

Redefining Public Sector Unionism

UNISON and the future of trade unions

Edited by Michael Terry

Routledge Research in Employment Relations



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Redefining Public Sector Unionism

As the largest and most influential trade union in the public sector, which is itself increasingly becoming the main base of British unionism, UNISON may be seen to be holding the key to the future success or failure of UK unions. Its creation was a sign of progress in a period of union despondency and decline. Its size and strength promised greater unity and effectiveness in the defence of its members' interests. Its radical governance proposals gave formal dominance to women, the largest membership category, and promised effective representation to a myriad other groups. Its rules and structures stressed union responsibility for the protection and improvement of public services as well as of public service employment, and promised new relationships with members, citizens and government.

This volume brings together a selection of contributions from expert academics and leading figures of the union itself, wherein the achievements and failures of UNISON since its creation in 1993, and the challenges it will face in the future, are scrutinised. In so doing, this work highlights the ways in which British public sector unionism in general, and trade unionism more widely, may develop, and will help deepen our understanding of the nature of modern trade unionism in the twenty-first century.

Michael Terry is Professor of Industrial Relations at the Industrial Relations Research Unit, Warwick University.

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Michael Terry



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