

Certification Annual Report 2018-2019

CERTIFICATION OFFICE FOR TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Annual Report of the Certification Officer, Sarah Bedwell, was laid before Parliament today 5 September 2019. The report describes the work of the Certification Officer over the year 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 and provides detailed information on all trade unions and employers' associations. The statistical information it contains is drawn from the annual returns received during the reporting period, which relate mainly to the year ending 31 December 2017.

TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCES

- Figures reported to the Certification Officer show total trade union membership of 6,767,824. This is a decrease of 107,407 members or 1.6%. This continues the decrease in union membership for the tenth successive year. The 13 largest unions account for over four fifths of the total trade union membership (5.78 million members or 85.5%)
- The number of trade unions has also continued to decrease, notwithstanding the modest increase in 2014-15. There were 142 trade unions on the Certification Officer's lists and schedules at the end of this reporting period, compared to 146 at the end of the previous period. Whilst two trade unions were added to the list, six removed. At the end of this reporting period there were 90 employers' associations, a decrease of one because one was removed. (Chapter 1).
- The total funds (net assets) of trade unions as reported in this period increased of 25.8% to £1,645 million. The 13 largest unions, that each have membership in excess of 100,000 members, had average net assets of £58 million (Chapter 2, Appendix 4).
- The total sum contained in the political funds of the trade unions at the end of this period was £35million. This is up – (1.32) million, from 34.03-million the previous year. The largest political fund was that of Unite the Union, which was valued at around £14.5 million (Chapter 4 and Appendix 9).

COMPLAINTS Over the past reporting year 46 complaints were determined. This compares to 44 complaints in the previous reporting year. Of these, 42 complaints alleged that a union had breached its own rules. The other 4 related to alleged breaches of statute. A summary of these decisions can be found in Chapter 5 of this report.

THE TRADE UNION ACT 2016 • Three sections of the Act, that relate to the work of the Certification Officer, have been implemented: Section 7 Information to Certification Officer about industrial action etc; Section 11: Opting in by union members to contribute to political funds; and Section 12: Union's annual return to include details of political expenditure

All these provisions are now consolidated into the Trade Union Labour Relations Act 1992 and were commenced on 1 March 2017.

SECTION 32ZA AND 32ZB OF THE TRADE UNION LABOUR RELATIONS ACT 1992

INFORMATION TO CERTIFICATION OFFICER ABOUT INDUSTRIAL ACTION ETC

New duties to report on political expenditure and to provide information about industrial action apply to the reporting periods which begin after 1 March 2017. For the majority of trade unions this will mean that they will provide this information, for the first time, in their annual returns to me for the period ending 31 December 2018 which should be provided to me before 1 June 2019.

Ballots and Industrial Action – This office received 23 annual returns from unions who were required to report this information.

Political Fund expenditure – Only one union was required to report this information in this reporting year.

84A OF THE TRADE UNION LABOUR RELATIONS ACT 1992

OPTING IN BY UNION MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO POLITICAL FUNDS

The law relating to the way members of trade unions contribute to the political funds of their unions has been amended to favour a system of opting in rather than requiring members to opt out of making an otherwise automatic contribution. These unions must also notify their members who joined after the implementation date of their right to withdraw an opt-in notice and send a copy to this office.

All unions which were required to provide a copy of this notification during this reporting period did so.

Notes to editors:

1. The annual report of the Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations was published and laid before Parliament on 5 September 2019. It is available on the Certification Office website: www.gov.uk/certificationofficer.
2. The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, as amended, sets out the Certification Officer's statutory responsibilities. Section 258 requires the Certification Officer to make an annual report on his activities to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and to the Chair of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas). The report must be laid before Parliament and published.
3. The Certification Officer is appointed by the Secretary of State for

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and resourced through Acas, but is independent of any direction from Ministers or Acas. Sarah Bedwell was appointed to the post on 1 January 2018.

4. The Certification Officer's website contains every decision made by the Certification Officer since 1975. It contains all the annual returns from trade unions and employers associations since 2012, with links to The National Archives website for returns from between 2003 and 2012. It also contains guidance on various aspects of the Certification Officer's functions, copies or links to Annual Reports going back to 2001-2002 and a list of trade unions and employers' associations.
5. The Certification Officer invites you to subscribe to his email service to receive notice of any new items posted to the website. Visit the website: www.gov.uk/certificationofficer, to subscribe.
6. The Certification Officer has reported the following figures for trade union membership over the past 10 reporting years.

Year TU Membership Changes from previous year

	TU Membership	%	
18-19	6,767,824	-107,407	-1.56
17-18	6,875,231	+10,175	+0.15
16-17	6,865,056	-83,669	-1.2
15-16	6,948,725	-61,802	-0.88
14-15	7,010,527	-75,589	-1.1
13-14	7,086,116	-111,299	-1.5
12-13	7,197,415	-63,795	-0.9
11-12	7,261,210	-67,695	-0.9
10-11	7,328,905	-58,993	-0.8
09-10	7,387,898	-268,258	-3.5

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