

Getting voluntary trade union recognition

When there's a dispute, a collective conciliator works with an employer and an official trade union representative to resolve it.

If a group of workers want to be formally represented by a trade union, the union must ask the employer for union recognition.

Acas collective conciliators can help a trade union and an employer:

- agree voluntary recognition
- identify the bargaining unit – this is the group of workers represented by a trade union
- carry out membership checks to find out the number of union members within a bargaining unit
- conduct a ballot to find out how many employees within the bargaining unit agree to trade union recognition

If a trade union does not get voluntary recognition, they can apply to the [Central Arbitration Committee \(CAC\) on GOV.UK](#) for statutory recognition.

Recognition agreements

When an employer and a trade union agree to voluntary recognition, a collective conciliator can help the parties to write a recognition agreement.

A recognition agreement can include for example, the:

- bargaining unit – the group of workers covered
- scope of the negotiations – pay, hours, annual leave
- facility time – time off for union duties
- dispute resolution procedure

Find out more about:

- voluntary trade union recognition – [contact the Training and Customer Services Team](#)
- [applying for statutory trade union recognition on GOV.UK](#)