

Social Dialogue mapping

Description scheme for country overviews

UNITED KINGDOM

Sources:

1/ Eurofound Working Life Profiles <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/united-kingdom>

2/ OSH WIKI https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/OSH_system_at_national_level_-_United_Kingdom

3/ ESENER-2 <https://osha.europa.eu/en/surveys-and-statistics-osh/esener/2014>

Introduction on Social Dialogue in MS (1)

The issue of representativeness is largely unregulated in the UK. Formal 'representativeness' criteria for trade unions and employer bodies are generally not used. Representation is conducted largely on a voluntary basis, and is most commonly conducted at the workplace level.

Trade Unions (1)

- **About trade union representation**

Any worker or employee can join a trade union. In practice, employees or workers can join any union, which may or may not be recognised at their place of employment. As noted, the practice of recognition is largely voluntary.

Trade union membership is voluntary; the closed shop has been illegal in the UK since the Employment Act of 1990

- **Main trade union confederations and federations**

Long name	Abbreviation	Members	Year	Involved in collective bargaining (*)
Trade Union Congress	TUC	5,814,836	2017	No

Employers' organisations (1)

• About Employers' organisations

The TUC is paralleled on the employers' side by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). Like the TUC, the CBI has no mandate to collectively bargain and bind its affiliates. In general, the CBI represents companies in the private sector and is regarded by the government as its main interlocutor with business. Its membership comprises trade associations (around 140 currently) and individual companies (usually of medium and large size) as direct members – the CBI claims to represent around 190,000 businesses, employing nearly 7 million people, in the UK. Other employers' organisations operating in the UK include the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Forum of Private Business (FPB). These organisations provide smaller businesses with a link to national and regional government and provide business advice and support. Current employer organisations that do engage in social and employment affairs include the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) and the Local Government Association (LGA). Employer organisation density in the UK is estimated at around 30–40%. Compared with trade unions, the level of information regarding employers' organisations is poor.

• Main Employers' organisations

Long name	Abbreviation	Members	Year	Involved in collective bargaining (*)
Confederation of British Industry	CBI	Around 7 million in approximately 190,000 businesses	2015 (CBI Annual Report and Accounts 2015)	No
British Chambers of Commerce	BCC	Over 5 million employees organised across 52 chambers	Current – from the BCC website	No

Social Dialogue on OSH (2)

• National level

As compared with other European countries and the European approach to social dialogue specifically, the UK has a varied institutional framework to support social dialogue ^[21] which provide a fora through which participation by the social partners in policy making might take place ^[22]. Some examples include the Low Pay Commission and the Women and Work Commission ^[23].

Social dialogue between employer representatives and worker representatives plays a role in shaping policies relating to occupational safety and health in the UK ^[23] where [stakeholder consultations](#) and [impact assessments](#) have increasingly become essential parts of the policy making process ^[24]. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), in preparing policy proposals, consults extensively with organisations representing professional interests in health and safety, business managers, trade unions, and scientific and technological experts. This is managed through a network of advisory committees and by public invitation to comment on particular proposals ^[4]. HSE regulates in England, Wales and Scotland, while, in Northern Ireland workplace health and safety is regulated by the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI).

Furthermore, the social partners are represented in the HSE governing Board which comprises of up to 12 non-executive directors. Members of the Board are appointed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions after consultation with organisations representing employers, employees, local authorities and others, as appropriate. The tripartite board is responsible for establishing and delivering HSE's strategic aims and objectives consistent with its overall strategic direction and within the policy and resources framework determined by the Secretary of State ^[25].

The key national social partners in the UK are:

Trade Union Congress (TUC) ^[26]: The TUC is central trade union confederation in the UK and the largest organisation representing employees. The TUC is a member of ETUC and campaigns for a fair deal at work and for social justice for employees both in the UK and in Europe. The vast majority of the UK's trade union members belong to the 58 unions affiliated to the TUC.

Confederation of British Industry (CBI) ^[27]: The CBI is the UK's premier business lobbying organisation, providing a voice for employers at a national and international level. The CBI represents its members on a wide range of business related issues including industrial relations and occupational safety and health. CBI is a member of BUSINESSEUROPE and its mission is to promote the conditions in which businesses of all sizes and sectors in the UK can compete and prosper for the benefit of all.

Other national social partners include:

- Partnership of Public Employers (PPE) ^[28]: representing public service employers (known as CEEP UK until 2008)
- Institute of Directors (IOD) ^[29]: professional membership organisation representing business leaders
- Federation of Small Business (FSB) ^[30]: representing self-employed and owners of small firms

• Sectoral level

The Health and Safety Executive receive specialist advice from a range of advisory committees, boards and councils. These bodies may be concerned with health and safety in a particular industry or sector, or with particular hazards that may be present across a range of industry sectors. The Committees are serviced by HSE to help achieve the outcomes in its strategic plan. The Committees may recommend standards and guidance and, in some cases, comment on policy issues confronting the HSE or recommend an approach to a particular new problem. Each committee includes a balance of people nominated by employer and employee organisations and, where appropriate, public interest representatives and technological and professional experts ^[31]. The key committees include:

- Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens
- Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances (ACTS)
- Agricultural Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC)
- Asbestos Liaison Group
- Cement, Ceramics, Concrete, Heavy Clay, Refractories and Glass Manufacturing Industries Joint Health and Safety Committee (C3HARGE)
- Castings Health and Safety Advisory Committee (CHASAC)(formerly Foundries Industry Advisory Committee FIAC)
- Chemical and Downstream Oil Industries Forum (CDOIF)
- Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC)
- Health and Safety Executive / Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA)
- Interdepartmental Liaison Group on Risk Assessment (ILGRA)
- Legionella Committee
- Mining Industry Safety Leadership Group (MISLG)
- Mining Qualifications Board (MQB)
- Motor Vehicle Repair (MVR) Forum
- National Liaison Committee overseeing the Protocol of Work-related deaths
- Offshore Industry Advisory Committee (OIAC) (formerly Oil Industry Advisory Committee)
- Paper and Board Industry Advisory Committee (PABIAC)
- Quarries National Joint Advisory Committee
- Safety and Health in Mines Research Advisory Board (SHMRAB)Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use)

- Small Business Trade Association Forum (SBTAF)
- Textiles Industry Advisory Committee (TEXIAC)
- Tyre and Rubber Industries Advisory Group (TRISAG) (formerly Rubber Industry Advisory Committee RUBIAC)
- Wood Safety Group

• Enterprise level

A clear legal framework to ensure social dialogue at the enterprise level is well established in the UK. The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 [\[17\]](#) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 [\[9\]](#) set out how employees must be consulted in different situations and the different choices employers have to make.

According to the regulations, the employers must consult with employees or their representatives on the following:

- the introduction of any measure which may substantially affect their health and safety at work;
- arrangements for getting competent people to help them comply with health and safety laws;
- the information they must give their employees on the risks and dangers arising from their work, measures to reduce or get rid of these risks and what employees should do if they are exposed to a risk;
- the planning and organisation of health and safety training; and
- the health and safety consequences of introducing new technology [\[32\]](#).