of your branch, including being a rep, so before you take on the role outlined below is some additional information and steps you should consider before signing up to this exciting and voluntary role.

,Please have a look at our reps’ page (<https://prospect.org.uk/get-involved/what-are-reps/>).

If you haven’t already, please contact your branch chair (details can be provided by your organiser) who can talk to you about how the branch works and how you can help.

**Your role**

Union reps make a difference to the lives of the people they work with, the colleagues they represent and to their employers’ business performance.

**Your rights**

Where Prospect/Bectu is recognised by the employer, reps should be entitled to time away from their day job to carry out their responsibilities as a rep (sometimes called facility time) – this also includes time off for training.

Your branch secretary can provide you with guidance on this or you can have a look at the ACAS Code of Practice on time off for trade union duties and activities.

<https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-time-off-for-trade-union-duties-and-activities/html#3.-time-off-for-trade-union-activities>

With rights come responsibility. So while you should expect to be valued and not subjected to harassment, intimidation or discrimination, Prospect expects you to carry out your role responsibly. Always think about the Union’s professional reputation – but most importantly be aware of the confidentiality of your members’ personal data.

**Training**

Members who have been in their role for a while make excellent reps because they will have developed a good feel for the issues in their workplace – as well as experiencing the policies first-hand.

Nevertheless, there is much to be gained from being a rep: a sense of fulfilment and empowerment, a basic understanding of employment law and honing further skills like: listening, negotiating, organising and time management.

Our current training programme is digital first, so we offer a range of online courses. You can find out more here:

<https://prospect.org.uk/get-involved/training-for-reps/>

<https://bectu.org.uk/get-involved/training-for-reps/>

If you would prefer face to face based training, please contact your organiser to talk about setting up your own in-house training. You can find your organiser via our websites:

<https://prospect.org.uk/about/organising-team/>

<https://bectu.org.uk/about/bectu-officials/>

Prospect also has access to the training programmes run by the Trades Union Congress. If you are interested in a TUC course, do let your organiser know so we can update your training record accordingly. <https://www.tuc.org.uk/TUCcourses>

**Help and support**

If you need help, support or advice, your starting point should always be within your branch. Branches should ideally have a chair, secretary and organiser/membership and recruitment secretary. They all work together to recruit, retain, organise and support members.

Where the union is recognised in a workplace, employers have a duty to consult reps on certain matters. Therefore, ensure your line manager/employer knows that you are now a union rep and start to build a relationship with them. This will help you when requesting facility time for your duties.

If you are part of a large branch with different types of reps, don’t be afraid to call on their experience if you’re unsure about a process or need advice.

If you want more information, or would like to arrange a meeting or phone call to chat through anything rep related, please contact your dedicated organiser

<https://prospect.org.uk/about/organising-team/>

<https://bectu.org.uk/about/bectu-officials/>

We wish you well with your role as a rep and look forward to welcoming you on a course soon.

Kind regards

The Education Team