

Job Summary

Job Title:	Senior National Employment Relations Officer
Job Location:	Birmingham with hybrid option (2+ days per week in office) with UK travel
Salary:	£50,000-£55,000
Reporting to:	Director Trade Union and Employment Relations

Job Purpose

The Senior National Employment Relations Officer (Senior NERO) is the BDA's senior operational specialist for employment relations, complex casework and regulatory support. The role ensures members receive a high-quality, consistent and legally robust Employment Relations service. As the senior team member, the role holder will deliver case work services for complex, sensitive and high-risk cases, including HCPC investigations and Employment Tribunal matters, and will support the NEROs with their cases when these are complex or volume is high.

Working closely with the Director of Trade Union & Employment Relations, the National Employment Relations Officers, other Trade Union team members and the wider BDA team, the post holder provides high quality casework to BDA Members, and supports the NERO team with complex cases providing coaching support and supervision as necessary for the NEROs. They ensure members are protected, supported and represented fairly in their employment and professional practice, and that the integrity and reputation of the dietetic profession is upheld. They will also provide support for HCPC cases in conjunction with the Professional Practice team.

The Senior NERO plays a key role contributes to Trade Union National Executive Committee priorities and supports the strategic aims of the BDA by delivering a member-centred employment relations service. The role holder will also work with the organising officer support trade union engagement and activism across the membership when required.

The Senior NERO supports quality improvement initiatives within the trade union particularly, seeking and analysing member feedback, and looking for improvement opportunities related to processes and services.

The Senior NERO also supports the BDA's EDI agenda and initiatives and supports equality representation and equality reps with relevant matters as required.

Job Context

The role holder must be committed to the ethos of the Trade Union movement and to representing members of a regulated health profession.

The role holder is expected to protect the integrity and good standing of the profession and the BDA at all times, and to uphold the Association's values.

The Senior National Employment Relations Officer is a full-time official within the BDA Trade Union, responsible for supporting, representing and protecting members in all employment and related matters. The role holder also supports the Director of Trade Union and Employment Relations in the development and implementation of employment relations strategy, policy and operational processes.



Key areas of responsibility

Leadership

Representation

- Provide senior representation for members, acting as the lead full-time trade union official for complex, sensitive and high-risk employment and professional matters across the UK.
- Provide advanced advice, guidance and training for trade union representatives and NEROs, acting as a key point of contact for member queries and complaints where required.
- Represent the BDA in high-level employer meetings, partnership forums and strategic Employment Relations (ER) discussions with NHS, Health and Social Care (HSC) and local government stakeholders.
- Act as the senior point of escalation for case work and enquiries, resolving complex issues and urgent matters requiring senior-level judgement.
- Represent members in complex cases that may involve public, political or media interest.
- Prepare concise, high-quality briefings and recommendations to inform the Director, the Trade Union National Executive Committee (TUNEC), Country Boards and relevant committees on emerging workforce, ER and professional issues.
- Contribute to national lobbying, influencing and policy work on employment relations matters, ensuring the BDA's position is clear, evidence-based and aligned with strategic priorities.
- Act as advisory lead for designated employment relations areas (e.g. health and safety, equality or training), producing relevant guidance and materials.
- Provide training, mentoring and capability development for workplace representatives and colleagues to support consistent, effective member representation.
- Maintaining up to date and accurate records of case work in line with BDA processes.
- Working with the Director to seek appropriate legal support for members when appropriate.

Relationship and Communication

- Build and maintain strong working relationships with BDA workplace representatives, fellow trade union officials, senior NHS/HSC HR and ER leaders, and other key stakeholders across all four nations.
- Act as a senior contact with external organisations as designated by the Director, representing the BDA in high-level discussions on employment relations, workforce issues and regulatory matters.
- Provide senior input and guidance at relevant BDA and trade union meetings, including TUNEC, the Annual Rep Conference, employment relations forums and BDA EDI Committee.
- Provide secretariat and expert support to national employment relations committees, sub-groups and task-and-finish groups, including drafting agendas, preparing papers and ensuring delivery of agreed actions as required.
- Lead or contribute to cross-team projects supporting the Trade Union function and the wider BDA strategic plan.
- Prepare clear, high-quality articles, briefings and guidance to inform members, strengthen understanding of employment rights and raise the profile of the BDA's trade union activity.
- Translate complex employment and regulatory issues into accessible guidance that supports members' understanding of their terms, conditions and workplace rights.



Initiative and Independence

- Draft clear, high-quality briefings, guidance, consultation responses and technical materials on complex employment relations and regulatory matters.
- Represent the BDA as a senior official at national groups, forums and partnership meetings, articulating the BDA's position confidently and professionally.
- Lead collective bargaining and negotiation activity where delegated, engaging with employers, government bodies and sector partners on pay, terms and conditions.
- Exercise sound senior judgement on complex employment law, contractual and regulatory issues, making decisions that directly affect members' terms, conditions and professional standing.
- Analyse complex or incomplete information, identifying key issues, risks and options, and providing balanced, evidence-based recommendations.
- Apply employment law, trade union legislation and public-sector terms and conditions independently, including recognising nation-specific legislative and policy differences, operating with a high degree of autonomy.

Role Dimensions**Knowledge**

The role requires a strong and up-to-date understanding of employment law, trade union legislation, pay and reward structures (especially Agenda for Change), and other workforce frameworks affecting members across the UK. The post holder must be able to interpret employment data, research, proposals and policy statements from the National Health Service (NHS), Health and Social Care (HSC) and other employers for strategic, operational and forecasting purposes.

Impact on Reputational Risk

The role involves close working with members, workplace representatives, employers, and occasionally government officials. The post holder must build constructive relationships while ensuring the BDA's priorities, strategy and member interests are promoted confidently and professionally. The role carries significant reputational implications, requiring discretion, diplomacy and sound judgement at all times.

Work complexity and judgement

The role regularly involves situations requiring detailed knowledge of employment law, public-sector terms and conditions, and professional regulation. The post holder must exercise sound judgement in high-pressure environments such as disciplinary hearings.

The role holder must be able to manage confidential and emotive matters effectively, support members in situations with long-term career implications, and balance competing priorities while working under tight deadlines. The role involves a significant degree of autonomous working.

Freedom to make decisions

The role holder is required to make informed decisions in negotiation forums, formal hearings and high-stakes casework situations. They must operate with a high level of professional autonomy within the framework set by the Director of Trade Union and Employment Relations.



People Management and leadership

While the role has no direct line management responsibilities, the post holder provides leadership, guidance and support to workplace representatives and NERO colleagues, offering expert advice and direction on complex employment relations matters.

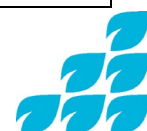
Money and resources

No budget responsibility.

Emotional Impact

The role frequently involves supporting members in highly charged, sensitive and emotionally complex situations. Members may be experiencing significant distress due to employment disputes, financial implications, or risks to their professional standing, and may present in a heightened or agitated state. The role holder must manage these interactions with professionalism, empathy and resilience, often outside standard working hours and across multiple communication channels, including in person, by telephone and via email.

Person Specification		
Category	Essential	Desirable
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent influencing and negotiation skills • Excellent influencing, advocacy and negotiation skills. • Excellent presentation skills and confidence working with staff, members, employers and external partners. • Excellent listening and communication skills. • Ability to analyse complex information quickly and make sound, balanced judgements. • Strong problem-solving skills, with the ability to resolve developing or sensitive situations. • Ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines and manage competing priorities. • Emotional resilience and the ability to support individuals in distressing or high-stakes situations. • Ability to work independently, remotely and proactively, while contributing to a wider team. • Ability to motivate, mentor and guide workplace representatives. • Strong organisational skills, including coordinating complex activities and managing multiple cases. • High level of discretion and the ability to handle confidential information responsibly. • Ability to remain calm and professional in pressured or contentious environments. • Developed investigative skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling skills



Person Specification		
Category	Essential	Desirable
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility, adaptability and the ability to innovate. Project management skills. 	
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant experience working within a trade union environment or equivalent employment relations setting. Experience of representing members in discrimination and equality related cases. Direct experience representing members in complex casework, including dismissal, discrimination and Employment Tribunal processes. Experience of complex situations involving two or more members who are on different sides of an issue. Experience of interpreting and applying employment policies, procedures and contractual provisions. Thorough and current experience of UK employment law. Experience leading, supporting or working alongside lay representatives in a trade union context. Demonstrated ability to make complex judgements based on employment and national legislation. Experience motivating, supporting and developing members or representatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience within the NHS or wider health and social care system.
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong working knowledge of employment law and practice, ideally within a trade union setting. Understanding of equalities legislation and its application to employment and workforce matters. Up-to-date knowledge of employment legislation, NHS policy frameworks and national agreements across the UK. Commitment to maintaining and developing professional knowledge. Awareness of professional and practice issues affecting dietitians and how these influence employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training qualifications or equivalent experience. Formal qualifications or training in employment law, industrial relations or a related field. Knowledge of agenda for Change Knowledge of the roles of Equality and Learning Representatives within the trade union movement. Degree-level qualification. Knowledge of the dietetic profession. Understanding of the work and processes of Employment Tribunals.



Employment Benefits

- Pension Scheme (employer 12% contribution)
- Flexible Working Policy
- THRIVE Accreditation Staff Well being Group
- Parental Leave arrangements
- 'Cash Back' Healthcare and Healthcare Scheme
- All positions subject to 6 months probationary period, statutory sick pay during this period
- Sickness Benefits – after successful probationary period
- Trade Union Recognition- GMB
- 30 days Holidays per annum (1 to be taken last working day before Christmas and 3 to be taken between Christmas and New Year, this is for full time, will be pro-rata'd for part time employee)
- Staff Development opportunities

Changes

This is a description of the job as it is presently constituted. It is the practice of the British Dietetic Association to examine job descriptions from time to time and to update them to ensure they relate to the job as then being performed, or to incorporate whatever changes are being proposed. This will be conducted in consultation with you.

This job description is supported by annual objectives and performance standards to provide an indication of the level of performance expected from the role.

Signed by
Job holder

Date

Signed by

Date

