

WORKPLACE ACTION ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

– what could your branch be doing?

The climate emergency is the biggest threat facing humanity. Tackling it will require big changes to how our economy and society is organised so we can end our reliance on fossil fuels and achieve net zero emissions. All workplaces will be impacted by these changes. Some employers will have to substantially rethink the way they do business in order to reduce their environmental footprint.

Trade unions have a vital role to play in pushing employers to take environmental sustainability and the threat of climate change seriously. Most employers are not yet doing enough to respond to the climate emergency, and few have developed credible plans for decarbonising their business operations. Trade unions can help make sure workers are given a strong voice in developing workplace decarbonisation plans, so that the costs and benefits of big changes are shared fairly.

So, what could your branch be doing to help tackle the climate emergency? Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Elect an environment rep

Does your branch have someone who is taking a lead within your branch on sustainability and environmental issues? If not, then consider putting out a call for someone to take up that role.

Connect with the Prospect environment network

Share insights and ideas with other Prospect activists, and access Prospect campaign materials by joining our environment network.

Access Prospect's environment training course

Prospect has a new training course on environmental campaigning open to all members. If someone from your branch hasn't already been on the course get in touch with Prospect to find out when the next course is running.

Make environmental issues a standing item on your branch agenda

One way to help ensure your branch is creating space to discuss the climate crisis is to make environmental issues a standing item on the agenda for your branch meetings.

Organise a meeting on the climate crisis in your workplace

Raise awareness about the crisis and start a conversation about action you could take in your workplace. Demonstrate to colleagues who are not yet members why joining the union is a great way to get more active on environmental issues.

Establish a workplace green committee

If your workplace doesn't already have one, negotiate with your employer to set up a committee with representatives from staff and from management to start discussing ways to make your workplace greener and more sustainable.

Get your employer to undertake a proper environmental audit

A key first step in making your workplace more sustainable is to establish a baseline environmental footprint. Press your employer to undertake a full environmental audit to assess energy and resource use and identify opportunities to lower emissions.

Work with your employer to develop a sustainability action plan for your workplace

Once you have established a baseline, start a discussion with your employer about how you can reduce your workplace's environmental footprint in a fair and sustainable way.

Integrate sustainability goals into your bargaining agenda

As you engage in negotiations with your employer over terms and conditions, think about how you could integrate sustainability goals into your bargaining demands. Your employer's policies on business travel, company car use, or flexible working all have obvious sustainability implications for example.