

Unions and bargaining

Unions support employees in the workplace. They bargain for collective employment agreements with employers and help employees with information and advice about work-related issues.

[Unions](#)

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Employees can choose whether or not to join a union. Unions negotiate collective employment agreements and advocate on behalf of employees.

[Collective agreements](#)

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Collective employment agreements are agreements between employers and registered unions that cover employees in the employer's workplace.

- [Collective bargaining](#) [\[starting-employment/unions-and-bargaining/collective-agreements/collective-bargaining/\]](#)
- [Passing on collective agreement terms](#) [\[starting-employment/unions-and-bargaining/collective-agreements/passing-on-collective-agreement-terms/\]](#)

[Unable to agree](#)

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If parties can't agree, they have several options to choose from. These include asking for help from Employment Mediation Services or the Employment Relations Authority.

[Strikes and lockouts](#)

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Strikes and lockouts can be used as a tool by parties to collective bargaining or for health and safety reasons. Notice must be given of strikes and lockouts.

[Employment relations education leave](#)

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A union may allocate paid employment relations education (ERE) leave so members can attend approved courses in employment relations.

- [Calculating, allocating and taking ERE leave](#) [\[starting-employment/unions-and-bargaining/employment-relations-education-leave/calculating-allocating-and-taking-ere-leave/\]](#)
- [ERE-approved courses](#) [\[starting-employment/unions-and-bargaining/employment-relations-education-leave/ere-approved-courses/\]](#)
- [Applying for ERE course approval](#) [\[starting-employment/unions-and-bargaining/employment-relations-education-leave/applying-for-ere-course-approval/\]](#)
- [Using pre-approved courses](#) [\[starting-employment/unions-and-bargaining/employment-relations-education-leave/using-pre-approved-courses/\]](#)
- [Applying to have a course re-approved](#) [\[starting-employment/unions-and-bargaining/employment-relations-education-leave/applying-to-have-a-course-re-approved/\]](#)

Please note that this content will change over time and may be out of date.