



**RMT**

**EQUALITY  
AUDIT**



[rmt.org.uk](http://rmt.org.uk)

# INTRODUCTION

At the Black and Ethnic Minority Members' Conference 2018 a resolution was passed entitled "Equality Impact Assessment". It asked for the RMT leadership to look at the impact of not having an allocated seat for a BEM member on the NEC on our BEM membership since the establishment of our B&EMM Advisory Committee. In trying to answer the question, this has started the discussion as to what do we know about our membership? Not just our BEM members but the other "equality" groups too (ie those with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 such as women, disabled workers, LGBT+, and young members). What can we tell from the data we have?

I believe this has presented a challenge to the union as to what and how we record the data about our membership, particularly in regards to how we can analyse the figures in any meaningful way. Not only do we need to look at our membership, but the activity levels of our equality groups and how they are represented throughout the ranks of the union - our activists and officers should be as diverse as the membership we represent.

I hope by sharing these figures with our advisory committees we can engage with all representatives to look at who is active and how we are encouraging the involvement of all equality groups within the union. Feedback is requested to this exercise as equality monitoring is a key part of our organising strategy.



Mick Cash  
General Secretary, September 2019

## THE DIFFICULTY WITH DATA

First of all, there must be a health warning about the figures we have. They are only as good as the information we hold and there are many members who have not provided any description of themselves in regards to racial/ethnic identity. These figures are therefore not accurate, but they have provided us with an overall picture.

## TUC EQUALITY AUDITS

The fact that we have some figures to hand which have provided us with a basis to start from is due to the TUC. At the 2001 TUC Congress, unions agreed to change the TUC's rules so that all affiliates had to demonstrate a commitment to promoting equality. This was to be done through adding new clauses to their rule books and to regularly report back to Congress on what they were doing to advance equality. The RMT incorporated these rules in Rule 1 (4) in the Objects of the union, and has participated in all the TUC equality audits. A summary of the data provided is as below:

### TUC EQUALITY AUDITS

Audit year	Audit description	B&EMM Membership	%	Women Membership	%	Young	%	LGBT+	Disabled	Total Membership
2003	General	5,840	9%	6,696	10.4%	4,824	–	–	–	64,421
2005	Collective bargaining	7,305	10.2%	7,534	10.5%	–	–	–	–	71,544
2007	Other activities	6,724	8.9%	8,641	11.5%	10,881*	–	–	–	75,136
2009	Collective bargaining	–	13%	–	12%	6.5%*	–	–	–	–
2011	Other activities	8,422	11%	9,560	12.4%	10,990	14.3%	–	–	76,844
2012	Collective bargaining	–	14%	–	13%	5%*	–	–	–	–
2014	Other activities	6,149	7.8%	10,073	12.7%	8,085	10.2%	–	–	79,341
2016**	Collective bargaining	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2018	Other activities	13,300	16.5%	12,600	15.7%	11,000	13.7%	–	–	80,400
End of 2018										82,366

\*The definition of “young” changes \*\*No figures were requested at all for 2016 audit

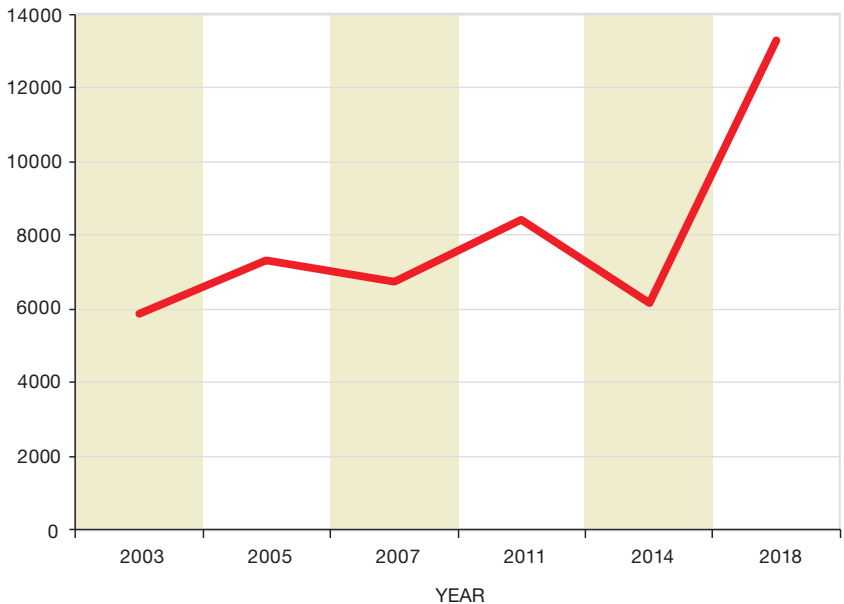
Note: Some figures were not requested or were not available.

## B&EM MEMBERSHIP

The Black and Ethnic Minority Members' Advisory Committee was established in 1993. It arose as one of the recommendations from the Race Relations Commission investigation into the union's failure to legally challenge racial discrimination on behalf of eight asian railway guards who wished to be train drivers at Paddington station. At this time it was also agreed to add an ethnic indicator on the membership form. By participating in the TUC equality audit since its inception, the union has a means to review our B&EM membership which shows a significant increase over the past 15 years.

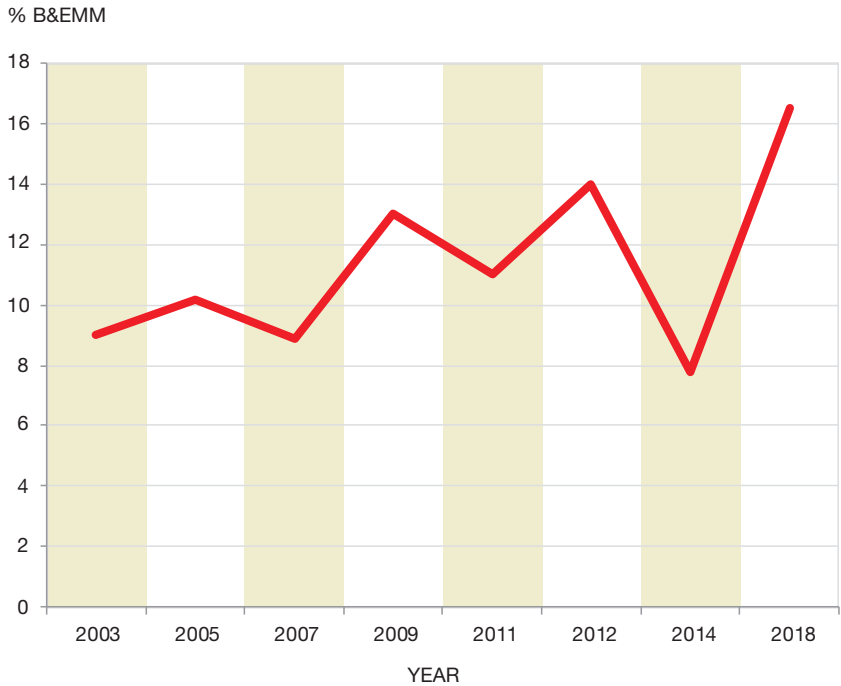
### B&EM MEMBERSHIP

No. of B&EM  
members



The purpose of the TUC audit was to make unions account as to how they were improving in regards to representing groups such as B&EMM and women. Therefore, besides the simple number of B&EM members, this number had to be considered as a percentage of the overall membership. This is shown as below:

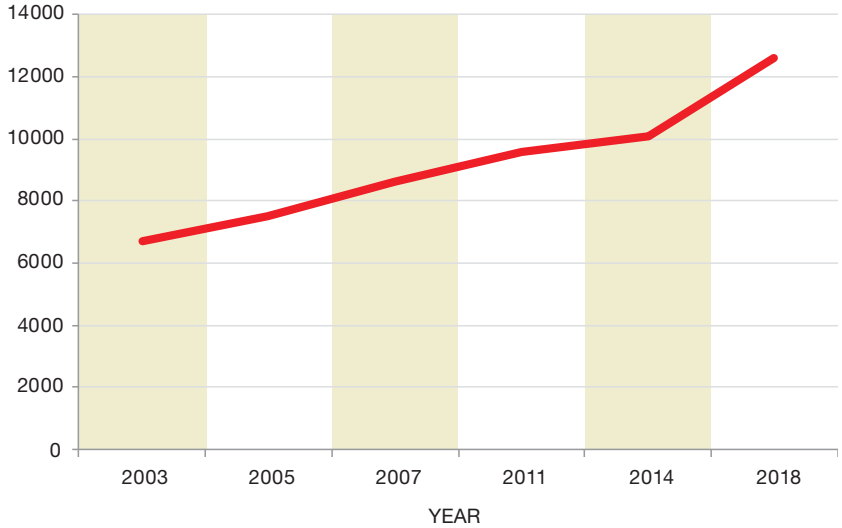
**% OF B&EMM MEMBERSHIP**



## WOMEN MEMBERS

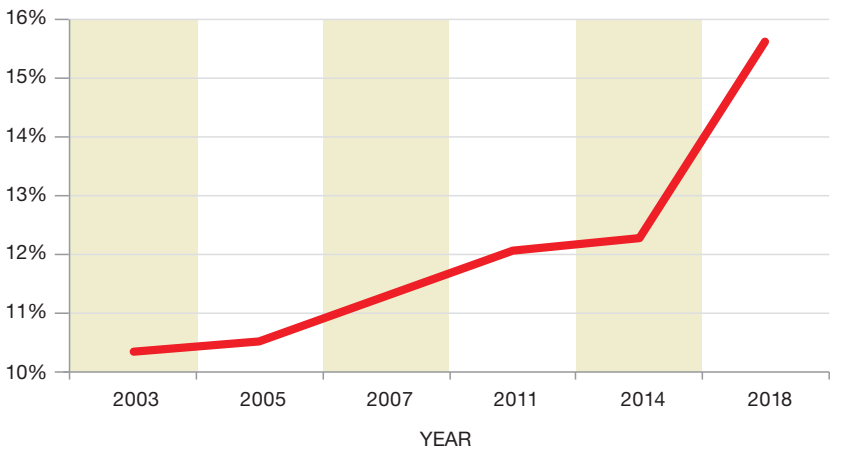
Our figures have shown a steady increase in women membership:

No. of women  
members



There is also an increase in the percentage of women in the overall membership.

% of women  
members



## YOUNG MEMBERS

The definition of “young” has changed over the years but looking at the last two audit entries over four years the percentage of young members has increased (ie. those who are up to and including 30 years.).

2014	8,085	10.2%
2018	11,000	13.7%

## LGBT+ MEMBERS

The TUC also asks for data regarding how our membership defines their sexuality besides heterosexual (eg whether they are lesbian, gay, bisexual) and how many members share that they have changed their gender from that assigned to them at birth, i.e. are transgender. The “+” sign is an umbrella term used to include all other definitions of sexuality and gender. These categories have been on the membership for a few years now, but the numbers are still very low and therefore not useful in analysis as existing members have had no need to input this information.

## DISABLED MEMBERS

The category to capture whether our members self-define as disabled has just been added to the membership form. Again it will take time for more members to indicate whether or not they are disabled for us to have a better picture of this group.

## CURRENT ACTIVISM OF EQUALITY GROUPS IN RMT

Looking at the resolution that started this investigation into our data, the question was not only about the numbers of B&EM members but whether they held a position at Branch or Regional level. This is another challenge with our data. The only way we can see B&EM engagement in positions within the union is if a position has been recorded under “activity” which includes many positions, such as Branch Secretary and Health and Safety Rep, to AGM delegate and attending TUC or RMT conferences.

Obviously some members carry out a number of different activities over time and so duplicates have to be taken out and on the other hand some key activities may not be recorded at all on someone's details on the membership system.

Looking at the current position from our membership system, 6.1% of our members are "active", with activism by equality groups summarised below:

	Membership	% of membership	Activists	% of activists
RMT total (2018 year end)	82,366		5,052	
Young members	11,000	13	240	4.75
B&EM members	13,300	16	742	14.7
Women Members	12,600	15	632	12.5



## WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT ACTIVITY WITHIN THE UNION?

What these figures show us is that while our membership has increased, so has the percentage share of B&EM, women and young members within the ranks.

Taking the year end figure in 2018, taking out duplicates of activities, 5,052 members were shown as active which is 6.1% of the membership. 742 B&EM members are shown as having an activity which is 15% of all activists. Women are slightly lower with 632 activists, which is 13% of activists. Young members appear as the least active, being 5% of all activists. B&EM activity appears as a fairly consistent level pro rata to membership overall (16% of membership, and being 15% of activists).

However what must be taken into consideration is that the activities recorded on the membership system only include certain positions like Branch Secretary and attendance at conferences, but not local rep and other key activity indicators. We also know that whilst we have our first female President, we currently have no women in a Regional Officer or National Secretary/Assistant/General Secretary role or on the NEC. B&EM, LGBT+ and young members are also not represented at these levels.

## FEEDBACK

These figures have been compiled and shared to open up the debate as to the makeup of our membership, their level of activity and the diversity within our ranks.

Feedback is welcomed and will be reported back to the NEC in December.

Please send all comments to our Equal Opportunities Officer, [j.webb@rmt.org.uk](mailto:j.webb@rmt.org.uk)



[www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)

