

Proposal for the Trade Union Link

Enhancing the Trade Union Link

All discussions concerning the trade union link must part from the basic understanding that the trade union link is fundamental to the existence of the Labour Party, and that it must not only be defended, but strengthened. The following proposals outline concrete ways this should happen:

- Establishing the principle that all representatives on national committees and institutions should have mandates from either party members or affiliated trade unions, and that there should be parity between these two groups, leading to an increase in trade union representation on the National Executive Committee (NEC), the National Policy Forum (NPF), as well as Local Government Committees (LGCs).¹
- Affiliated supporters should be allowed to participate in selections processes for local councillors, and affiliated trade unions should have a role in deciding local party manifestos.
- Affiliated trade unions be able to vote for Labour group leaders, as part of a 50:50 electoral college with party members.
- Trade Union Liaison Officer positions should be Officer positions on CLP Executives with full voting rights.

Building Support for Workplace organising

In addition to these measures, the party should increase awareness of the importance of the trade union link in the following ways:

- Affiliated members should be made fully aware of the rights and entitlements that Labour Party membership brings them.
- Existing guidelines requiring all people standing to be elected representatives to be members of affiliated trade unions should be enforced.
- The Labour Party should support mass recruitment drives to increase trade union membership, and should develop workplace organising training for Labour Party members who are trade unionists in collaboration with work carried out by the Community Organising Unit.
- The Labour Party should build on existing efforts to work with trade unions to support workplace struggles, including the McStrike campaign led by the Bakers' Union, and the Picturehouse strike.

¹ These would replace Local Campaign Forums.

Supporting Argument

The trade unions founded the Labour Party and represent its institutionalised link to working people, thus underpinning its objectives, principles and political identity. Successive attacks on the trade union movement over decades have created the conditions for devastating inequality, low levels of investment and productivity, and the disempowerment and alienation of millions of working people across Britain. The Labour Party will only be able to deliver a historical redistribution of wealth and power through the empowerment of trade unions, and this must be fully reflected in internal party structures. All representatives on the NEC, NPF, regional boards, and Local Government Committees should have a mandate from either party members, trade unions, or both, leading to expansion in the representation of trade unions on these bodies. Trade unions should have a role in electing Labour Group leaders, whilst affiliated members should be encouraged to participate more heavily in local parties. The party should build on existing efforts to promote workplace organising, in particular by supporting workers in struggle.