UNISON College

Short workshops for delivery in branches

April 2023

Introduction

This range of short workshops has been developed for delivery in branches by activists or organisers. They vary in length from half an hour to half a day and cover a wide range of topics.  They are organised under the following categories and a summary of each workshop is included overleaf:

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If you would like to run any of these workshops in your branch, speak to your branch education officer, branch secretary, or regional education officer or organiser.  If you have any queries about the workshop materials, contact [learningandrganising@unison.co.uk](mailto:learningandrganising@unison.co.uk)

 Discussion Leaders training and Lay Tutor training is available to help you develop confidence in delivering these short workshops – contact your branch education co-ordinator or regional education organiser for more information.

General Skills Development

W001 – TEAM WORKING

A series of short standalone sessions: Identifying when team working is appropriate; successful team working; establishing team working within partnership agreements; reviewing practices; improving the effectiveness of a team; practical experience of effective team working; considering the role of leadership in team working. *(1 document comprising tutor notes and handouts)*

W062 – SPEECH WRITING

Short briefing, excerpted from the longer Speaking With Confidence session. *(PowerPoint presentation and two handouts: Checklist, Rhetorical devices)*

W072 – SPEAKING WITH CONFIDENCE

Two-hour taster session. This workshop looks at some practical tips to start increasing confidence with public speaking. *(2 documents: coursebook and tutor notes)*

W083 – TOP TIPS FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

Short session. Explores structure, rhetorical devices, and tips to beat the nerves. *(PowerPoint presentation only)*

Member Learning

W003 – STAYING STRONG: STRESS MANAGEMENT

Short session. To consider the effects and sources of stress; explore how to begin to manage stress and handle pressure. *(Handouts + tutor notes. Includes materials for delivering online and variation for delivering to ESOL learners.)*

W019 – CVs and INTERVIEWS

Short session. To identify transferrable skills and where they can come from; To explore what information to include in a CV; To explore what to prepare for an interview and how to beat nerves *(Tutor notes incorporating handouts)*

W044 – CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR Pas

1 hour. This is a specialised exercise for Personal Assistants, which gets delegates to examine reasons behind reactions to conflict and to develop skills in setting mutual guidelines to reduce and prevent conflict with their employer. *(Coursebook only)*

W047 – DEALING WITH PAPERWORK: READING FOR WORK

Half day workshop. The workshop covers practical techniques to help participants read more quickly and more effectively. *(Coursebook and tutor notes)*

W054 – FUN WITH NUMBERS

1-1.5 hours. Looks at where maths appears in everyday life; introduces basic maths concepts in a light-hearted and accessible way *(Tutor notes incorporating handouts)*

W055 – READING FOR PLEASURE

1-1.5 hours. Explores reading habits and preferences and gives participants a chance to read and discuss a text as might happen at a reading group. It could offer an opportunity to explore interest in a UNISON reading group or the Reading Ahead challenge. *(Tutor notes incorporating handouts)*  
*Materials are available to deliver this session online.*

W056 – CREATIVE WRITING

1-1.5 hours. Introduces easy creative writing activities including: what makes a sentence believable; starting to write; developing a character. *(Tutor notes incorporating handouts)*  
*Materials are available to deliver this session online. (Tutor notes and PowerPoint presentation)*

W057 – GET IN THE GRAMMAR GROOVE

1-1.5 hours. Explores feelings around written English; spelling; grammar; punctuation; parts of speech. *(Tutor notes incorporating handouts)*

W059 – USING SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSIBLY AND SAFELY

30 minutes. A facilitated discussion workshop suitable for delivery by organisers working with **all** school support staff job roles, particularly those employed in a classroom setting.  This interactive briefing is designed to engage school workers in discussion and to raise their awareness around the use (and misuse) of social media when working in schools. *(Tutor notes and resource sheet handout)*

W068 – YOUR SKILLS, YOUR FUTURE TASTER

Short session extracted from the one-day workshop. Invites participants to think about different ways to demonstrate confidence and tips and tricks to build confidence. *(Tutor notes only)*

W082 – STAYING SAFE ONLINE

Short session for online delivery. How to create strong passwords; using social media safely; switching off. *(PowerPoint presentation with tutor notes in notes.)*

Organising, Recruitment and Campaigning

Recruiting

W013 – MAPPING WORKSHOP

1.5 hours.  To understand what a workplace map is and why they’re made; how to map a workplace, and how maps can be used across the branch or employer. *(2 documents: tutor notes and handouts booklet.)* See also W41.

W017 – QUICK CONVERSATIONS

Short session. To prepare stewards and activists to have initial conversations in the workplace, to consider how they will gain access to their colleagues to talk to them about the union, and how to build confidence in talking to members and potential members they don’t know and to establish a rapport. *(Tutor notes only.)* ‘Pledge Yes for the NHS’ variation available.

W018 – THE UNISON RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISING ACTIVIST

A series of activities that can be delivered alone, as part of another workshop session, or combined into a half or one day course. Modules include:

* Why Do People Join Unions?
* Breaking Through Barriers to Recruitment
* Where do you go and who do you meet? Identifying recruitment opportunities
* Recruiting and Organising Situations
* Why, what, Where and What-ifs – techniques for effective recruitment events
* Mobilising around the cuts – the importance of having a one-to-one conversation
* Why join a union? An activity aimed at potential members

*(1 document: tutor notes with worksheets incorporated.)*

W008 – FOLLOWING UP RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY

Short session. Follow up actions to recruitment drive. *(1 document: tutor notes only)*

W041 – THREE TYPES OF ORGANISING MAP

Short briefing. An introduction to three types of organising map and their purpose. *(PowerPoint presentation with tutor instructions contained within notes.)* See also W13.

W070 ANGER, HOPE, ACTION – CONVERSATION

Short session. Can be used as part of a branch or workplace meeting.  An effective way to carry out conversations. *(Tutor notes only. Pledge Yes for the NHS variation available.)*

W074 – MOBILISING YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND SIX CORE ISSUES

1 to 1 ½ hours. This workshop is aimed at any group of young activists, members, or workers. It can be run at a branch or workplace meeting, or to help activists prepare to use the six identified issues as a route to organise young workers. *(1 document: tutor notes only)*

W075 – UNISON’S APPRENTICESHIP AGENDA

Short briefing. Introduces UNISON’s work around apprentices and the apprenticeship charter. Can be used with apprentices or to introduce the issues around apprenticeships to branch activists. Designed for online delivery but could be delivered in person. *(PowerPoint presentation only)*

Developing and Supporting Activists

W004 – COMMUNITY ORGANISING

Short session.Think and discuss around building strategic alliances, and long-term relationships with other organisations with which we share some common goals and the natural links we have as individuals and an organisation with other groups in our communities. *(1 document: tutor notes only.)*

W005 – DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING ACTIVISTS STORYBOARD ACTIVITY

Short session. To discuss the kind of activities to get members involved which help to build the union, and consider how we can support those members and develop them to get more involved. *(2 documents: tutor notes and storyboard template.)*

W007 – FACILITIES TIME OFF

Half day. To produce branch/workplace map on facility time and how it’s used;  ability to target debate and arguments on the merits of facility time; prepare to defend/improve facility time through organisation and negotiation; produce branch action plan. *(1 document: tutor notes with handouts incorporated.)*

W010 – PREPARING FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Half day. A detailed plan of action in the run up to industrial action;  a clear understanding of UNISON’s Industrial Action Guide and how to respond to issues which might arise; a plan for recruiting and organising around the industrial action. *(Tutor notes with handouts incorporated. Also available: Preparing for Industrial Action – Talking To Members (excerpted from the full workshop); standalone PowerPoint presentation which could also be used as part of the workshop.)*

W020 – TALENT SPOTTING AND DEVELOPING ACTIVISM

Short session – to discuss best practice on identifying activists and leaders, to recognise the different levels of activism, and to consider ways of mentoring and supporting activists, including UNISON’s Trained & Active approach. *(1 document: course book with tutor outline at end.)*

W038 – BUDDYING WORKSHOP

Half day. The aim of this workshop is to assist branches build up their capacity to provide a systematic and consistent approach to supporting new reps by utilising the skills and knowledge of experienced reps. *(2 documents: course book and tutor notes.)*

W042 – GETTING A MENTORING SCHEME OFF THE GROUND – USING THE TAP FORM AS A STARTER

A PowerPoint (originally developed by UNISON North West) to use with branches on how to set up a mentoring scheme using Trained and Active resources.  You need to add branch specific information to the relevant slides. *(2 documents: PowerPoint presentation (tutor notes contained in notes section) and card sort activity template.)*

W043 – TASKS TO GET MEMBERS ACTIVE

A short activity to help you work with members to identify tasks they can carry out to get more active in the workplace. *(1 document: tutor notes incorporating card sort activity.)*

W046 – INTRODUCTION TO NEGOTIATING SKILLS

One-hour workshop introducing some basic negotiation concepts. *(1 document: course book only)*

W050 –  DEVELOPING LINKS WITH POLISH MEMBERS

A short workshop to improve communication and understanding between branches and Polish members and increase awareness of issues these members face during disciplinaries, capability and performance management meetings. Could easily be adapted for issues affecting other groups for whom English is not their first language. *(1 document: tutor notes incorporating handouts)*

W060 – WRITING A MOTION

90 minutes. A short workshop giving participants an understanding of what a motion is and what they are used for. *(1 document: tutor notes incorporating handouts.)*

W061 – MOTIONS AND UNISON STRUCTURES

90 minutes. A short worship helping participants understand their role in the policy making of the union, using democratic structures. *(2 documents: tutor notes incorporating handouts; UNISON jigsaw.)*

W073 – MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES

One hour. To give participants an understanding of the theory of perspectives in industrial relations and help them to put it to practical use when meeting with management. *(Tutor notes and PowerPoint presentation)*

W076 – DIGITAL ORGANISING

A set of five linked workshops (plus one self-guided introductory pre-course activity) introducing concepts of organising and campaigning in a digital context. These can be delivered as standalones or with two or more together, depending on need. Modules include:

* Digital organising: the basics
* Social media tools
* Engaging digitally: taking meetings online
* Campaigning in a digital world
* Organising online
* Staying safe online

*(Tutor notes with handouts incorporated; supplementary material available on the e-learning site)*

Objective-Based Budgeting

W069 – OBJECTIVE-BASED BUDGETING

To gain understanding of joint assessment process; and to gain an understanding of committed costs and participation costs. Variations for use in branches and with regional organisers. *(Coursebook and tutor notes for each variation, and handouts.)*

Political Education

W024 – MARCHING IN OUR TRADE UNION FOOTSTEPS

Short session. To encourage members to: think about the history and importance of marches and rallies for the trade union movement; feel confident about taking small actions for a march. *(Tutor notes and handouts in PowerPoint format)*

W077 – WHY YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Short activity. To start a conversation about the importance of voting in the local elections in England on Thursday 4th May 2023. It only takes 30 - 45 minutes so is ideal to run at the end of any member training course, after a meeting, or at an AGM. *(Tutor notes and handouts in PowerPoint format)*

W084 – OUR MEMBERS WERE THERE – GETTING ACTIVE IN UNISON

Short session inviting members and activists to reflect on UNISON’s history as a campaigning organisation and consider future action they could take. *(PowerPoint presentation with tutor notes included in notes.)*

Service Groups

W078 – GET BALLOT READY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Short session exploring how to encourage members to vote in local government and schools pay ballot (2023). *(PowerPoint with tutor notes in notes)*

W079 – QUICK CONVERSATIONS ABOUT UNISON’S COUNCIL AND SCHOOL PAY BALLOT 2023

One hour workshop to prepare stewards and activists to have one-to-one conversations with members about UNISON’s local government and schools pay campaign – **Rise Up to Get Pay Up: Council and School pay 2023.** *(Tutor notes only.)*

W080 – BUILDING SUCCESSFUL BALLOTS IN HE 2023

Short session exploring how to encourage members to vote in Higher Education ballot (2023). *(PowerPoint with tutor notes in notes)*

W081 – QUICK CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GETTING ACTION READY (HIGHER EDUCATION PAY 2023/24)

One hour workshop to prepare stewards and activists to have one-to-one conversations with members about getting ready and preparing for potential action, and build confidence in talking to members about taking industrial action. *(Tutor notes only.)*

Women’s History and Campaigning

W030 – FORWARD, STILL FURTHER TO GO – GLASGOW RENT STRIKE

Short session. To look at the role of women campaigning and organising around a community issue; discuss the Glasgow Rent Strike of 1915; think about the legacy of the campaign to women in the trade union movement. *(Accompanies wallchart. Tutor notes incorporating handouts.)*

W031 – FORWARD, STILL FURTHER TO GO – MATCH WORKER STRIKE

Short session. An exampleof campaigning and organising. *(Accompanies wallchart. Tutor notes incorporating handouts.)*

W032 – FORWARD, STILL FURTHER TO GO – TRADE UNION WOMEN AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR GAINING THE VOTE

Short session. To discuss the campaign for votes for women; to look at the contribution made by trade union women to the suffrage movement; to look at campaigning and organising. *(Accompanies wallchart. Tutor notes incorporating handouts.)*

W035 – FORWARD, STILL FURTHER TO GO – WOMEN AND THE WELFARE STATE

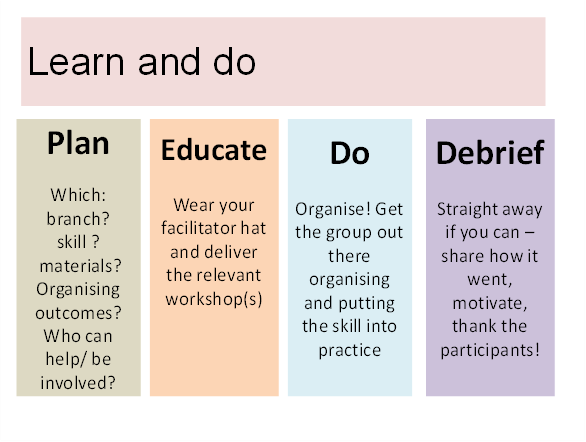
Short session. Think about the impact that public sector spending cuts will have on women; discuss the role of women in unions and society; feel confident to discuss these issues *(Accompanies wallchart. Tutor notes incorporating handouts.)*

A Guide to Using Short Workshops: Learn and Do

**Learn and** **Do** means running a short organising workshop which is immediately followed by an opportunity to try out the new skills learnt.  These usually are some kind of one to one organising or recruitment activity.  A learn and do activity concludes with a de-brief to review how it went and to plan next steps.

Principles

* Always delivered when and where it is needed.
* Organising and campaigning skills need to be embedded into everyday practice at workplace level.
* We have to create the right conditions for activists to try out one to one skills in a safe environment and to build confidence.
* Careful planning can deliver very tangible organising outcomes.
* ‘Learn and do’ does not replace more formal learning.



Before the session

Decide what the organising challenge is.

Consider what organising technique will best help this situation.  For example, what kind of one to one conversation will you be practising in the workplace?

Analyse your group and decide how you will get them along to a learn and do session.  For example, tacking onto a stewards meeting.

Plan the training element.

Be clear with activists about the ‘doing’ element so that it doesn’t take them by surprise.

What membership information will be useful?

What will the ‘doing’ part of the session look like?

What organising materials will you need?

Do you need to gain permission from management?

When will workers be available to talk to activists?

Gather together relevant workshop resources, e.g. handouts, flip charts, pens etc.

During the Session

Pair up experienced and less experienced people, particularly if you are going into a workplace to do one to ones or on a street campaigning exercise.

Give activists the option to play an observer’s role if they are very nervous.

Build confidence. Give it a go!

Be clear about the logistics.

After the Session

An immediate debrief is most effective.

Ensure you add up how many people have been spoken to, contacts made, new members recruited.  This can give participants a real feeling of achievement.

Plan a debrief to include:-

* What went well?
* What didn’t go so well?
* Feedback from the observers.
* What was the reaction?
* Any highlights?

Plan further follow up actions