

# Working for You



## Working for You

The *Prospect at Work* campaign promotes workers' rights and celebrates the work done by union representatives.

Effective trade unions resolve problems in the workplace, collectively negotiate terms and conditions and protect fundamental rights.

But the past four years have seen concerted government attacks on employment rights and trade unions. Despite this, unions continue to make a real difference to members' working lives. The hostile political climate makes a strong union base in the workplace even more important.

*Prospect at Work* seeks to highlight the work done by our reps and the real achievements made at local level for union members.

### Workers' Rights Advocates

Part of the campaign is a series of profiles of Prospect's fabulous Workers' Rights Advocates (WRA), who are reps who advise members and promote worker's rights.

The advocates were asked why they became a rep, to talk about the work they do for members and their views on employment law now and in the future. There are, so far, 21 advocates and their commitment and approach makes for interesting reading.

We have included some of the advocates' comments throughout this report and you can read their full stories at [bit.ly/ProspectWRA](http://bit.ly/ProspectWRA)

Being a rep has broadened my knowledge to deal with workplace challenges. I would strongly recommend a rep position, especially to those working on how to conquer their fears and empower them to be treated fairly and as equals.



Mavis Amadi-Babcock (Rosyth)

I supported a member who has dyslexia and was finding it difficult to cope with sudden demanding changes to workload. We worked with management to provide reasonable adjustments and a stable workload balance. Team training was organised as well. The member now feels supported and part of the team. It's often the smallest things that can make the greatest difference.



Mike Scott - Welsh Government

### Survey of reps

Prospect launched a survey of our union reps in March.

As Rodney Wheeler, Senior Research Assistant, explained in the campaign blog, [bit.ly/PAWBlog](http://bit.ly/PAWBlog) the aim of the survey was to:

- ✓ Gather information about the work done by Prospect reps
- ✓ Assess the damage of the cuts in employment rights
- ✓ Identify areas for change in the law

444 representatives, from a wide array of branches, returned the survey. Respondents were from all sectors of the union including the civil service, energy and communications, media & digital sectors.

### This report

In this report we have drawn together the results from the survey and comments of our advocates to provide a picture of union activity and to demonstrate how effective the union is. The report replaces the interim one issued for Prospect conference in May 2016 and includes more details.

### The report covers:

- ✓ Our reps
- ✓ Advising members
- ✓ Employer attitudes
- ✓ Collective bargaining
- ✓ Employment law
- ✓ Priorities for the future

We have been incredibly impressed by the responses to the survey, indicating the real difference that reps make in their workplace.

We asked for examples of successful personal cases and negotiations. The response was extraordinary, with just too many to cover in full. But we have quoted some of the replies and you can see a strong image of the positive impact that the union has for members.

This report demonstrates just how important union membership is and the benefits for workers of an organised workplace.

**Marion Scovell**  
Head of Prospect Legal

## Our reps

The respondents to the survey hold a variety of union roles, including branch secretary, chair, rep, organiser and case handler.

Many respondents hold specialist rep roles such as; equality, environmental, learning, health & safety and pensions champion.

58% of respondents have been a rep for 5 years or more and almost 10% had been in their rep position for less than a year.

As I work in a scientific organisation, becoming more active in Prospect has enabled me to get involved more directly to influence how management tackles the problems facing women in STEM and try to ensure they implement best practice.



Sarah Hughes - Scottish Government

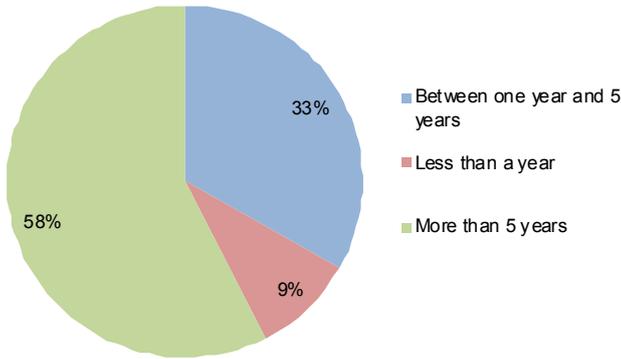


Chart 1 - How long have you been a Prospect rep?

There is a real wealth of experience in our rep network, showing the dedication of so many reps to the work they do for the union. It is also heartening to see a steady number of new reps coming through and working alongside their more longstanding colleagues.

The Young Professionals Network (YPN) is an excellent way to build a rep structure for the future and has been incredibly successful in recruiting younger members. The YPN group in the Intellectual Property Office, who feature in our Workers' Rights Advocates series, is a good example of this. The five YPN reps work with the rest of the union committee, which includes very experienced reps who are also involved in the union at national level.

Between us we get asked for advice 4 or 5 times a month. There are several other members of the committee so we share the personal case work with other experienced reps.



Young Professionals Network - IPO

## Becoming a rep

Any member of the union with a commitment to helping members has the capacity to become a rep. Our reps have a fascinatingly diverse range of day jobs and combine their specialist professional careers with their union work.

Our Workers' Rights Advocates include;

- ✓ Conservation Assistant
- ✓ Consultants
- ✓ Engineers
- ✓ Health & Safety Inspector
- ✓ Naval Architect
- ✓ Patent Examiners
- ✓ Project Manager
- ✓ Physical Oceanographer
- ✓ Scientist
- ✓ Social Care Inspector
- ✓ Team Manager

We asked our WRAs why they became a rep. Their reasons range from a strong belief in the value of unions, wanting to give something back and 'being in the wrong place at the wrong time!'

I went to my first branch meeting in 1994, as I wanted to find out what the union did and how it worked. I walked out branch chair. I was told it was either that or branch secretary...



David Evans - BT

I wanted to know what the union does, we don't hear about lots of the hard work our reps do, particularly in personal cases. Soon after, I followed my heart and became an equality rep.



Linda Ford - James Hutton Institute

I became a rep because I wanted to use the knowledge I had gained as a disabled member of staff to help others. Prospect had been there for me 10 years ago and I wanted to help others as they had helped me.



Amy Bishop - AWE

I'm passionate about trade unionism as a way to make a tangible improvement in people's lives and I wanted to get involved.



Chris Morris - IPO

We also asked what our WRAs would say to someone thinking of becoming a rep and what they like most about it.

I'd advise them to give it a go. I've enjoyed being part of the branch committee. I have helped set up and run the YPN in our branch, and attended two national YPN conferences.



Alison Berry - IPO

Becoming a union rep is for someone who wants to be involved in improving workers' rights and represent their colleagues. Being a rep gives you a platform to be the voice of the people you work with.



Adam Rourke - Cavendish Nuclear

It is a great support network. Not only do the union fight for your rights but they are there to assist in any cases which arise. I would always recommend it.



Catherine Brown - Rosyth

## Advising members

The majority of reps replying to the survey had advised members at work in the last year.

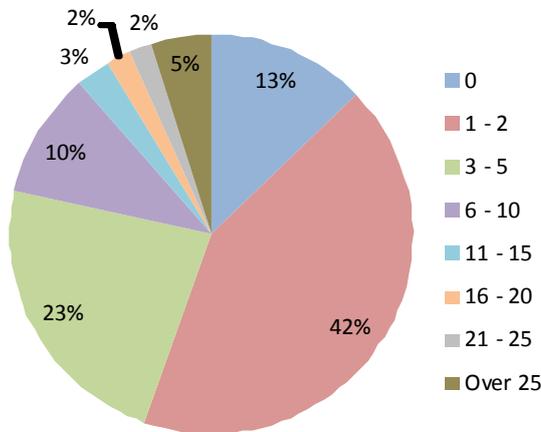


Chart 2 - How many times, on average each month are you asked for advice by a member?

12% of reps said they were approached for advice more than 3 times a week, while 87% would on average advise at least once or twice every month.

The time spent on advising individual members varied from a couple of hours a month to over 20 hours per month.

Advising members is, of course, only one part of the job for many reps. They will also be engaged in activities such as; recruiting new members, preparing newsletters, consulting with members and negotiating with management. All of this - not to mention the day job - shows just how busy a rep's life can be.

I really want to hear from members so I arrange periodical drop in 'surgeries' for them to come along and talk about any issues that concern them.



Steve Crothers - STFC



## A Wide Range of Issues

Chart 3 highlights the wide range of issues that reps have advised on over the past year

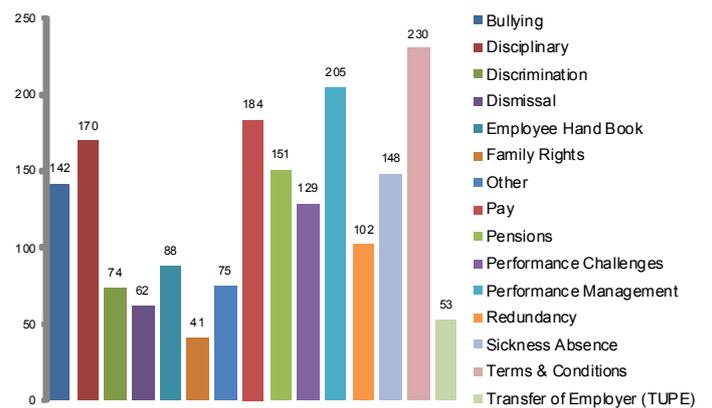


Chart 3 - Issues reps have advised members on over the past year

Not surprisingly, terms and conditions is the most frequently raised issue.

Performance management is clearly a very significant issue across both the public and private sectors for our reps. 57% of reps in the public sector and 52% in the private sector reported that they have advised on this issue in the last year.

Aside from the formal performance management procedures, around a third of reps had advised members on other performance criticisms and challenges.

Queries on pay are the next most frequently raised with our reps, followed by disciplinary issues.

Respondents listed a number of other issues ranging from a parking fine dispute to political activity, showing the diversity of matters reps address. A large percentage of reps also reported on advising on health and safety issues and sadly a large number are dealing with ill health caused by stress at work.

Many reps reported that it is often the little things that make a difference.

I actually like it when relatively small things get sorted out, you know that if left, they might have escalated into something that eventually made no sense, so its nice to be able to get in early and fix it.



Sarah Hughes - Scottish Government

### Representing members

Prospect reps accompany members at a number of different meetings and hearings. Over the last year our respondents had represented members at 169 grievances and appeals and 154 disciplinary and appeal hearings.

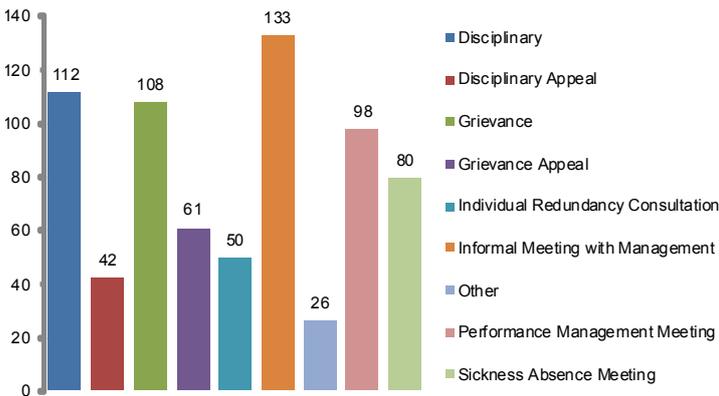


Chart 4 - Types of meeting attended

The issue of performance management was high on the list of representation with our respondents attending 98 performance management meetings with members.

Respondents mentioned a range of other meetings where they had represented members, these included; flexible working applications, job evaluation assessments, fact finding meetings, mobility, redeployment and work permits.

In 2015 I encouraged and then assisted two members taking out grievances against 'Must Improve' performance markings under the new civil service performance management system. Both grievances were successfully resolved. It is particularly pleasing to win some cash for members in the pay cap era.



Simon Hester - HSE

One rep said they thought union representation helped in two ways:

- ✓ "Firstly, being able to support members and manage meetings so they are less stressful. Secondly it often seems that the company behave better when a union rep is present."

A member came to me following a dispute with his manager. He found my just being there for him was very helpful. Having someone with the clout of the union on his side relieved a lot of his stress.



Kunal Saujani - IPO

### Successful cases

We asked for examples of recent successful cases and were inundated with responses.

Prospect reps reported a number of successes, for example there were several mentions of:

- ✓ Appealing performance markings
- ✓ Defending members in disciplinary hearings
- ✓ Arranging adjustments for disabled members
- ✓ Reinstatement following decisions to dismiss
- ✓ Challenging decisions to refuse ill health retirement and pension
- ✓ Opposing move to another location
- ✓ Resisting recovery of overpayments

This shows the extremely positive outcomes that reps achieve in the workplace.

Just some of the specific comments reporting successful outcomes were:

### Redundancy and dismissal

- ✓ "Although I was unable to avoid members being made redundant, I was able to influence an improvement to their redundancy packages."
- ✓ "I helped a colleague who was unfairly dismissed get her job back and get paid for the time she was not employed."
- ✓ "We secured funding for a young member to enable him to commute a long distance to work following the completion of his apprenticeship."
- ✓ "I represented a member in a disciplinary case that could have led to dismissal, but by demonstrating management failing, we kept the member in his job."
- ✓ "2 members were facing dismissal at the end of the probationary period, but I helped to persuade management to extend probation by 3 months and setting clear and achievable objectives. They both eventually passed probation."

My most 'famous' case was Graham Vare who took BT to an employment tribunal and won. I supported him right from his first formal performance interview, through a long period of stress-related sickness, his return to BT, his dismissal and the ET.



David Evans - BT

- ✓ "I recently represented a member charged with gross misconduct (fraud) who was entirely exonerated."

**Equality**

- ✓ "I recently won a grievance appeal for a woman member claiming equal pay with a male colleague. She got an increase in pay and back pay."
- ✓ "We had a successful mediation on emerging discrimination due to race culture and religion."
- ✓ "I assisted a new rep working with a member in putting forward reasons for possible indirect discrimination in the allocation of work. Our arguments were accepted for the individual member and there was a review of the process and training for managers to remove unconscious bias."
- ✓ "I challenged unequal pay treatment for a black woman member, thereby getting her promoted into the correct pay grade."

A union member was treated in an inappropriate manner at work. This had an impact on their health. I worked with the member to ensure they got fair treatment and that the negative issues were successfully resolved. An alternative plan was agreed to resolve the problem for the future.



Mavis Amadi - Babcock (Rosyth)

**Flexible working**

- ✓ "We resolved an issue for a member about a change in working hours and child care arrangements."
- ✓ "I helped a member successfully appeal a flexible working case where the senior manager had issues with anyone working 'outside' normal office hours."
- ✓ "We had a successful flexible working appeal where a member had been refused a sensible working request to fit in with family lifestyle."

**Disability and ill health**

- ✓ "A disabled member was facing redundancy, but we got his job changed and the member is now in a secure position."
- ✓ "A member with stress and depression sought advice and I arranged for him to be referred to occupational health and a change of role."
- ✓ "We won a case where a member on the autistic spectrum had their performance marked down."
- ✓ "I improved the handling of an absence management case, in particular I achieved agreement to count disability related absences separately."

Due to disability, a member of staff is unable to carry on in their present role. I am working to ensure the company carries out the redeployment process correctly and to enable adjustments to be made to allow the member to stay in work.



Amy Bishop - AWE

- ✓ "I supported a number of members through long-term absences and helped them in their return to work."

**Performance management**

- ✓ "A member returning to work after long term illness was given a low performance score that initiated a capability procedure, but we managed to get it changed."
- ✓ "I have dealt with 3 successful appeals challenging performance ratings in the last year."

A member was being taken through the Capability Procedure. I felt he was a square peg in a round hole. Management were sympathetic to this and we all put in a lot of work, first trying to mould him into the right shape to fit the hole, then into finding a hole the right shape to fit him.



David Schaffert - Magnox

**Terms and conditions**

- ✓ "I advised a member re potential changes to their job description."
- ✓ "We resolved a problem for members regarding tax implications of company cars."
- ✓ "Recently, I successfully represented a member with a grievance over his annual bonus."
- ✓ "I helped to resolve a grievance over grading."
- ✓ "We successfully preserved TUPE terms on voluntary change of roles."

We represented a group of members who we believed were underpaid for the duties they were carrying out. After months of negotiations they were awarded a significant raise in their salary.



WRA Team - Rosyth

One of my most exciting personal cases was coaching a group of young members to challenge their fixed term appointments. They made such a compelling case, they even got a pay rise thrown in with their permanent contracts. I believe the most important role of a rep is giving members the confidence and tools to fight their own battles.



Jenny Andrew - NERC

I was involved with a case regarding higher education funding for apprentices. The member had been rejected for sponsorship for higher education. I helped him build a case with supporting evidence. I then referred him to our section rep and branch president, to support him in presenting this to the learning and development department. His case was successful and he is now in his second year of University.



Adam Rourke - Cavendish Nuclear

## Employer attitudes and facility time

We asked in the survey what reps thought their employers' attitude was to their union work. It was heartening to see that 39% of respondents said that their employer was supportive although over 10% reported that their employers were unsympathetic to their union work.

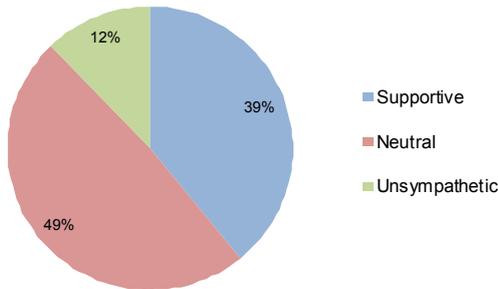


Chart 5 - Employer attitudes towards reps' union work

Our private sector reps reported slightly more positively than their public sector counterparts on their employer attitudes.

### Facility time

Only 35% of the reps responding to the survey have a set amount of facility time and of these only 23% have 50% or more facility time.

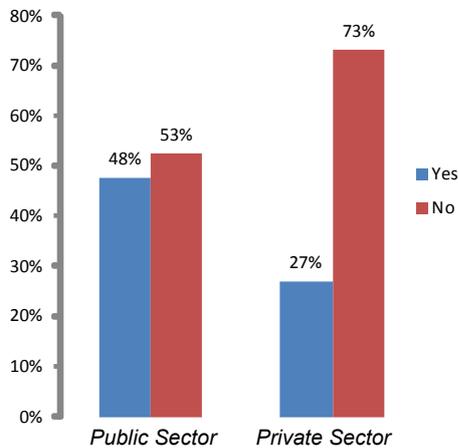


Chart 6 - Do you get facility time?

There is a very marked difference in the amount of facility time between the public and private sectors, with close to 50% of reps in the public sector having facility time, whereas only just over a quarter in the private sector do.

In our branch there are five reps who form part of the JCNC (Joint Collective Negotiations Committee) and negotiate directly with the employer on behalf of the branch and members. We have the opportunity to propose improvements in policy.



Hajira Mahomed - National Trust

Chart 7 shows that where facility time is granted a higher proportion of private sector reps have a 100% facility time arrangement with their employer.

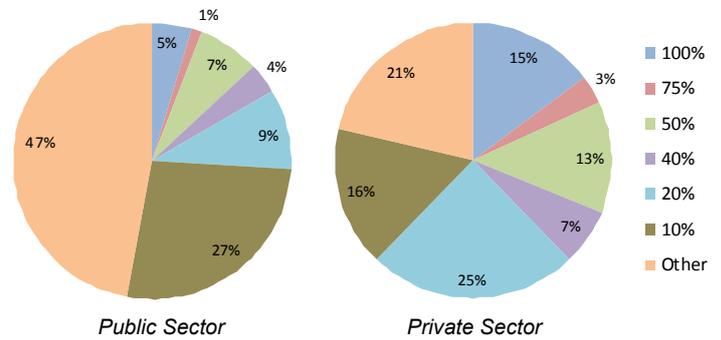


Chart 7 - How much facility time do you get?

### Attack on facility time

A very worrying 19% of respondents said their employer had tried to reduce facility time. But the situation was worse for public sector reps where 28% of reps reported the employer had tried to reduce facility time.

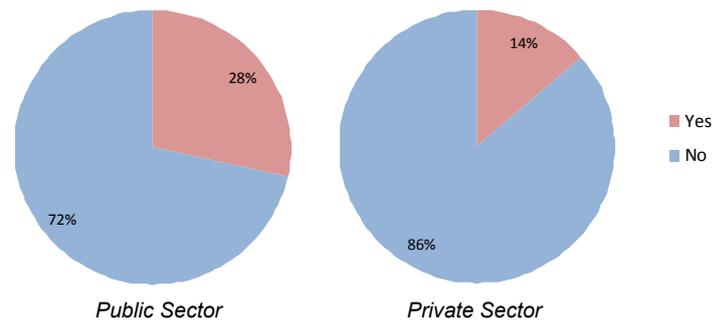


Chart 8 - Has your employer tried to reduce facility time?

Not surprisingly, there was widespread report from civil service branches of the cut backs in facility time, with the loss of 100% facility time posts and other amounts being cut significantly.

Many of our civil service reps reported the detrimental impact government restrictions on facility time were having. In many Departments and Agencies with dispersed workplaces this often meant that several locations were left without any allocated facility time.

Several reps said that that the branch's previous facility time had been slashed by 50% over the last year. Others reported how increased workloads and pressure on their teams was meaning less time for union work.

There is pressure on many reps not to undertake union training or attend meetings off site.

We asked respondents to give details of the impact of facility time reductions. The comments show the pressure that some reps are under:

- \* "I was discouraged from spending work time handling union business so I spend quite a lot of my own time doing so"

- ✗ "My employer regularly flies that flag as a negotiating point"
- ✗ "They have told us they are keeping an eye on us".
- ✗ "We no longer get time off to attend the branch AGM, so we are going to try having the AGM by telephone in future".
- ✗ "I have no approval for facility time presently and have been refused time away from my role to attend union meetings."
- ✗ "They are making it difficult to carry out my rep's duties due to increased workload. I've been refused time for Prospect training because other team members were on leave."

## Collective bargaining



42% of respondents reported being involved in successful negotiations in their branch to improve or protect the rights of members in the last year.

The main areas where new and improved agreements were reached are in chart 9.

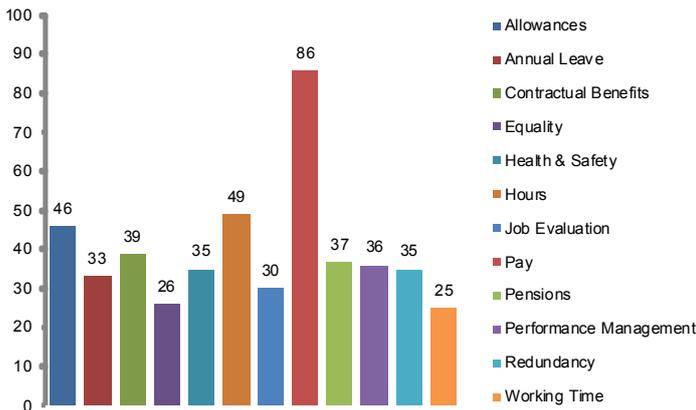


Chart 9 - Collective bargaining issues reps have been successful in over the past year

The biggest issue was pay, followed by agreements on working time and allowances.

Other new agreements mentioned by reps were around; career progression, site facilities, flexible working and working practices. A number of respondents reported reaching agreements for extra leave, perhaps suggesting employers were seeking other rewards in times of pay pinches.

When the types of agreements are broken down between our public and private sector reps, there is relatively little difference in the frequency of the issues arising. The data shows a similar number of agreements being reached in both sectors. However, there were two areas where there was a marked difference:

- ✓ Agreements on holiday pay were markedly more common in the private sector. This may well be in the wake of recent European Court decisions requiring holiday pay to include guaranteed overtime and other payments.
- ✓ New agreements on pensions were more prevalent in the private sector, largely reflecting the trend of closing defined benefit schemes and the pressure on funding of pension schemes. However, despite this, there have been several reports of successful negotiations.



WRA Team - Rosyth

## Bargaining for equality

Respondents reported a significant number of agreements reached around equality issues, including:

- ✓ A new respect campaign
- ✓ Agreement for an equal pay audit
- ✓ Implementation of equality impact assessments
- ✓ Shared parental leave
- ✓ Agreement to separate disability absence from sick absence
- ✓ A recognition of the need to take transgender issues more seriously



Linda Ford - James Hutton Institute

## Other comments from reps

Our reps provided a wide range of comments on policies that they collectively bargained for in their workplace, these included:

### Pay

- ✓ "Bonuses last year were higher due to unions".
- ✓ "We got an improvement to holiday entitlements and back pay".
- ✓ "We have recently agreed a three year pay deal which has reinstated some specialist allowances and progression pay".

- ✓ "Members will now receive overtime payments with holiday pay."
- ✓ "Part of the pay agreement was to ensure increases to those on the lowest incomes."

## Equality and flexible working

- ✓ "We negotiated an improvement in pay to reduce the gender pay gap."
- ✓ "New policy on shared parental leave".
- ✓ "Agreement on sickness absence policy to separate disability absence from sick absence"
- ✓ "Successfully got the company to take transgender issues more seriously".
- ✓ "We negotiated a change to flexible working whereby staff can request reduced hours for at least six months without suffering any denial of the right to return to full time."

We were involved with particularly constructive negotiations over a new Dignity at Work policy. We were able to highlight and preserve the best of the existing policy, and incorporate some of the latest guidance from Prospect and the TUC.



Jenny Andrew - NERC

We put in place new flexible working arrangements to move our site to four day working. The challenge was to make the arrangements fair and equitable for both 4-day and 5-day workers. After much number-crunching and to-ing and fro-ing, we had a scheme that was voluntary, equitable and demonstrably cost-neutral.



David Schaffert - Magnox

The best thing I was involved with was an agreement to treat Modern Apprentices more fairly, which resulted in a number of them getting a significant amount in back pay. It is a good story to tell young people thinking of being members. I have to admit I only got involved at the very end so can't take much of the credit – but it was still good to be part of that success.



Sarah Hughes - Scottish Government

- ✓ "We have agreed updates to our terms and conditions manual where legislative change has occurred, such as flexible working, protecting any additional benefits we already had which were over and above the law."
- ✓ "We agreed changes under a complete review of the T&C manual, where we rebuffed a lot of proposals that would have weakened the document".

- ✓ "We managed to resist changes to allowances and leave that had transferred under TUPE."
- ✓ "Delivered union led learning in the workplace."
- ✓ "New improved short term and long term sickness policies were agreed."

I worked with the health and safety team to introduce a more rigorous system for RSI injury guidance relating to the use of portable electronic devices. You can't get issued them now until you take an online training session.



Mike Scott - Welsh Government

## Employment law

The last few years have seen a significant number of detrimental changes in employment law. These have included :

- ✓ The reduction in the period for redundancy consultation from 90 days to 45 days for larger scale redundancies
- ✓ An increase in the qualifying period for unfair dismissal from 1 year to 2 years
- ✓ The compensatory award for unfair dismissal has been capped at a year's pay for most claimants
- ✓ The introduction of 'protected conversations'
- ✓ Reduced protection following a transfer of undertaking
- ✓ The introduction of employment tribunal fees

See our employment law briefing on the State of Employment Rights in 2016 for more detail at [bit.ly/EMPRights2016](http://bit.ly/EMPRights2016)

We asked participants whether they were aware of cases where recent cuts by the Government in statutory rights had been detrimental.

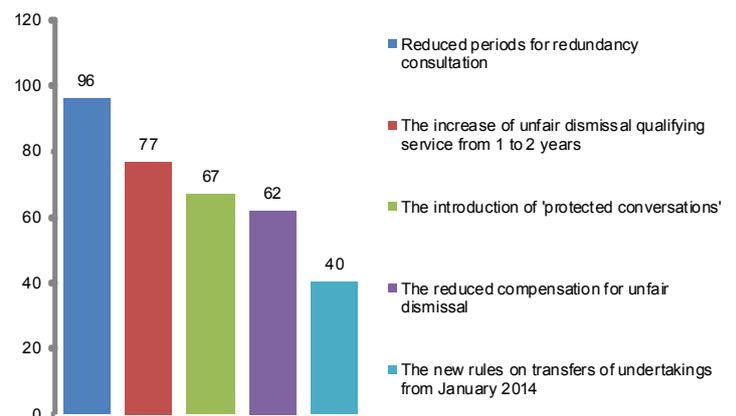


Chart 10 - The impact of the cuts in employment law

Almost a quarter stated that the cuts in the minimum time for redundancy consultation had a detrimental impact on their members.

A number reported concerns about the impact on dismissals, with a longer qualifying period to bring an unfair dismissal claim, reduced compensation being available, and the introduction of protected conversations all figuring strongly on our reps' radars.

Here are some comments from respondents on the impact of the cuts in the law.

### Unfair dismissal

Several reps gave examples of the increased unfair dismissal qualifying period and reduction on compensation causing a real problem:

- ✗ "I have a case now where a member has been dismissed but has worked at the company for less than two years so is unprotected".
- ✗ "The company has made a small number of staff redundant who had less than two years' service, by what I consider dubious methods".
- ✗ "Employees with less than two years' service will not now raise any grievance against the company".
- ✗ "I had a recent case where the 2 year term limit meant a member has little recourse against unfair treatment at work".
- ✗ "A colleague who had been dismissed took the company to a tribunal and eventually settled at the maximum that could be awarded (12 months' pay). I believe this would have been much greater had it not been for the cut in compensation"

### Redundancy consultation

The minimum period for consultation in large scale redundancies was cut from 90 days to 45 days in 2013. This shortened period was highlighted by some reps:

- ✗ "Shortening of the consultation period for large scale redundancies has resulted in unnecessary uncertainties placed upon employees."
- ✗ "I know of one case where someone was made redundant after 45 days and could have applied for something that came up shortly afterwards had they still been with us".
- ✗ "Reduction in redundancy consultation period has lost members who left 45 days pay."

### Protected conversations

New rules on 'confidentiality of negotiations before termination' mean that offers or suggestions by the employer for the employee to agree to leave employment for a sum of compensation, must not be taken into account by ETs hearing unfair dismissal claims. Our reps said:

- ✗ "In a period of continual reduction in spend, 'protected conversations' seem to be the company's latest buzzword to cut the wage bill. The number of people having these types of conversations has dramatically increased in the last few months."
- ✗ "Numerous 'without prejudice conversations' held between senior managers and staff members, with pressure applied on individuals to accept certain offers."

### Employment tribunal fees

Many respondents were aware of the impact that the introduction of employment tribunal fees has had generally on workers, but as one rep stated:

- ✓ "Tribunal fees is a point used in recruitment to point out that where Prospect takes up the case of a member there is no cost to the member."

### Differences across the UK

The detrimental changes have not been implemented in Northern Ireland. One rep said:

- ✓ "I'm aware of all of these but thankfully they don't apply in Northern Ireland where I am based".

## Priorities for future changes in the law



A main priority for the future must be to reverse many of the detrimental changes imposed by the government over recent years. But we need to do more to seek to build and improve on workers' rights.

The Trade Union Bill and its progress should be stopped in its tracks!



Mike Scott - Welsh Government

The Trade Union Act was passed in May, but we do not yet have commencement dates and the final details of regulations to implement the Act are still not known. The Act will significantly restrict workers' rights to strike. It also will create significant new burdens on trade unions and members. See our briefing on the Act for more detail [bit.ly/TUAct2016](http://bit.ly/TUAct2016)

The uncertainty of the impact of Brexit on workers' rights is very worrying and Prospect will be campaigning hard to ensure that all existing rights are maintained.

We asked reps to say how important changes to employment law would be to them. All the issues identified in chart 11 were particularly important to our reps.

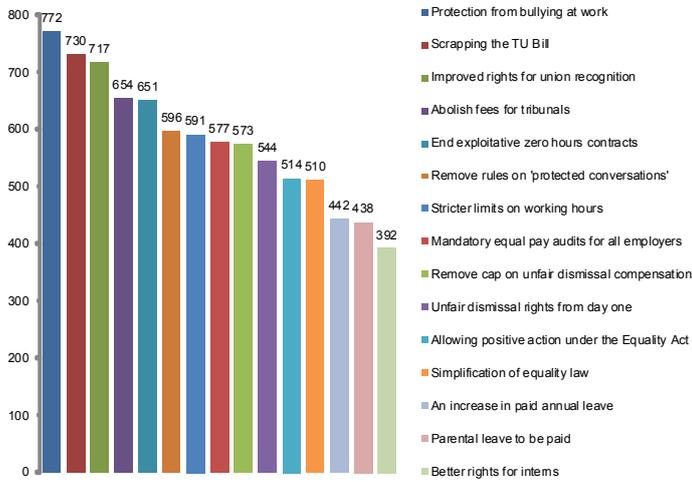


Chart 11 - The changes reps would most like to see in the future

The area that was seen as most important was to introduce a law protecting workers from harassment and bullying, which probably reflects much of the case work of our reps and the inadequacy of any legal protection unless the harassment is outlawed under the Equality Act.

Not surprisingly scrapping the invidious Trade Union Bill (now the TU Act) came second in the list of most important changes to the law. This was closely followed by a wish to see improved rights for trade union recognition.

Reps raised a wide range of issues for future changes. We have listed some below:

### Overhaul of rights

- ✓ "Lifting the bar on rights at work is one of the most important roles for trade unions."
- ✓ "It is more important than ever to work to abolish zero hours contracts, as people cannot plan or budget when they have no idea what their income will be."
- ✓ "Laws regarding transgender need to be simplified and strengthened."

### Union organisation

Many reps forcefully expressed their anger about the reduced employment rights and attack on trade unions imposed by the Government. They also stressed how necessary unions are to defend members.

- ✓ "Amendments are chipping away at the TU Bill, but let's keep up the pressure to try and derail the whole thing."
- ✓ "At the same time as the government is curbing workers' rights, reps are needed more than ever...."
- ✓ "Being a member of a trade union should be mandatory."
- ✓ "I believe maintaining the unions should be a priority as without these, employees are, or could be, at the mercy of some unscrupulous working practices by the employer."

- ✓ "There has been gradual pressure, usually covertly, to reduce representation for workers. There should be increased statutory obligation for employers to promote union participation of workers."
- ✓ "I would like to see facility time given to all reps. My manager makes it very difficult for me to do union work as he doesn't believe in unions."

### Pay

And on pay our reps proposed:

- ✓ "Secrecy over pay results in members not being able to identify inequality and should be abolished"
- ✓ "There needs to be strong messaging that effective unions drive up pay for all employees across a sector."
- ✓ "All working people should be paid the proper living wage – not the government's version."

### Mental health

Several respondents referred to the need for much better protection for workers with mental health difficulties:

- ✓ "Greater protection for workers with mental ill health was also seen as an important factor."
- ✓ "Employers do not regard absence due to mental illness as seriously as they should."
- ✓ "Most managers do not see mental health issues as an illness at all and are not understanding or sympathetic to those suffering."

## Workers' Rights Advocates: thoughts for the future

The last word comes from some of our Workers' Rights Advocates on their priorities for future changes in employment law.

The anti-discrimination law in the UK currently is far too complex, it is clear that current legislation is not fit for the society we live in and much more work has to be done to create a framework that works towards eradicating discrimination in employment.



Hajira Mahomed - National Trust

A clearly enshrined right to industrial action, rather than it being a privilege of which the government gets to set the terms.



Chris Morris - IPO

I would like to see the specific duties under the Equality Act widened to include all employers and not just the public sector. I think that doing so would go a long way to eliminating discrimination in all our workplaces.



Linda Ford - James Hutton Institute

My stepson and his friends have all had a succession of short-term jobs with very exploitative managements. I would like to see the return of basic employment rights from day one, particularly the right to claim unfair dismissal.



Simon Hester - HSE

I think ideally we would have equal compulsory maternal and paternal leave, I think that anything less then this results in women being discriminated against.



Jorge Quintero - IPO

Improvements in flexible working to create a better work life balance. For example the opportunity to have 4 day weeks provided contractual hours are met.



Adam Rourke - Cavendish Nuclear

I would like to see the removal of time limits on claims that are too short to be meaningful.



Steve Crothers - STFC

Better enforcement of the Equality Act to ensure that legal rights can become a reality for employees.



Amy Bishop - AWE

I would love to see a law that has a monitoring system in place at work to ensure everyone gets equal treatment in the workplace. The monitoring information should be visible to the government, workers and unions.



Mavis Amadi - Babcock (Rosyth)

## The campaign continues

*Prospect at Work* is your campaign. Let's make sure members know what Prospect does and the value and benefits of organising together to secure better rights at work. Share this report and encourage members to look at the campaign web pages at [bit.ly/PAW2016](http://bit.ly/PAW2016)

But don't stop there, work to build Prospect and the union movement. Speak to non-members in your workplace. Share the message with friends, family and others on social media.

### What you can do to spread the word:

- ✓ Download our WRelfie (workers' rights selfies) signs from the website at [bit.ly/WrselfieSign](http://bit.ly/WrselfieSign)
- ✓ Take photos individually or in branch or workplace groups with the campaign signs
- ✓ Post to Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms
- ✓ Use the [#ProspectAtWork](https://twitter.com/ProspectAtWork)
- ✓ Send your photos to [ProspectLegal@prospect.org.uk](mailto:ProspectLegal@prospect.org.uk) for us to add them to the campaign materials
- ✓ Alert members to the campaign in branch newsletters, mailings and notices
- ✓ Have a workplace meeting to discuss workers' rights (invite a legal officer, your full time negotiator or organiser if you'd like to)
- ✓ Display Prospect materials proudly at work
- ✓ Set out to recruit a new member



Attendees stop for a WRelfie during the Prospect at Work fringe meeting at National Conference 2016



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