



**2015**  
**Courses for**  
**all South West**  
**UNISON Activists**



## Introduction



As the new Co-Chairs of the Development and Organising Committee we were delighted to be asked to write the introduction to the UNISON South West 2015 Activists Education Programme. Our Committee now has responsibility for Education and Training and as such we are very keen to ensure learning initiatives are developed and promoted within the region.



We recognise that our activists have had to deal with considerable challenges over the last few years from the governments ongoing austerity agenda with cuts to funding and services throughout the public sector. From redundancies to outsourcing and cuts to terms and conditions our workplace representatives have had to deal with these challenges on a daily basis. We value all this hard work which we recognise is in addition to the normal casework and their day jobs.

Education and training is key to the union supporting our activists and therefore, we look to devise programmes of learning that actively support them. In addition to the normal stewards and branch officer training this year we continue to develop the new stewards pathways which has emphasis on providing short targeted courses for areas of development.

These training opportunities will not only help boost your confidence and your skills but they also cover key areas of knowledge including grievances, disciplinaries and bargaining. It is also recognised that we need to look after those that look after others so there is even a course on understanding and developing your own personal resilience. The stewards pathways are a really important part of your ongoing training and development so please take the opportunity to look through this booklet and book yourself on to these courses.

Enjoy the courses and we hope to see you at some point in 2015!

**Kevin Judd/Darienne Flemington**

Co-Chairs Development and Organising Committee

# Courses for Activists

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## Courses that help develop workplace representatives

### Programme of Learning

This programme of learning has been designed for newly elected and less experienced UNISON stewards organising in the workplace. As a steward you are a vital link in the union chain and have an important role to play in organising members at local level.

UNISON'S ability to support and represent its members with their employer is very much dependent upon the strength of membership organisation. The union is more likely to get good results where it has strong membership organisation. Strong membership organisation is based on sound organising principles.

Over the past year, in conjunction with branches and organisers, we have developed the following programme of learning for all our stewards.

### The Organising Steward – 5 days

#### *What will I learn?*

The course aims to develop your skills, knowledge and confidence to enable you to carry out the role of a steward in UNISON, including to:

- understand the role of an organising union in public services
- recognise the importance of equalities in UNISON
- work with members to tackle issues in the workplace

- work with members in resolving cases
- know where and when to seek advice and guidance
- understand how procedures work in practice
- handle grievance and disciplinary and similar types of cases as the representative of UNISON members within your workplace
- be certified as competent to accompany members at a disciplinary and grievance hearing in order to comply with The Employment Relations Act 1999
- understand the broader roles in which UNISON operates, including internationally.

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

Bristol UNISON Office Friday's	Exeter UNISON Office Thursday's	Swindon New College Monday's
30 January 6, 13, 27 February 6 March	29, January, 5, 12 & 26 February 5 March	19, 26 January 2, 9, 23 February
Friday's	Thursday's	Wednesday's
24 April 1, 8, 15, 22 May	23, 30 April, 7, 14, 21 May	22, 29 April, 6, 13, 20 May
Friday's	Thursday's	Wednesday's
25 September 2, 9, 16 & 23 October	24 September 1, 8, 15, 22 October	23, 30 September 7, 14, 21 October
Taunton UNISON Office Wednesday's	Truro Cornwall County Branch Office Thursday's	Wareham UNISON Office Wednesday's
28 January 4, 11 & 25 February 4 March	29, January, 5, 12 & 26 February 5 March	28 January 4, 11 & 25 February 4 March
Wednesday's	Thursday's	Wednesday's
22, 29 April, 6, 13, 20 May	23, 30 April, 7, 14, 21 May	22, 29 April, 6, 13, 20 May
Wednesday's	Thursday's	Wednesday's
23, 30 September 7, 14, 21 October	24 September 1, 8, 15, 22 October	23, 30 September 7, 14, 21 October





# Stewards Pathways

In the South West Region we have developed a specific learning pathway for our workplace stewards. It consists of a combination of core training, known as the Organising Steward (see pages 3 and 4), which takes place over 5 consecutive weeks followed by 5 further modules:



Kay MacKenzie  
Education Officer

1. Communicating with Members
2. Further Representation Skills
3. Making Equalities Central to your Practice
4. Introduction to Bargaining
5. Understanding and Developing Personal Resilience

See page 8 for dates and venues.

The good thing is that this means, as a steward you have a very clear programme of development which will keep you up to date with any new changes in procedure or law. You can also take your time and use these sessions to reflect on what has been happening in your new UNISON role.

Many stewards find it helpful to look through the dates and then book the core training (The Organising Steward) along with dates for the 5 other modules. It may be that you are booking at least 18 months in advance but this will help your Education Coordinator secure paid time off for this training.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ring or e-mail the Education and Equalities Team on 01823 285314 or [unionsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unionsweducation@unison.co.uk) and we will try and help.

Please see overleaf information on each of the courses.

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for these courses



## **Module 1: Communicating with Members**

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This is a one-day course aimed at helping stewards communicate effectively with members from an organising perspective. It provides an opportunity to develop skills in a variety of communication methods including starting conversations, managing discussions, listening to members' views and using emails and other media.

## **Module 2: Further Representation Skills**

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The course reinforces some approaches and procedures introduced in the 5 day Stewards course and explores in more detail:

- process for identifying needs and exploring what is and isn't a case
- recap on sources of information especially the ACAS code
- preparing for a grievance and a capability case
- planning and building a case including interviewing witnesses
- possible outcomes from cases
- building confidence, getting organised and looking after yourself

## **Module 3: Making Equality Central to your Practice**

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This course covers UNISON's commitment to reflecting the diversity of its members and an introduction to equality legislation. It is designed to raise awareness of potential discrimination in the workplace.

The course will help participants to:

- review UNISON's rules in relation to proportionality, fair representation and self-organisation
- have an understanding of the development of anti-discrimination legislation, culminating in the Equality Act 2010

- have an understanding of the definitions of direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and equal pay
- recognise when discrimination is taking place in the workplace
- have a view of the coalition government's approach to amending the legislation
- understand how the Public Sector Equality Duty could be of use in improving members' terms and conditions at work
- have an awareness of legislation relating to work and family life

## **Module 4: Introduction to Bargaining**

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The course focuses on talking to employers as an essential part of the steward's role and stresses the importance of preparation and practice.

The course aims to develop your skills, knowledge and will help stewards to:

- understand what negotiating is
- understand how to negotiate and appreciate different management styles
- develop an effective negotiating team
- develop casework skills
- prepare a claim with bargaining information
- learn how to respond to tactics during negotiations

## **Module 5: Understanding and Developing Personal Resilience**

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Mental health and how we feel affects every part of our lives and everyone can experience difficult or "bad" days when we might feel down, worried or upset. However there are lots of things we can do to look after our mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The course will help you to:

- manage personal boundaries in dealing with stress and anxiety
- develop self awareness and meaningful self-management
- explore ways of looking after yourself whilst meeting the demands of being a union representative
- find practical ways of managing and dealing with problems
- recognise symptoms of stress and anxiety and how they can affect individuals
- find self management techniques
- recognise the importance and value of having some "me time", topping up your tank and having fun!

## ***Stewards Pathways - Venues and dates***

### ***For Stewards undertaking Organising Stewards Training in September 2014 and January 2015***

- **Communicating with Members**  
Wednesday 10 June: Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Truro, Wareham
- **Further Representation Skills**  
Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 September: Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Truro, Wareham
- **Making Equalities Central to Your Practice**  
Tuesday 28 October: Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Truro, Wareham
- **Introduction to Bargaining**  
Tuesday 25 November: Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Truro, Wareham
- **Understanding and Developing Personal Resilience**  
Wednesday 2 March 2016: Bristol  
Wednesday 9 March 2016: Taunton  
Wednesday 16 March 2016: Wareham  
Wednesday 23 March 2016: Truro

### ***For Stewards undertaking Organising Stewards Training in April 2015***

- **Communicating with Members**  
Wednesday 16 September: Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Truro, Wareham
- **Further Representation Skills**  
Wednesday 11 & Thursday 12 November: Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Truro, Wareham
- **Making Equalities Central to Your Practice**  
Wednesday 13 January 2016: Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Truro, Wareham
- **Introduction to Bargaining**  
Thursday 18 February 2016: Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Truro, Wareham
- **Understanding and Developing Personal Resilience**  
Wednesday 1 June 2016: Taunton  
Wednesday 8 June 2016: Bristol  
Wednesday 15 June 2016: Wareham  
Wednesday 22 June 2016: Truro



## Health & Safety Stage One – TUC 10 day course

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This course is for newly appointed and untrained Health & Safety Representatives and covers the basic training you need. It is designed to help you build the skills, knowledge and confidence you need to carry out the role. The training is scheduled to run one day a week for 10 weeks.

Please apply for this course using the application form in the South West TUC Education brochure. Copies of this are sent to each Branch.

***For further details contact your relevant TUC Centre, details below or go to their website [www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)***

### **Bath/Bristol/Taunton/ /Weston-Super-Mare/ Yeovil**

Trade Union Education, Business Enterprise  
Centre  
South West Skills Campus  
Weston College, Locking Road  
Weston-Super-Mare  
Tel: 01934 411411  
Email: TUEdadmin@weston.ac.uk  
Website: [www.westoncollege.ac.uk](http://www.westoncollege.ac.uk)

### **Cheltenham/Gloucester/Swindon**

Trade Union Studies Centre  
New College, New College Drive  
Swindon SN3 1AH  
Tel: 01793 732 848  
Email: [tustudies@newcollege.ac.uk](mailto:tustudies@newcollege.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.newcollege.ac.uk](http://www.newcollege.ac.uk)

### **Cornwall/Exeter/Plymouth**

Trade Union Studies Centre  
City College Plymouth, Goschen Centre  
Saltash Road, Keyham  
Plymouth PL2 2DP  
Tel: 01752 305 020  
Email: [jterry@cityplym.ac.uk](mailto:jterry@cityplym.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.cityplym.ac.uk](http://www.cityplym.ac.uk)

### **Dorset**

South West TUC  
Church House,  
Church Road, Filton,  
Bristol,  
BS34 7BD  
Tel: 0117 9470521  
email: [tucedsw@tuc.org.uk](mailto:tucedsw@tuc.org.uk)





## **Union Learning Representative (ULR) 3 days**

***Have you always wanted to get involved in the union but did not want to take up the usual role of shop steward?***

Then the Union Learning Representative role could be what you are looking for. This is a way of being involved but through a completely different route. This role is part of the UNISON branch and is about enabling colleagues to get back into learning. The role also involves you acting as a sign post to point people in the right direction for help or advice in other avenues of learning.

As a Union Learning Representative you can use a variety of skills and develop the role at your own pace. You will become part of the Branch Education Team within your local Branch working closely with the Education Co-ordinator/Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator.

As a Union Learning Representative (ULR) you may do some of the following:

- attend local employer education groups
- run information sessions and publicise UNISON courses
- take part in induction processes making new starters aware of learning opportunities
- run various information stalls with the employer to publicise training opportunities alongside them
- take an active part in Adult Learners Week and Learning @ Work Day

You may also be involved in recruiting new members and learners to attend workplace partnership courses.

ULR Training is for 3 days, normally one day a week over 3 weeks. You will need to attend all 3 days of this training.

***Venue and Dates:*** To be confirmed – contact the Education and Equalities team at e-mail: [unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314

***Fee:*** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Education Network Day

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### **Who is it for?**

Union Learning Representatives (ULRs), Life Long Learning Co-ordinators, Education Co-ordinators/Lay Tutors

### **What are Network Days/Forums?**

They are training sessions that we run once or twice a year.

This event is a chance to receive updates on subjects such as the functional skills programme for level one and two requirements. It is a great way of keeping representatives in touch with new courses, finding out about new developments and highlights what's new on the learning front. In the past it has been used to plan events such as Adult Learners Week/Learning at Work Day. It is a day when Education Teams can suggest ways to make their roles more effective and offer examples of good practice.

It is always a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

**Venue and Date:** Taunton, Thursday 26 March

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Equality Representatives – 3 Days (non-residential)

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UNISON has been at the forefront of campaigns for equal pay, for rights at work for same sex partners and for proper protection for disabled workers. Tackling racism remains a key priority. Equality representatives can play a key role in taking our work forward in the workplace.

Equality representatives are elected by UNISON members in their “workplace” to provide advice and support on equality and discrimination issues. Day to day they are doing things like talking to members to find out if they are being treated unfairly, talking to managers to find out if they understand what they are required to do under the law and also what their own organisations policies are on equality issues. They are not expected to take on representation of discrimination cases.

Equality representatives work closely with other workplace representatives and the Branch equality co-ordinator to make our workplace fairer by promoting respect and dignity at work.

This 3 day course has proved to be always interesting and even enjoyable!  
– sign up now!

***Who is it for?***

Members and activists with an interest in equality.

***Venues and Dates:*** Taunton, Wednesday 11 to Friday 13 March

***Fee:*** There is no charge to branches for this course

## **Equalities' Network Day**

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***Who is it for?***

Branch SOG Officers (Women, LGBT, Disabled and Black members) Equality co-ordinators and Equality Reps.

***What are network days/forums?***

Network days give you the opportunity to share information about what you're doing, good equality practice in your workplace, branches and current campaigns. It is also a chance to find out about any changes/updates in equality legislation including training and speakers on specific subjects.

***Venue and Date:*** Bristol, Wednesday 7 October

***Fee:*** There is no charge to branches for this course

## **SOG Networking Day**

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This day is aimed at members who are active at branch level and **identify with self-organisation (woman, black, disabled, LGBT and/or a young member)** or active in one (or more) of the Regional Self Organised Groups or Young Members' forum.

This event aims to identify common issues that the regional Self Organised Groups (SOG's) and Young Members (YM) can jointly campaign around,



promote UNISON's Equality objective and identify ways that the SOGs and Young Members can influence the mainstream objectives and activities across the region.

Part of the day will include training around a specific issue, details of which will be confirmed nearer the time.

This is always an informative day and a great opportunity to come together.

**Venue and Date:** Taunton, Friday 24 April

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Domestic Violence and Abuse; A Trade Union Issue

- Did you know that UNISON has launched a new policy? - Domestic violence and abuse: a trade union issue
- Are you aware of how much domestic abuse goes on in your workplace?
- Do you know how domestic abuse affects victims, colleagues and managers?
- Do you know how much domestic abuse costs your organisation?
- Does your employer have a domestic abuse policy?

In the face of current austerity measures all public services are under threat and particularly those affecting vulnerable people.

Domestic violence and abuse is an equalities issue most significantly affecting women and there is overwhelming evidence that women are also most affected by austerity. Against this backcloth there are some positive signs of national political attention to the wider issue of violence against women and girls agenda.





The Regional Women's Committee have identified domestic abuse as a campaign priority this year and will launch the new UNISON guide. There will be a series of special two hour workshops throughout the region in the first quarter of the year to introduce the issues and answer questions about the full day's training in June. The issues are complex and training will provide the opportunity to reflect on them as well as explore what action you, as a trade unionist can take, including working with employers to implement a domestic abuse policy.

***Who is it for?***

All members and activists

Come and see how you might help to improve the lives of those experiencing domestic abuse in your workplace.

The training (and workshops) will be run by UNISON member Rachel Martin who had a strategic role in leading the domestic abuse partnership work in Devon since 2002. During this time she undertook significant consultation with staff to gauge the scale and impact of domestic abuse, and implemented measures to safeguard victims within her organisation.

***Venue and date:*** Taunton – Thursday 4 June

***Workshops venues and dates:***

- Taunton – Saturday 24th January (Get Active event)
- Exeter – Wednesday 18 February
- Bristol – Wednesday 25 February
- Wareham – Wednesday 18 March
- Truro – Friday 27 March

***Fee:*** There is a charge of £25 per delegate to branches for this course



# Courses that help Run, Develop and Organise your Branch

## Branch Officers Training

The Branch Officer Weekend at Croyde Bay has been a feature of the South West Activist programme for some years now. However, following your feedback regarding clashes with some National Conferences and the Tolpuddle Festival we are piloting a new way of working.

Training will take place over Friday and Saturday (all day both days) in Taunton and there will be a rolling programme starting in March. The course will include an overnight stay on the Friday.

### ***Who is it for?***

All newly elected or re-elected Branch Officers, or members interested in taking up one of these roles.

This course will help you understand:

- the structure of UNISON, its aims and objectives and how it operates
- the key duties and role of your specific post

Details of what each course will cover on the training is listed overleaf:

## Chairing Skills

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This course will help you to:

- identify the skills you need to Chair a meeting well
- feel more confident to Chair and facilitate meetings
- prepare an agenda
- write union motions and amendments
- look at ways to make union meetings more 'user friendly' and accessible

**Venue and date:** Taunton, Friday 8 May to Saturday 9 May

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course

## Communication Officers

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**What will I learn?**

- to explain UNISON's policies and provide the information members need to play an active role in their union
- to also assist in helping create a positive image for the Branch
- to show you how to produce newssheets or bulletins for distribution to your branch members

**Venue and Date:** Taunton, Friday 8 May to Saturday 9 May

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course

## Education Co-ordinators/ Lifelong Learning Co-ordinators

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This training is now run jointly as these roles either crossover or are carried out by one person.

**What will I learn?**

- how these roles have changed and how they differ
- what we mean by the Organising Challenge
- how the co-ordinators role fits into the Branch Assessments
- how to build training plans
- how to build individual training plans and maintain records



- to ensure the work of the learning reps is integrated into the branch
- to build a pro-active team

**Venue and Date:** Taunton, Friday 20 March to Saturday 21 March

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course

## Equality Co-ordinators

This course is suitable for all Equality Co-ordinators, branch Black, Disabled, Women and LGBT Officers.

### *What will I learn?*

- to understand the role
- to promote equality in the branch and workplace
- to advise on how to have a co-ordinating role among self organised groups

**Venue and date:** Taunton, Friday 20 March to Saturday 21 March

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course

## Health and Safety Officers

### *What will I learn?*

- to understand the role of the Branch Health and Safety Officer and how to promote Health and Safety
- to develop structures within your branch
- to develop skills to support Health and Safety Representatives

**Venue and date:** Taunton, Friday 27 March to Saturday 28 March

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course





## International Officers

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### **What will I learn?**

- to co-ordinate the Branch's work on international relations
- to ensure that Branch members are informed of National Policy on international matters
- to encourage members of the branch to take action and participate in International solidarity activities organised nationally or regionally
- to seek to develop an international perspective amongst members, workplace representatives and branch officers

**Venue and date:** Taunton, Friday 27 March to Saturday 28 March

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this courses

## Women's Officers

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### **What will I learn?**

This course will show how:

- women's Officers contribute to the effectiveness of the branch
- women's Officers link with the regional structures
- to access resources, including advice on harassment and discrimination
- to make useful links and gain information on campaigning issues
- to build strategies for supporting and developing Women in their branches

**Venue and date:** Taunton, Friday 17 April to Saturday 18 April

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course



## Treasurers

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### ***Who is it for?***

This course is designed for Branch Treasurers and Branch Officers who are interested in the role of branch finances. The course runs for one day and involves individual activities, group work and discussion as well as finding out information about UNISON and your branch. This course is **NOT** designed to make you into a 'financial expert' but to introduce you to some of the key issues facing the trade union and the UNISON branch.

The aims of the course will enable the Branch Treasurer to:

- identify the main duties and responsibilities of a UNISON Branch Treasurer
- to recognise the role of the Branch Treasurer in organising and supporting the branch
- understand the branch accounting cycle
- understand the role of the Branch Treasurer in budgeting and managing finances as part of the Joint Branch Assessment (JBA)
- to identify the role that branch finance plays supporting and achieving UNISON's priorities and objectives
- to recognise the role of the Branch Treasurer in organising and supporting the branch

**Venue and date:** Treasurers – Taunton, Friday 5 June to Saturday 6 June (Treasurers wishing to attend this course must have previously completed Module 1 OLBA training)

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course

## Young Members Officers – Developing Leadership Skills

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### ***What will I learn?***

The aims of this course are:

- goal setting
- maximising your time as a member (both pre and post age 27)
- speaking with confidence

**Venue and date:** Taunton, Friday 27 March to Saturday 28 March

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course



# Branch Secretaries Development Programme

This successful programme, consisting of 6 modules will be run throughout 2015.

Module 1 – ‘Changing Times’ will be run as part of the Branch Officer rolling programme see page 15.

You will be assigned a mentor as part of this programme and will need to follow all six modules.

If you have any questions please contact the Education and Equalities Team email: [unionsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unionsweducation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314.

## ***Who is it for?***

New Branch Secretaries, Assistant Branch Secretaries, Senior Branch Activists. The training consists of three modules:

## ***What will I learn?***

## **Module One: Changing Times**

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This module will help you

- develop an understanding of the Branch Secretary and Assistant Branch Secretary
- consider the role of the Branch Secretary/Assistant Branch Secretary in the current economic and political context
- to develop ideas and strategies to build strong branch organisation
- to reflect on how you lead a branch in changing times

***Venue and Dates:*** Taunton, Friday 17 April to Saturday 18 April (residential)

***Fee:*** There is a charge of £125, per delegate to branches for this training weekend

## Module Two: Managing the Branch

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This module will help you to:

- understand the standard expected of the Organising Branch in UNISON
- set targets to achieve the standard within the objectives of the union

**Venue and Dates:** Taunton, Monday 27 April to Tuesday 28 April (non-residential)

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Module Three: Organising, Representing and Bargaining

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This module will help you to:

- understand what we mean by mentoring in the UNISON context
- understand the context of a branch strategy on mentoring
- develop key mentoring skills
- develop awareness of the process of developing stewards
- agree the scope and boundaries of the role of mentors within the branch

**Venue and Dates:** Taunton, Wednesday 10 June to Thursday 11 June (non residential)

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Module Four: Strategic Campaigning

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This module takes participants through a series of steps which need to be in place to ensure effective campaigning, from analysis of branch and employer and establishing campaign networks through to the development of appropriate and effective resources.

The course aims are:

- to introduce the key ideas of strategic campaigning
- to enable participants to put into practice the strategic campaign approach and apply it to their own campaign ideas
- to develop planning skills

**Venue and Dates:** Taunton, Wednesday 2 September and Thursday 3 September (non residential)

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Module 5: Mentoring in the Branch

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The aims of the module are:

- to gain an understanding of what mentoring is
- to understand the context of a regional or branch strategy on mentoring
- to develop key mentoring skills including listening and questioning
- to develop awareness of the process of developing stewards
- to agree the scope and boundaries of the role of mentors within the branch (or other group)

**Venue and Dates:** Taunton, Thursday 8 October and Friday 9 October (non residential)

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Module 6: Leadership in the Branch

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This module aims to:

- explore what it means to be a branch and regional leader in UNISON
- recognise your own style of leadership and what that means for you and your branch
- to examine what it means to be a leader in the current economic context
- to discuss how cultural change within the union impacts on our role as leaders
- look at how decisions are made in UNISON and how the union's objectives and priorities are agreed
- examine what happens on the regional committee you sit on in order to identify how to engage more effectively and improve participation
- help develop participants' skills and influence in the union, including through networking, asking questions and supporting and developing others.

**Venue and Dates:** Taunton, Tuesday 3 November and Wednesday 4 November (non residential)

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Learning Outcomes

Following the courses participants will be able to:

- understand the standard of an organising branch in UNISON and set targets to achieve the standard within the objectives of the union
- understand the timetable for achieving an annual branch framework assessments and schedule this into the activity plan for the branch year
- understand the concepts of fair representation proportionality and how to incorporate these concepts into branch plans
- develop new processes and systems in the branch to maintain support for key activists
- understand the branch finances and work with the Branch Treasurer to establish transparency in all transactions and develop protocols for budget setting and procurement.
- To enable you to give encouraging and difficult feedback to stewards, members and those in other leadership positions in the branch

## Young Members Weekend 2015 Nottingham, 15–17 May

This event brings together well over 100 UNISON young members from across the UK to find out more about the union and, more importantly, how they can play a part in the union's campaigning to defend public services and jobs and win fair pay.

It will take place against a background of unremitting attacks on public services and on young people, so one focus will be a practical campaigning activity, including approaching members of the public to get our case across.

It's a great chance to meet, work, and socialise with other young members and learn some key skills.

If you will be under 27 years of age on 17 May, ask your branch secretary about attending. Alternatively you can

get in touch with your regional young members contact by calling 0800 0857 857, or by emailing your full name, branch name, and membership number to [young.members@unison.co.uk](mailto:young.members@unison.co.uk)

Weekend costs including accommodation, meals, travel, childcare and other appropriately incurred expenses will be met by UNISON.

Please note that numbers are limited, and registering your interest does not guarantee you a place at the event.

***Why not take a look at the national website page for young members to find out how you can become involved and what UNISON has to offer its young members***

***[www.unison.org.uk/about/our-organisation/member-groups/young-members/](http://www.unison.org.uk/about/our-organisation/member-groups/young-members/)***





## Branch Welfare Officer

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With job cuts and benefit reductions increasing the strain on household budgets and finances, our Branch Welfare Officers need more than ever to be equipped to help members overcome the difficulties they face with practical advice and support. This training will help Branch Welfare Officers (BWOs) to:

- understand their role and the confidentiality it involves.
- understand the UNISON Welfare charity structure and staff responsibilities.
- understand the application process and areas where welfare can assist members.
- develop influencing and communication skills and practice active listening.
- promote 'There for You' to managers and as a part of recruitment drives.
- practice presentation skills and to handle problems in an assertive manner
- understand the importance of promoting and publicising 'There for You'.

There are two stages to BWO training, an online e-note and a face-to-face course:

### **Stage 1: Online e-note (1 hour)**

You will need access to a computer with internet connection but no particular computer skills are needed. You can do this at your workplace, at home or in your branch office. You may wish to use earphones to avoid disturbing those around you. You don't have to complete the e-note in one go - you can exit at any point and return to where you left off when you next log in.

To register for the e-note:

- Visit <https://www.tuceducation.org.uk/course/view/php?id=938> to access the Branch Welfare Officers e-note.
- You will be asked to log into the TUC Education online site, who host this module for UNISON. Once logged in, you will be taken to the e-note page.

- If you don't have a username and password, click 'Register'.
- Complete the form, then return to <https://www.tuceducation.org.uk/course/view/php?id=938> and log in.

If you don't have access to a computer, contact 'There for you' so that other arrangements can be made for you by calling 020 7121 5620.

## **Stage 2: Two-day face-to-face course**

This course will help you develop skills and knowledge for your role. You must complete the e-note module first as you will use this information during the course. The course is delivered on a regional or cross-regional basis

**Venue and Dates:** Bristol, Tuesday 29 September and Wednesday 30 September

**Closing date for applications:** 11 August 2015

**To apply:** Download an application form or contact UNISON Learning and Organising Services, UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY. Tel: 0207 121 5116. Email: [LearningAndOrganising@unison.co.uk](mailto:LearningAndOrganising@unison.co.uk)

**Charges for nationally organised courses:** Branches will be charged a fee of £150.00 for each participant on the two day course. Accommodation, travel and care costs will be paid nationally, as well as a £10.00 per day out of pocket allowance.

**Facilitation and Dependent Care:** It is UNISON policy that no member should be deterred from applying for courses because of facilitation needs, necessary childcare or other care commitments.

**Allocation of Course Places:** To ensure the effective application of UNISON principles of Proportionality and Fair Representation, places are allocated on national courses immediately after the closing date instead of on a first-come first-served basis. If courses are oversubscribed, places are allocated on the basis of achieving Fair Representation and Proportionality, as set out in UNISON Rules, and to ensure a fair spread of participants from branches, regions and sectors where appropriate.

**Cancellation Policy:** A charge will be made for course places cancelled without good cause:

- within two weeks of the course start date: 50% of the course cost
- within one week of the course start date: 100% of the course cost.



## Discussion Leaders

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### ***Who is it for?***

This course is designed for Branch activists who wish to improve their discussion skills to help build branch organisation.

### ***Discussion leaders:***

- are a method of raising an issue with members in a structured but informal way
- are an education resource that can be used either in branch meetings or with groups of members in the workplace
- allow branch officers and activists to involve members in a structured but informal way about issues which will affect them

### ***What will I learn?***

- how to build on your existing discussion skills
- how to explore facilitation techniques
- techniques for solving problems which may arise
- how to become aware of best practice when running a discussion

### ***The point of holding a membership discussion is:***

- to inform members
- to build solidarity among members
- to involve members in the decision making process at local level
- to build the unions organising culture around workplace issues

***Venue and Date:*** To be confirmed – contact the Education and Equalities team at e-mail: [unionswededucation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unionswededucation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314

***Fee:*** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this weekend course

## Lay Tutor Training

### **Who is it for?**

This course is aimed at branch activists who want to use education methods to run organising focused branch-based training for members and activists who may have previously attended Discussion Leaders training.

### **What will I learn?**

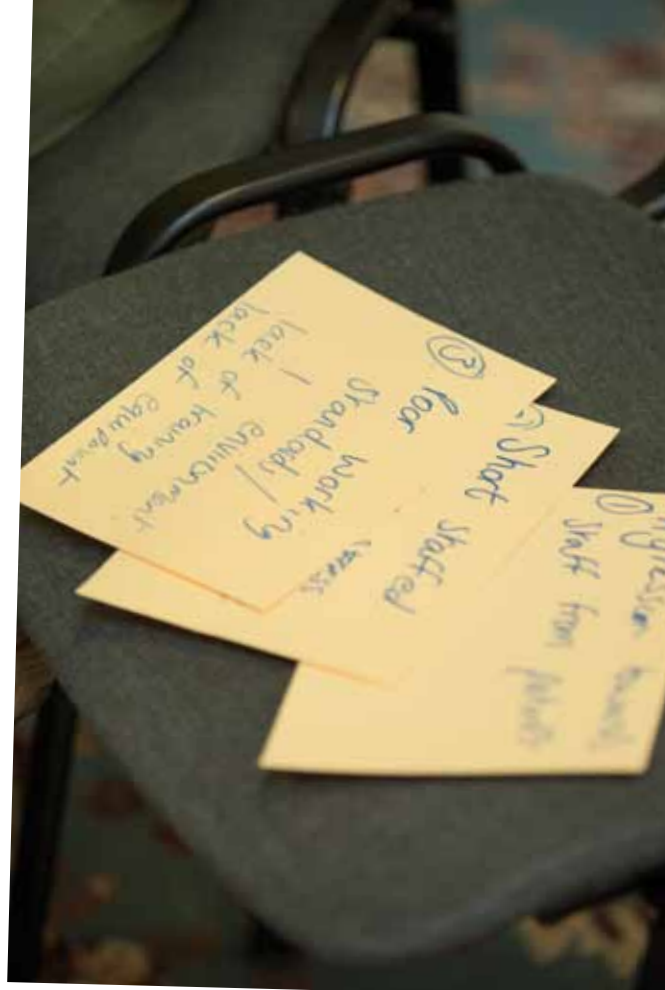
Completing this course will help you to understand:

- teaching and learning approaches for trade union education
- how to run a simple group based activity
- how to research and gather information in preparation for a simple activity
- how equality and diversity issues relate to learners' needs on courses
- how tutoring knowledge and skills can engage branch activists around union organising
- the benefits of a group learning process

**Venue and Dates:** Taunton, Monday 20 April  
Croyde, Friday 22 May to Sunday 24 May

**Participants will be required to attend the one day and weekend dates in order to complete the course**

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course



# Courses that help develop your skills when negotiating

## Bullying and Harassment

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### ***Who is it for?***

All UNISON Workplace Representatives, Health & Safety Representatives and Branch Officers.

### ***What will I learn?***

- to define and recognise bullying
- to understand how legislation applies to workplace bullying
- to develop a workplace policy on bullying at work
- to understand how bullying affects both the individual as well as the wide workplace culture

***Venue and date:*** Taunton, Thursday 19 March

***Fee:*** There is no charge to branches for this course

## Sickness Absence and Capability Procedures

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Sickness Absence Policies affect UNISON members across all sectors that UNISON represents. The current economic climate, government policies, expenditure cuts, tendering, structural changes, changing patterns of work, skill mix, the increased emphasis on individual performance and management attitudes all contribute to sickness absence levels. All too often employers introduce capability procedures and disabled members are particularly affected. This is why it is important for UNISON activists and members to learn how to tackle the increasing implementation of unfair sickness absence policies in the workplace.

### ***Who is it for?***

Activists who have some experience of dealing with sickness absence issues and who wish to understand the issues in more depth. It can also be used by those activists with less experience but who are faced with an unfair sickness absence policy and wish to know more.



### ***What will I learn?***

The course will help participants to:

- identify common problems
- identify ways to improve policies, including negotiating disability leave
- be aware of the way stress impacts on sickness levels
- practice attending a sickness monitoring interview
- be aware of equality issues
- put together an action plan for the branch

**Venue and date:** to be confirmed – contact the Education and Equalities team at e-mail: [unionsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unionsweducation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course

## **Mental Health**

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### ***Who is it for?***

The course is aimed at Stewards, H&S Reps, Equality Reps and Branch Officers, to help them deal with the increasingly common situation of employees who are diagnosed with mental health issues.

Trade unions have always been at the forefront of identifying and campaigning on issues that affect their members' health and safety. For example: asbestos, hazardous substances and Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs). So it is with mental health.

### ***What will I learn?***

The course aims to help Reps to:

- outline some commonly held perceptions about mental health
- identify some of the common signs and symptoms of poor mental health in the workplace
- discuss and explore strategies for early intervention and support for members experiencing mental ill health
- negotiate a mental well-being policy with your employer
- find strategies for coping with union-related stress and getting help and support

**Venue and date:** Bristol, Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 November

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course



## Build Your Confidence (2 days – non- residential)

### *Who is it for?*

Any UNISON member who would like to feel more confident.

This new two-day course is aimed at any UNISON member who wants to take positive steps towards building their self-confidence. The course follows a similar format to Women's Assertiveness but is a mixed course, available to men and women.

This course will help you to:

- explore issues around confidence
  - investigate your idea of a confident person
  - recognise body language and unspoken communication
- raise awareness of different behaviour types and hidden agendas
  - deal with criticism constructively
  - look to the future

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- better understand your own confidence
- identify and use confident behaviour
- communicate assertively
- plan the changes required to behave in a more confident manner
- identify development opportunities

**Venue and date:** To be confirmed – contact the Education and Equalities team at e-mail: [unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314

**Fee:** There is a charge of £50 per delegate to branches for this course

## Understanding and Developing Personal Resilience – Part 1

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### **Who is it for?**

A day's training for workplace stewards focusing on the importance of looking after yourself whilst fulfilling your roles as Unison Representatives.

### **What will I learn?**

We are living in challenging times and listening to other people's stories can take its toll on our mental health and personal wellbeing. It is important to understand what mental health is and how to look after it. This way we are all, including those we support, more able to enjoy the aspects of life meaningful to us.

Using a combination of learning styles, story and some reflective, interactive and experiential exercises – the day aims to provide you with some useful tools to help you develop self awareness and meaningful self-management. It aims to support workplace representatives in dealing with stress and anxiety and above all to recognise the importance and value of having some 'me-time', topping up your tank and having some fun!

## Understanding and Developing Personal Resilience – Part 2

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### **Who is it for?**

This is a day's workshop for workplace stewards who have attended part 1. Once again this day's training will focus on the importance of looking after yourself whilst enjoying fulfilling your roles as UNISON Representatives.

Enjoy comparing notes with other UNISON colleagues, share your experiences and learn from each other. Give yourself a day to recharge your batteries and enjoy the feeling of blue skies (even when it's cloudy). We will revisit the topic of mental health, remind ourselves of positive self management techniques and explore the importance of having strong and healthy personal boundaries.

**Venue and dates:** Part 1: Taunton, Wednesday 21 January  
Part 2: Taunton, Thursday 26 February

**Fee:** There is a charge of £25 per delegate to branches for each part of this course

## Autism Awareness

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This course is aimed at people whose employment brings them into contact with people with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Learners will benefit from the fact that the tutor team will include an adult with ASD and will therefore have the opportunity to put questions to an individual who has first-hand knowledge and experience of autism and the challenges this poses on a daily basis.

This course will:

- help individuals manage positive interaction with those with an ASD
- improve and enhance the experience for those with an ASD
- understand why ASD awareness is important not only on a personal basis but also for their respective organisations

**Venue and Date:** Taunton, Thursday 14 May  
Taunton, Thursday 15 October

**Fee:** There is a charge of £25 per delegate to branches for this course

## Deaf and Deafblind Awareness

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This half day deaf and deaf-blind awareness course is designed to enable participants to be more effective in communication when coming into contact with deaf and deafblind people through both their work and social lives.

**Venue and date:** Wareham, Thursday 5 March – morning only  
Taunton, Thursday 7 May – morning only  
Bristol, Monday 12 October – morning only

**Fee:** There is a charge of £25 per delegate to branches for this course



## Introduction to Sign Language

This half day course is designed to give people an insight into British Sign Language and on completion of this half day workshop will allow the delegate to conduct a “pleasantries” conversation.

**Venue and date:** Wareham, Thursday 5 March – afternoon only  
Taunton, Thursday 7 May – afternoon only  
Bristol, Monday 12 October – afternoon only

**Fee:** There is a charge of £25 per delegate to branches for this course

## Introduction to Mindfulness

The weekend will be both informative and experiential, enabling participants to

- gain a thorough understanding of what mindfulness is
- experience a variety of foundational mindfulness practices
- learn how to incorporate mindfulness techniques into daily life
- receive a comprehensive information pack to refer to in the future
- take home guided CDs for continuing home practice

Learning mindfulness is a relaxing and enjoyable experience, and provides people with the skills to reduce stress and become more creative and fulfilled.

The many benefits that the regular practice of mindfulness can bring have been widely demonstrated in both clinical and work settings, and are backed up by neuroscience research showing that the brain develops new pathways which support improvements in mood, mental clarity and focus, and reduce anxiety.

The course is suitable for anyone who is open to learning new skills that will enhance the quality of their life. No prior experience is required. The course can also act as a refresher for people who have previously learned mindfulness.

**Venue and Date:** Croyde Bay, Friday 17 April to Sunday 19 April

**Fee:** There is a charge of £300 per delegate to branches for this residential course





## Courses for Women

### Confidence Building and Assertiveness for Women Members

---

#### **Who is it for?**

This course is available to any woman member of UNISON.

This friendly and supportive 2 day course is aimed at women who want to take positive steps towards building their self-confidence and learn how to behave and communicate assertively.

#### **What will I learn?**

The course will help participants to:

- assess and understand issues around confidence and assertiveness
- investigate their idea of a confident woman
- recognise body language and unspoken communication
- raise awareness of different behaviour type and hidden agendas
- say no
- deal with criticism constructively
- look to the future

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- better understand issues around confidence and assertiveness
- identify and use confident behaviour
- communicate assertively
- plan the changes required to behave in a confident and assertive manner
- identify development opportunities

**Venue and Date:** Croyde Bay, Friday 8 May to Sunday 10 May

**Fee:** There is a charge of £125 per delegate to branches for this course

## Women's History and Reclaiming the F Word (2 days – non residential)

It is a well known fact that measures to reduce the deficit are having a greater impact on women, both in terms of cuts to jobs and benefits and services that support women's everyday lives. There is also a growing likelihood that women will be the ones left filling the gaps as state services are withdrawn. It seems that time appears to be turning back on women's equality.

This course is essential to empower women members and encourage them to become more active in their union.

### **Who is it for?**

This course is open to all women members and/or activists.

### **What will I learn?**

The course looks at the history of women in work, society and the trade unions and covers issues such as:

- women's suffrage
- women and politics
- feminist theories
- women and trade union movement
- women in public life

**Date and Venue:** To be confirmed – contact the Education and Equalities team at e-mail: [unionswededucation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unionswededucation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314

**Fee:** There is a charge of £50 per delegate to branches for this course





## Branch Based Courses

### Challenging Racism in the Workplace – Developing a Branch Strategy

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All UNISON activists, not just Equality Co-ordinators, Reps or Black Members' Officers, are well placed to challenge racism in the workplace. This course will assist everyone within the branch to become proactive in identifying and challenging those issues that affect black workers in general, rather than focusing on individual concerns only, in order to ensure that all workers are treated fairly.

- help to build an integrated and team approach for dealing with issues of racism collectively within the branch.
- help you to gain an awareness of the opportunities the Equality Act provides to identify institutional racism and ensure that the issues are dealt with
- improve your knowledge of the tools you can use to engage with your employer on tackling race discrimination
- help you explore how an organising approach can be taken to tackling racism in the workplace
- help to build confidence in negotiating with employers and anticipating any challenges

### ***Who is it for?***

This course is designed for a minimum of 2 Branch Officers to attend together and take back their action plan to the rest of the Branch Committee. It is recommended that at least one attendee should be a key branch negotiator (e.g. Branch Secretary, Service Conditions Officer, Convenor) and Equality Co-ordinator, or Black Member's Officer. Other interested activists or representatives are, of course, welcome. If in doubt ask if you have a different combination.

### ***What will I learn?***

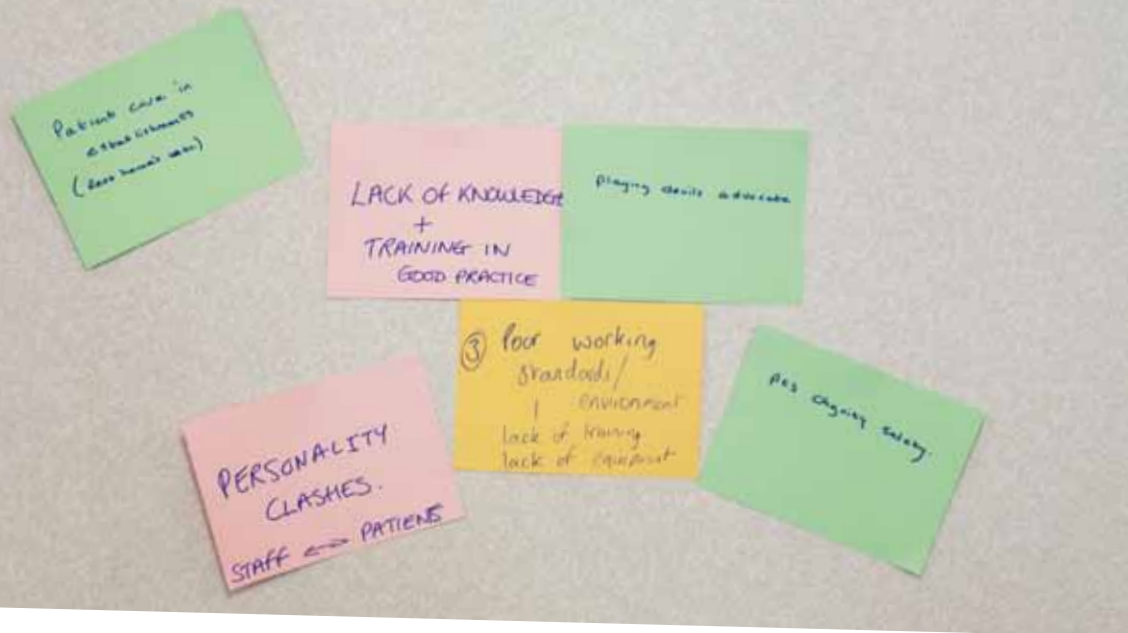
This course will:

- help to build an integrated and team approach for dealing with issues of racism collectively within the branch.
- help you to gain an awareness of the opportunities the Equality Act provides to identify institutional racism and ensure that the issues are dealt with
- improve your knowledge of the tools you can use to engage with your employer on tackling race discrimination
- help you explore how an organising approach can be taken to tackling racism in the workplace
- help to build confidence in negotiating with employers and anticipating any challenges

***Venue and date:*** To be confirmed - contact the Education and Equalities Team  
e-mail: [unionswededucation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unionswededucation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314

***Fee:*** There is no cost to branches for this course





## Regional Courses

### National Delegate Conference Pre-conference Training

Are you going to National Delegate Conference for the first time and wondering what you have to do, what it is like and how it works? Or maybe you have been before and want a refresher; a chance to discuss the agenda and meet the other delegates.

Then come along to the National Delegate Pre-Conference Training.

#### **What will I learn?**

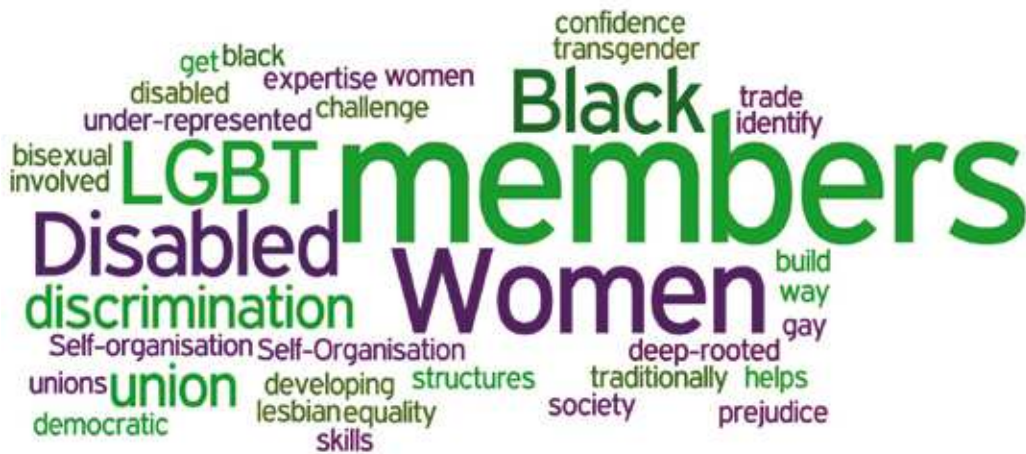
The aim of the briefing is to provide information to assist delegates to understand and participate in the National Delegate Conference by:

- explaining the role of the UNISON National Delegate Conference
- showing what Conference is like
- giving practical advice on how Conference works
- examining the Rules and Standing Orders governing Conference;
- preparing delegates to participate on behalf of their branch.

**Venue and Date:** To be confirmed – contact the Education and Equalities team at e-mail: [unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course





## Self Organised Groups (SOGs) Pre-conference Training

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Are you going to a SOG National Conference for the first time and wondering what you have to do, what it is like and how it works?

Or maybe you've been before and want a refresher; a chance to discuss the agenda and meet the other delegates.

Pre-conference training is available for all National SOG Conferences and is arranged in consultation with each Regional Committee. For all SOG Conferences you will be notified of the date soon after registration.

### ***Venue and dates:***

- Women's National Conference Pre-conference Training – Taunton, Saturday 31 January
- Black Members National Conference Pre-conference Training – to be confirmed.
- Disabled members National Conference Pre-Conference Training – to be confirmed
- LGBT Members National Conference Pre-conference Training – to be confirmed

For dates and venues please contact the Education and Equalities Team at e-mail: [unionsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unionsweducation@unison.co.uk) telephone: 01823 285314

## Online Branch Accounting System (OLBA)

This one-day course is aimed at new and re-elected treasurers of non-live OLBA branches and newly appointed treasurers of live OLBA branches and provides practical guidance on using the online branch accounting system.

The training will cover:

- how to use OLBA
- a Case Study
- entering your receipts and payments
- accounts and reports

**Venue and date:** To be confirmed – contact the Education and Equalities team at e-mail: [unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk) or telephone 01823 285314

**Fee:** There is no charge to branches for this course



# National Courses – Employment Law Courses

The following in-depth employment law courses supplement the range of training offered at regional level and are aimed at more experienced activists.

## Maternity and Parental Rights

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**15 July: Closing date for receipt of applications: 1 June**

This course is for UNISON activists who need to advise members on maternity and parental rights or who are looking to improve on statutory rights through negotiation. It will help you understand the complex law relating to maternity rights and give you an opportunity to compare negotiated contractual agreements with statutory rights to identify opportunities for seeking improvements.

## Disability Discrimination Law

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**14 – 15 May: Closing date for receipt of applications: 30 March**

This course will help activists when representing members and negotiating with employers around disability issues by increasing their understanding of how often disability discrimination law applies and how it can be used to put pressure on employers to take positive steps. The course covers identifying potential cases of disability discrimination in the workplace, who disability discrimination law applies to, how to interview members with a potential case, the extent of the employer's duties to make reasonable adjustments, the relationship between sickness issues (e.g. back injury, depression) and disability discrimination, and recognising time-limits. It does not cover how to run a tribunal case.

## Contracts Redundancy & TUPE

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**23 – 25 March: Closing date for receipt of applications: 9 February**

**16 – 18 November: Closing date for receipt of applications: 5 October**

This course will help activists develop their understanding of contracts of employment and member's potential rights on redundancy. It will enable them to recognise relevant legal issues when dealing with casework, campaigning and negotiating. It also covers unilateral variation of contract; TUPE; unfair dismissal in the context of changing contracts; redundancy & TUPE. It does not cover unfair dismissal in the areas of capability and misconduct.

## Unfair Dismissals and Employment Tribunals

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**6 – 8 July: Closing date for receipt of applications: 26 May**

**4 – 6 November: Closing date for receipt of applications: 21 September**

This course will help reps to use the law to underpin negotiations with employers on dismissal issues in internal disciplinary hearings, and to develop analytical skills useful in all areas of their work. While activists are not expected to represent at tribunal cases, understanding the importance of time limits and evidence gathering at an early stage will ensure sound groundwork should a case eventually go to tribunal. This course covers the law of unfair dismissal: who can claim unfair dismissal and what makes a dismissal unfair, especially in the context of misconduct. It follows a misconduct dismissal through every stage of preparation for a tribunal case, finishing with a mock video of the tribunal hearing. This course does not cover unfair dismissal in the context of redundancy, contract variation or TUPE as that is the subject of the Contract, Redundancy and TUPE course.

## Race and Sex Discrimination Law

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**8 – 10 April: Closing date for receipt of applications: 23 February**

This course will help activists to recognise direct and indirect race and sex discrimination when dealing with casework in the branch. It will help them understand the questions to ask when interviewing members with potential cases. It will give them an overview of legislation and time-limits; understanding the questionnaire procedure; introduction to law on sexual harassment. It does not cover how to run a tribunal case. The course does not cover the law on pregnancy and maternity/paternity which is covered in the Maternity and Paternity Rights course.

**Courses will be held in UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Rd, London NW1 2AY**

**To apply, visit <http://www.unison.org.uk/for-activists/training/u-train/law-courses/> for an application form and return it to:**

**UNISON Learning & Organising Services,  
UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road,  
London NW1 2AY**

**Tel: 0207 121 5383 Fax: 0207 121 5758  
E-mail [learningandorganising@unison.co.uk](mailto:learningandorganising@unison.co.uk)**

**SEE FURTHER DETAILS>**

## **National Courses – Employment Law Courses**

### **Further details** (continued from page 42)

#### **Allocation of Course Places**

In order to ensure the effective application of UNISON principles of Proportionality and Fair Representation places are allocated on national courses as soon as possible after the closing date instead of on a first come first served basis. In the event of courses being oversubscribed, selections will be made on the basis of achieving Fair Representation and Proportionality, as set out in UNISON Rules, and will also ensure a fair spread of participants from regions and sectors where appropriate.



In-depth employment law courses supplement the range of training offered at regional level. They are aimed at experienced activists and this is also taken into account when offering places on these courses.

#### **Charges**

Branches will be charged a fee per participant of £225 for 3-day courses, £150 for 2-day courses and £75 for 1-day courses. Accommodation, travel and care costs and a £10 per day out-of-pocket allowance will be paid from national level.

#### **Facilitation and Dependent Care**

It is UNISON policy that no member should be deterred from applying for a course because of facilitation needs, necessary childcare or other care commitments.

#### **Cancellation Policy**

Where places on courses are cancelled without good cause charges will be levied as follows: Where places are cancelled within two weeks of the start of the course the cost will be 50% of the course cost. Where places are cancelled within one week of the start of the course the cancellation will be 100%.

#### **Our Commitment to Equalities**

As part of UNISON's equal opportunities policy in education there is a questionnaire at the back of the application form. This information will be strictly confidential and used only to monitor UNISON's ability to deliver educational opportunities fairly to all sections of its membership.



# Practicalities

Our courses are friendly and informal, so you are invited to dress at all times for comfort. Our training is aimed to make learning fun rather than a daunting experience. Everybody's views and experiences are listened to. Much of the time is spent working in small groups. You won't be lectured to or suddenly be called to give answers and there are no exams at the end.

## ***How do I apply for a course?***

Download the application form giving us all your contact details, including a daytime telephone number and e-mail address in case we need to contact you at the last minute. It is also important for you to give us your UNISON membership number as not having this information can delay the processing of your application.

## ***What do I do when I have completed my form?***

Send your completed form to your local UNISON Branch for signing by a Branch Officer (usually the Branch Secretary or Education Co-ordinator) and ask them to send it, with any payment required, to the Education and Equalities Team. It is essential that your form has been sent to your local Branch first so that:

- we know your branch supports your application
- they know you have applied to attend a course
- they can help with paid time off
- they will pay your travel and meal expenses
- they will pay any course fees where necessary

If you do not know how to contact your local Branch please call the Education and Equalities Team on 01823 285314 or [unionsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unionsweducation@unison.co.uk) to find out.

## ***Are there closing dates for courses?***

Yes, the deadline for applications being accepted on to courses is 12 days before the date the course is due to start. The earlier you apply, the easier it is for us to organise, most courses operate a minimum of 12 applicants in order to run so please do not delay. Late applications may mean the course has to be cancelled or child/dependant care cannot be organised.

What happens once you receive my application?

Once your form has been signed by a Branch officer and sent to us we will acknowledge receipt of your application, which confirms that you have been reserved a place on the course. Then approximately a week before the course begins we will send you final details confirming the course starting and finishing times and venue details.



***Do I need to arrange time off to attend the course?***

Yes, we strongly advise you to start arranging time off at the same time as you apply for a course. Inform your manager, using your local procedure. Don't delay your time off request by waiting until your course place has been confirmed, as your manager may then say that you didn't give them enough notice.

If you need help at any stage ask your local UNISON Branch. Time off with pay is normally available to Stewards/Rep representatives to attend trade union courses.

***What happens if I need to cancel my place on a course?***

If for any reason you find that you cannot attend a course on which you have been allocated a place, it is essential that you contact both your Branch and the Education and Equalities Team immediately. Whatever your reason for cancelling it may mean that another member may be offered a place on the course. If less than 72 hours notice is given, no refund will be made. However, if the course place is re-allocated monies will be refunded.

***I have been told the course I want to attend is full/has been cancelled, what happens now?***

We accept applications on a first come, first served basis, so if as sometimes happens a course is full we will try and offer you another option or where applicable add you to a waiting list for a future course. Unfortunately sometimes courses are cancelled, often due to lack of applications. We appreciate that this is frustrating and inconvenient and we do our best to avoid it. Where this is unavoidable we will try and offer you

an alternative. Monies will be refunded if UNISON has to cancel the course.

***I want to attend a course that is being run outside of my Region, can I do this?***

Yes, members may take the opportunity to attend courses run by other regions. Applications for these should be made through the Education and Equalities Team Whilst course fees may be similar you need to be aware that accommodation and travel costs tend to make these more expensive for Branches.

I have child care/dependant responsibilities, what can you do to help? Your Branch should pay any additional child/dependant care costs that result from attending a course - it is best to discuss this with your branch before attending.



***I have applied for a residential course do I need to book my own accommodation?***

No, your accommodation and your facilitator's (where applicable) will be booked by the Education and Equalities Team. However, if you wish to bring family/guests with you, we ask that you organise and pay for their accommodation direct with the venue.

I have difficulty climbing stairs will I be able to attend the course?

It is UNISON'S policy to seek venues that are accessible to all course applicants. Every effort is made to make suitable arrangements for members with disabilities however, facilities do vary between venues. If you are a disabled member please let us know relevant details of your disability when you apply so that we can try and cater for your needs.

***I have special dietary requirements, will they be catered for?***

Non-residential venues vary enormously but generally will include access to tea and coffee facilities and somewhere local for meals. Generally you

will have to pay at the time for your lunch on these courses. Most of our residential courses are run in locations where meals are provided and special dietary requirements can be catered. It is therefore essential that you let us know of any special requirements when filling in your application form.

### ***Do all the courses start and finish at the same time?***

Most of our courses are run on a non-residential basis and usually begin at either 9am or 9.30am and finish at 4.30pm on each day. Residential courses are usually held at weekends and normally start with an introduction session at 6pm then dinner, on the Friday evening and finish at approximately 1:00pm with lunch on the Sunday. These times may vary slightly and you will be notified of the exact timings of the training about a week before the course begins.

### ***Do I have to pay to attend any of the courses?***

Whilst there is no cost to you as an individual member, for certain courses there will be a charge to the Branch. These are clearly marked within the programme.

On certain residential courses where there is an opportunity to bring your partner/dependants the member will be charged the appropriate costs. These costs will be payable with your application form.

### ***Full costs will be incurred if there is less than 72 hours notice of cancellation***

Costs (where applicable):

- £125.00 per member for residential courses
- £25.00 per member per day for non-residents attending courses
- Payable at time of booking - Please make cheques payable to UNISON

### ***Request for special courses***

£200.00 to be paid in advance.

### ***Cancellations:***

- Full charges will apply if less than 72 hours notice has been given to cancel attendance of a delegate on a course.
- If a special course has been arranged and is cancelled with less than 72 hours notice, full charges will also be incurred.

### ***Can I claim my travel expenses for attending a course?***

Yes, you can claim travel expenses you incur from attending a course from your local UNISON Branch by completing an expenses form. As allowances vary from Branch to branch we would advise that you check how much you can claim. The Branch Secretary or Education Co-ordinator will be able to help you.

### ***Are there any bursaries available to members to attend courses?***

Yes, the National Scheme for Financial Assistance for education is a scheme that provides financial help to members on Trade Union/ Labour Studies Courses, those in general Non-Vocational Education and via a small scholarship programme supporting member and activist development. There are four types of award available; bursary, flexible bursary, Open University and book grants.

For further information, including an application form please contact:

Bursaries Administrator  
UNISON learning & organising services  
130 Euston Road  
London  
NW1 2AY

Tel: 0207 121 5116

E-mail: [learning&organising@unison.co.uk](mailto:learning&organising@unison.co.uk)

Or visit our national website: <http://www.unison.org.uk/for-activists/training/>  
and <https://www.unison.org.uk/for-members/unison-learning>

### ***What do I do if I have further questions to ask before I apply for a course?***

If you have any queries that have not been covered or you need any further information please contact the Education and Equalities Team on 01823 285314 or e-mail: [unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk)



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# COURSE BOOKING FORM

Course Title: .....

Venue: ..... Date: .....

Please ensure that this form has been signed by a branch officer and returned no later than 12 days before the course begins

## 1. Details of Person attending *(Please tick boxes as appropriate)*

Full Name: ..... Membership No: .....

Address for correspondence: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Daytime Tel No: ..... Email address: .....

Male  Female

## 2. UNISON Details

Branch ..... Employer .....

Elected role .....

Do you have any special dietary needs? Yes  No

Do you require any access facilities? Yes  No

For Residential Courses, is accommodation required? Yes  No

Do you need assistance with child/dependent care to attend this course? Yes  No

If you have answered yes to any of the above, please give details

.....

**Applicant's Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

All applicants must ask their Branch Secretary or Education Co-Coordinator to complete and return this form.

**Signed:** ..... **Position:** .....

*for and on behalf of the Branch*

**This form must be completed and returned to:**

The Education & Equalities Team, UNISON South West, UNISON House,  
The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4DU

Tel: 01823 285314 E-mail: [unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk)

**By no later than 12 days before the course begins**

**PLEASE SEE OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR OUR COURSE CHARGES  
POLICY PAYMENT TO BE MADE AT TIME OF BOOKING**