

## 'I don't do politics' and the General Election

Last year, UNISON launched a new campaign to encourage women to get involved and to encourage them to see that politics isn't dry discussions and isn't just something that men 'do'.

Our members care about their children's education, about making their neighbourhoods safer, about local health services and about the health of the planet – and that's politics too. In all those areas of our lives, we can make a difference by getting involved. You could become a governor at your children's school or join the parent-teacher association. That's politics.

Your local involvement network (LINK) can help you join with individuals and community groups to improve local services together. And that's politics.

UNISON members are concerned about crime, and about making their communities safe for everyone. Get involved with your safer neighbourhood team or think about becoming a magistrate or volunteering to help Victim Support. That's politics too.

**But the easiest, easiest thing of all is to use your vote.**

As we near International Women's Day on 8 March, this is at the heart of a message that UNISON is keen to spread to all women. Women gained the right to vote the hard way – it was 1928 before all women over the age of 21 finally won the right to have their say in the political life of the nation. We should make absolutely sure that the sacrifices that achieved that are never forgotten or wasted.

**UNISON has 1.3 million members – and 75% of them are women. Just imagine what a force that could be.**

### Becoming a Women's Officer

If you'd like to know more about becoming a Branch Women's Officer, and what this entails, you might be interested in attending the 2-day training that will be taking place this year. This 2-day course is for newly elected and/or untrained Branch Women's Officers. The course will help you to understand the role of the Branch Women's Officer and will briefly cover some of the major discriminatory issues still facing women at work and in society today. The course will also discuss the important role of the Branch Women's Officer in assisting UNISON in working towards equality for women in the union, the workplace and in society.

### UNISON Women Campaigns

Keep your eyes open for the following campaigns that will be running throughout the year:

**International Women's Day– March**  
**Breast Cancer Awareness– October**  
**End Violence Against Women– November**  
**White Ribbon**  
**Reclaim the Night**  
**Women's No Pay Day**  
**Ovarian Cancer**  
**Women not for Sale**



UNISON South East Region  
Ground Floor, Ranger House  
Walnut Tree Close  
Guildford  
Surrey GU1 4UL

Phone: 01483 406533  
Fax: 01483 570271  
E-mail: j.mason@unison.co.uk



**A GUIDE FOR  
WOMEN IN  
UNISON**

**TOGETHER  
WE'RE STRONGER**

[www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

To join call  
**UNISON Direct**  
**0845 355 0845**

**UNISON**  
South East Region

## Increasing the participation of women within UNISON



This leaflet has been designed to give women member's in UNISON a clear path of

progression and development for those wishing to become more active in the union. The aim is to promote women's self-organisation, influence regional agendas and promote the interests of South East UNISON women at all levels of the union. We do this by encouraging, informing and educating all women in the region, including each other, thus empowering women by building confidence and facilitating the formation of networks. Women make up 75% of UNISON's membership and we run several courses a year specifically for women. UNISON is also involved in particular campaigns targeted at women, such as Breast Cancer Awareness and International Women's Day.

For more information on getting involved, or keeping up-to-date with



events, please see the South east

Women's webpage at [http://](http://www.unison.org.uk/southeast/women.asp)

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## Courses and events for 2010

If you're interested in becoming more active in the union, but don't feel comfortable attending regional events yet, then the following courses offer a safe, friendly environment to explore you options:

- Women's History– women in work, society and the trade unions. 16th-18th April
- Bullying & Harassment– collective responses to challenging this in the workplace. 5th-6th May
- Branch Women Officer Training- understand the role of the Branch Women Officer and how they work within UNISON. 3rd– 4th June
- Assertiveness Training– building confidence through participative group work. 13th– 15th October
- National Women's Conference– February 2011

The following courses are open to all active UNISON members and will set you on the path to becoming a workplace representative:

New Stewards

Grievance and Disciplinary Handling

Negotiating Skills

Equality and your Branch

Confidence Skills for Activists

Please contact your branch, or the Regional Office on 01483 406533 for more information

## Regional Women's Forum 2010– 2nd– 4th July

The purpose of the Forum is to encourage and empower women to play a full and active role in UNISON. The Forum works to boost the confidence and skills of women with the aim of building knowledge and involvement in UNISON at a branch and regional level; encouraging women branch officers and stewards to organise



around issues that affect many of the women members in our region, and empowering women

members and activists to pursue these issues through the unions' structures and beyond. The Forum will be an excellent opportunity for women members and activists to come together, network and share experiences and examples of good practice. If you have ever thought about getting involved in the Union and making a difference then come along to the Women's Forum and learn about women in UNISON and how we work together to make changes. It is a brilliant opportunity for brushing up on skills, gaining information on women's issues and forming friendships with women from across the region. The safe and friendly atmosphere provides the perfect place for discussion and learning to take place and a crèche is provided for those who need it.