



LEGAL DEPARTMENT

THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS

- YOUR VOICE AT WORK

- 1) Trade union recognition at the workplace
– either by voluntary agreement or through the Central Arbitration Committee (the CAC) – industrial court.
- 2) But what if your employer refuses to recognise the NUJ on a voluntary basis and there are not yet enough members to gain recognition through the CAC?
- 3) You are still entitled to be a member of a trade union. If you suffer discrimination at work because of your NUJ membership, or your NUJ activities, you may be able to take legal action against your employer. The NUJ can help you with that claim.
- 4) You and your workmates can still form an NUJ Chapel (workplace organisation) even if your employer does not recognise the NUJ.
- 5) You can build your Chapel and hopefully eventually persuade your employer to agree to recognise the NUJ or if not, gain recognition through the union applying to the CAC.
- 6) Employees need their union more than ever at the moment. In the current economic climate, with multiple redundancies in so many workplaces, NUJ representatives can help their colleagues in a variety of ways, with back-up assistance and advice and sometimes representation from your NUJ paid officials, legal advice from NUJ Head Office in London or in NUJ Scottish office in Glasgow, NUJ Northern Regional office in Manchester or in NUJ Ireland office in Dublin.
Your NUJ Official can represent you.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

- 7) You can advise, assist and represent your colleagues in Disciplinary matters.
- 8) You can advise, assist and represent your colleagues in Grievance matters.



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- 9) You can advise, assist and represent your colleagues in Redundancy disputes.
- 10) Health and Safety - Employees are entitled to have a say in Health and Safety issues at work, and are entitled to a Health and Safety representative to discuss and put forward the views of employees. Make sure an NUJ member is the workplace Health and Safety representative, even if the employer does not recognise the NUJ. The NUJ can provide advice and assistance, including legal advice over the whole range of Health and Safety issues, such as workload, stress and bullying, regular breaks from working on computers and health checks. The union for example, can organise a Health and Safety or stress survey.
- 11) You can assist colleagues who want to work beyond normal retirement age.
- 12) You can assist colleagues who want to request flexible working.
- 13) Your employer may have a Staff Association. They are often under the effective control of management and not truly independent, with no rights to negotiate. But the union Chapel and members may decide to try to gain influence within the Staff Association to help push forward NUJ ideas.
- 14) Your employer may be part of a company that has other workplaces within Europe. Employees may be able to force the company to have a European Works Council, to be informed of issues affecting the future of the company and its employees and have elections for staff representatives. Try to ensure that union members are influential and elected. Make contact with other NUJ representatives elsewhere in the company and other union reps.
- 15) Union Chapel meetings – hold these regularly, to keep members involved, aware of the issues, aware of what the union is doing. Listen to members and keep in touch with what is happening in the workplace.
- 16) Talk to non-members about what the union is doing and can do with more support and more members and try to recruit new members.



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- 17) Try to involve other members in the Chapel – form a Chapel committee with various functions, such as Mother or Father of Chapel, Secretary, Equal Opportunities Officer, Recruitment, Social Secretary, Health and Safety Officer – don't forget that social events are a good way of bringing workmates together and may lead to more joining the union.
Try to have a NUJ Chapel representative in each company department.
- 18) If the Equality Bill becomes law, pay secrecy imposed by an employer should be outlawed, so the union could conduct a pay survey and use that to expose pay inequalities and unfairness.
Seek union advice on Equal Pay claims.
- 19) Write to management with the Chapel's views on various issues – such as pay, flexible working, learning opportunities through work, health and safety, workload and staffing levels.
- 20) Even if your employer will not answer, let all your colleagues know what you've written and said to the company.
Let your colleagues see that the union is active – it will probably lead to more workmates joining the union.
Issue a regular NUJ bulletin. Leave copies of the Journalist around for colleagues to see. Let them know it is online as well.
- 21) Try to maintain and develop links with sympathetic company managers.
- 22) Remind members and colleagues of their legal rights. The employer often isn't entitled to do what it says it can in the way it wants.
Get advice from your NUJ Officials. Go on NUJ courses to learn more about your rights.
- 23) The Chapel could buy at least one share in the company to entitle you to company information and to attend the annual meeting of shareholders where you can raise issues with the Board of Directors or other shareholders and gain publicity.
- 24) Even if the NUJ is not recognised, if it is not possible to resolve a dispute, industrial action is not affected by lack of recognition – but you must seek advice first from your NUJ Official.
- 25) Make links within local communities.



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26) If the union does gain recognition to collectively bargain with the company, you must keep up the membership numbers, as otherwise the employer may be able to derecognise.

REMEMBER THE NUJ WAS 100 YEARS OLD IN 2007. WE ARE NOT GOING AWAY. WE WILL NOT BE SILENT WHEN IT COMES TO EMPLOYEES' RIGHTS, MEMBERS' RIGHTS, TRADE UNION RIGHTS OR HUMAN RIGHTS.

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