

Meet your new regional director

As part of Community's modernisation programme, which will bring many benefits to members, it has created a new Board to manage and run the Union. A new structure has been set up and four regional directors have been appointed to oversee the Union's activities across the country. They will strategically manage their regions, develop relationships with members and see to it that union services are provided efficiently and promptly in our usual friendly way. Essentially they will spearhead the drive for growth to make our union stronger than ever and all of us stronger together.



The new Board from left to right: Carol Hammond, Personnel and Board Administration Manager, Roy Rickhuss, National Secretary, Peter Crowe, Deputy General Secretary, Michael Leahy, General Secretary, Joe Mann, National Secretary and Sarah Wold, Director of Finance.



Regional Director: **Christine Hardacre**

Region: **East Midlands, London and South East of England**

Offices in: **Leicester, Northampton and London**

Christine joined our union 10 years ago as a member of the Organising Academy and rose to become Community's Head of Organising before taking maternity leave. Now she is back to face this big new challenge.

'I'm very excited,' she says, 'but I'm also very aware that it's important that we drive the union forward. It's a responsibility I take very seriously. I'll be working with membership liaison managers and support staff. Union activists will play a very important part in the union's development and I'm looking forward to working with them, too. In fact, I want to encourage all members to become as active as they want to be. For example, one idea might be to have experienced reps mentoring new and young reps.'

'But most importantly I want to meet members, especially reps, to hear their views and ideas on our strategy for growth. Their opinions are absolutely vital. I am extremely optimistic about the future. All the improvements we are bringing in will put us ahead of other unions – once again Community is leading the way. We've got to ensure that everything we do for members is of the very best quality.'



Regional Director: **Steve Stacey**

Region: **Yorkshire and Humberside, North West England and North Wales**

Offices in: **Rotherham and Oldham**

'Growth is a priority,' Steve says, 'as Community has many members who work in industries that are either contracting, such as textiles, or are employing fewer people, like steel. We're going to need the enthusiasm and support of all our members to tackle this challenge,' Steve declares. 'We're not only going for new sites but there is work to be done in maximising membership in plants where we already have members. It's also vital that we develop links and partnerships with organisations in the third sector, such as charities and various groups responsible for a multitude of projects.'

Steve is determined to continue to reach out to young people. For many years he has been going into schools and colleges to tell young people about the benefits of union membership. 'But you know, it's a heck of a job to show them that unions are not all about strikes,' he adds. 'Of course, their interest is very often about issues such as the environment and we can show that Community is active in these areas of concern.'

Steve believes that the improved benefits that the union is currently bringing to members will enable members to see what good value for money they get from their union subs. In the USA and Scandinavia, union members pay much more for considerably less.

'I'm very optimistic about the future,' Steve adds, 'and I believe that Community will go from strength to strength.' Steve will continue to be based mainly at the Rotherham office, and as soon as possible he intends to meet members, officials and representatives of other labour-related bodies.



Regional Director: **Heather Meldrum**

Region: **Scotland and Northern Ireland and North East England**

Offices in: **Middlesbrough and Motherwell**

Like Christine, Heather too was a member of the Organising Academy. 'It was great. Our union was in the forefront then as we are today,' she explains.

In January this year she was seconded to a small project team to examine every part of the union to see what improvements could be made. The team's work formed the basis of the modernisation programme that Community has now put into operation. 'It was a fantastic challenge,' she says, 'as is my new role.'

Heather's first task is to get to know members in her regions. 'I want to know how our union is working not only in the workplace but in the communities, too. I want to make contact with local voluntary organisations and with other groups who share our values so we can work together in real partnership. Already we have received indications that voluntary organisations love to work with us. It will be very beneficial for our long-term future. For instance, if we get into difficulties with a company it will soon become obvious to that firm that they are engaged not just with the union but with the community, too. But right now growth is the absolute priority. We will work closely with the union's organising department.'

'I can't wait to meet our members in all parts of our regions and I'm sure that together we can take our union forward and see it prosper and grow.'



Regional Director: **Jenny Smith**

Region: **West Midlands, South Wales and the South West of England**

Offices in: **Cardiff and Kidderminster, and a sub-office in Somerset**

Jenny has huge experience working in the trade union movement – at one time she worked with transport union leader Bill Morris – and also in the Labour Party. During the last two general elections she worked on the trade union co-ordinating unit and undertook the political fund ballot for 22 unions. Now she is delighted to be working with Community.

Jenny wants to review her regions to see how recruitment and retention is going and how services for members can be improved still further. 'The challenge right now is to bring everyone together to implement our growth strategy, for recruitment and retention. I also want to raise Community's profile in the regions. Unions generally are having a tough time but I am very optimistic for Community although I wouldn't underestimate the scale of the task. Lots of models for recruitment have been used over recent years to differing effect but the exciting thing with Community is that we are now trying to put an exciting vision into practice.'

The four new directors are raring to go but they know they can't realise the union's aspirations unless they have the support of the membership.