

DEVON, CORNWALL & WESSEX BRANCH REPORT

2nd November 2025 • AGM

Firstly, we want to thank members who have given their time to serve on the Branch Committee this year: Sarah McCourt (Chair); Wanda Blair (Secretary); Mike Terry (Campaigns Officer); Sarah McCourt (Treasurer); Tank Sherman (Variety Officer); Enna Michaels (Equality & Diversity Officer), Vanessa Goodwright, David Whitfield and L A Taylor.

Focus Points

Riviera Film Festival Recruiting New Members: Vanessa, Tank and Mike spent a day volunteering at the Riviera Film Festival providing information about Equity and the Branch. This continues our work raising awareness of the importance of fair pay for performers in the local film industry.

Wessex: Mike and Tank have been engaged with welcoming members in Wessex to the branch and working with them to gain a sense of needs and potential meeting places in the area, including a trip to Bridport to organise our first in person meeting and workshop in Wessex.

Online Playreading Sessions: Sarah ran three online playreading sessions which were attended by members from the Devon, Cornwall and Wessex regions, enabling members across the whole branch to meet up.

Motions & Annual Conference

The branch passed two motions that went to and were passed at Council. These were

The Equity Medical Role-Play Best Practice Guide published on the Equity website has already raised the profile and role of the union to both members and non-members undertaking these specialist roles. However sadly, despite best endeavours, we have not seen many agencies or institutions adopting them and our members report that they continue to see a stagnation of pay rates, and other issues.

The Devon, Cornwall and Wessex branch asks Equity to:

- 1. Set up and implement a communication strategy, including print materials, to promote the Best Practice Guide and the role of the union*
- 2. Develop and implement an industrial strategy for union staff and activists to engage with institutions and agencies to increase the adoption of the guidance.*

And

The Devon, Cornwall and Wessex branch commends the Women's Committee for developing the Equity4Women Toolkit and believes Equity should integrate its principles into industrial agreements and guidance to better support members, particularly those experiencing middle-age changes.

These changes impact employability and expose the persistent lack of opportunities for women and non-binary people in this demographic. With diversity among young performers threatened by course closures and socio-economic barriers, retaining mid-career diversity is essential to ensure role models for future generations.

The Devon, Cornwall and Wessex branch calls on Equity to:

1. *Ensure industrial committees continue to consult Equalities Committees when formulating claims to address discrimination and equal opportunities.*
2. *Organise a hybrid roundtable event for committee chairs and Equity officials to develop a strategic industrial agenda.*
3. *Support all committees in both writing and maintaining industry-specific guidance, ensuring accessibility through digital and print resources.*
4. *Strengthen engagement with the wider trade union movement through the TUC, STUC, TUC Cymru and ICTU, and regional TUC's and trades councils, facilitating collaboration with branches and committees to organise members around this industrial strategy.*

Equity must take decisive action to create a more inclusive and equitable industry.

Joan Beveridge represented Devon, Cornwall & Wessex at the Equity Annual Conference in Derry.

Guest Speakers and Workshops

We have been fortunate to hear from some amazing Guest Speakers this year:

Jean Rogers and Elaine Stirrat spoke about the Equity Women's Committee and the Women's Toolkit.

Dave Richey facilitated two improvisation workshops for members in Bridport and Saltash.

Looking Ahead

We look forward to welcoming the new committee who will take the branch forward for the next two years.