

Dignity In Amicus

At Policy Conference 2005, Amicus delegates voted for rule amendments and policy that should provide members with a mandate to progress the equality agenda.

Who does this agenda concern? Well it would be more appropriate to ask, 'who doesn't it concern?' Every single member – without exception – will belong to one or more equality grouping at some point in their lives.

Nothing to be ashamed of. Everything to be proud of as this is our humanity.

A rule amendment was passed which deleted barriers to age discrimination in the Union. Though it still persists through the denial of voting rights for Retired Member Delegates at Regional Council.

Further rule amendment, led by **amicus-lgbt** and supported by many Gazette members, gave a degree of proportionality of representation to larger regions on National Committees. It also gave members in the equality sectors the right in rule to be member led at a Regional level, in partnership with Regional Councils.

The policy decisions were more far reaching:

- Democracy – consulting our equalities communities, holding discussions with them and involving them in the decision making process;
- Equality – identifying discrimination, disadvantage, deprivation and working towards their elimination;

where they have a genuine and directly appropriate influence on outcomes pertinent to them;

- that lay member democracy is sacrosanct at all levels, that 'goal posts' in rule are not moved around by one group at the top of the union structure, to determine outcomes in groups below.

With real dignity and lay member democracy, we can effectively represent our members interests and aspirations in the workplace and society, and develop and encourage the resurgence of Trade Unionism in a form that meets and addresses the needs of contemporary and future society.



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▪ Liberty ▪ Equality ▪ Sorority ▪ Fraternity ▪

- Equity – being fair, reasonable and just in provision of all services and treatment of members and their democratically elected representatives.
- Quality – aiming for the highest possible standards and continual improvement of services.
- Empowerment – enabling members to take part in the business of the union, engaging them in discussions that are meaningful, effective in outcome and respecting their democratically reached decisions on policy, rule and representation.
- Diversity – recognising that the union is made up of members from many different communities, valuing and celebrating their difference and mainstreaming throughout the fabric of the union.

These points are to underpin all new policy in the union and also affect how we read existing policy. This is central to the philosophy of Mainstreaming.

The Union is committed in this policy to develop strategies for each strand to ensure that the union mainstreams the provision of its services.

How will the union know if it is successful in achieving real equality in the provision of services and member participation?

The Policy sets out two measures: Quantative and Qualitative.

Quantative – the union needs to monitor equalities in terms of employees and members. There is no option for just monitoring age groups or ethnicity – all equalities strands identified in rule need to be monitored.

If the spirit of policy is honoured, there will also be the opportunity for people to declare other communities to which they belong.

Qualitative – the union needs to support communities to organise and determine their structures within the union and having their say in processes and policy. It is about setting up a sense of community and empowering people and honouring and valuing democracy in their structures.

It is absolutely not about manipulating communities or setting its members against one another to deliver a mandate that originates outside of said communities, or determining who represents us or telling us what our futures are going to be. This has ever been the experience of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans communities, as well as that of our sisters and brothers in the other communities.

Qualitative outcomes are achieved when each community feels that it has its rightful place in the union, with a voice and influence on the business and policy of the union that is appropriate and where its aspirations are addressed with meaningful commitment and support.

So what is meant by Dignity In Amicus?

It means that:

- the union responds positively towards Policy passed at conference at every level, including NEC and addresses situations in the light of that policy.
- members are not treated any better or worse than other members, with a union commitment to treat all with appropriate respect.
- members can partake of structures in rule knowing that their contributions are valued and that any decisions made within rule are valued and respected.
- members representative structures are meaningfully consulted, that they are engaged in a dynamic process