

Everything You Wanted to Ask About Being on the Negotiating Team But Were Afraid to Ask

An Information leaflet for members of negotiating team

Congratulations, you have been elected as a member of the team to (re)negotiate your employment contract. But just what is this negotiating all about!

The aim of negotiating is to reach an agreement between the NZNO member(s) and their employer(s) on changes to the employment contract so that it can be renewed.

The negotiating team usually consists of an advocate (usually your local organiser) and one or more NZNO members whose employment is affected by the contract under negotiation.

1. What is a negotiation team?

Your job is:

- I. To bring the views/interests/issues of the affected members into the room;
- II. To act as a support/resource person for the advocate by exercising judgement based on your knowledge of members views/interests/issues in relation to the discussions occurring;
- III. To act as a communication link between members and the negotiation room;
- IV. To decide with other members of the team whether the negotiation process has gone as far as it can, and whether the outcome can be recommended to members.

2. Who can be on the negotiation team?

You must be:

- I. a financial member of NZNO
- II. be covered by the negotiations
- III. elected by those members covered by the negotiations

Depending on the size of the employer the team should be representative of the geographical spread and, if possible, of the occupations of the members on the employment contract.

3. How do you get to be a team member?

Prior to negotiations commencing, nominations are sought from the member for those interested in becoming part of the negotiating process. Generally voting on acceptance of nominees occurs in conjunction with the vote on the ratification process (refer to NZNO Rule 16). Therefore, if you feel you can provide assistance to the negotiation process it is important to have your nomination read at the appropriate time.

4. What can you do?

Cannot represent solely their own views. They must represent the views of the majority of members.

Cannot make assumptions on issues that have not been discussed with members. They can, however, make comments on these issues provided they preface their comments with a statement along the lines of “until members have had the opportunity to discuss this issue I cannot make any definitive statement but it is possible they may think”

The team will move to decide on a proposed settlement, but the final decision lies with the membership vote.

To expect the support of your colleagues and your organisation. Not to take ownership of individual members problems and/or the failures of employers to satisfy every members' wishes.

To expect the members to be informed on the processes of negotiation.

To expect the members to keep themselves informed and to make informed comment/criticism.

To expect each and every member to exercise their right to vote.