

Private Finance Initiative – Pay for it indefinitely?

One Day Campaign Skills Workshop

Campaigning Against PFI in Local Government

COURSEBOOK

UNISON
Learning and Organising Services

06/08/02

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INTRODUCTION TO PFI

Introduction

The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is one of a range of initiatives introduced by the last Conservative Government, aimed at increasing private sector involvement in the provision of public services. The Labour Government has pursued PFI by streamlining the process, and has introduced a simpler revenue support system to fund PFI schemes.

Under PFI, private companies design, build and finance the asset, such as a new hospital, school or housing, and depending on how the PFI scheme is packaged, some staff may transfer from the public sector to the private sector company to deliver the service. The public body has to pay an annual fee to the private company under a long-term operating contract for the services.

UNISON believes that PFI is a more costly way of providing public services than direct borrowing by the public sector. UNISON is also concerned that transfer of staff to facilities-management companies has led to a deterioration in terms and conditions. And UNISON is also concerned that the democratically elected local authorities will lose control over assets and service provision. The real danger is that under PFI the future provision of public services will be determined by what the private consortium wants rather than what the public need.

UNISON has developed a twin track approach to tackling the threat of PFI:

- Campaigning against PFI nationally and locally
- Getting the best deal for members where PFI projects go ahead.

UNISON continues to campaign against the high financial, employment and democratic costs of PFI and this one day course for UNISON members and activists is part of that campaign. The course is an introduction to campaign skills needed to fight the Private Finance Initiative and will help branches organise local campaigns against PFI. It also introduces UNISON's policy and strategy on PFI. The course is suitable for all members whether or not their employer has a current proposal for a Private Finance Initiative scheme.

This course, which has been produced by UNISON Learning and Organising Services to raise awareness of PFI and to encourage local campaigning around it.

Course Aims

The key aims of this course are to:

- Raise awareness among UNISON members of what the Private Finance Initiative is; its potential effects on our members and public services; and UNISON's strategy
- Encourage local campaigning on PFI

After completing the course participants will:

- Understand what PFI is and how to use arguments against it
- Be familiar with UNISON's twin-track strategy on PFI
- Know where to get information and advice on PFI
- Have developed a campaign or action plan on PFI to use in their branch.

Who the course is aimed at

The course is suitable for members both in areas where there are currently no concrete PFI proposals and for those where they already have knowledge of a potential PFI project.

The course is suitable for a group of a maximum 16 participants.

How The Course Will Work

Trade union education aims to help you develop confidence and practical skills, and to put the knowledge you gain during the course to good effect in your branch and workplace. To achieve this the course is organised in an active way that will give us all an opportunity to have a say, as well as listen to others. Therefore, you will often be working in small groups. To encourage a branch team approach to campaigning on PFI you will work as part of a branch team during the course.

Participants on the course may be from the same branch or from different branches. The course offers the opportunity to share experience of PFI and to come to a collective approach to campaigning against PFI and protecting members' interests where a PFI scheme exists.

Suggested Programme For a One Day Course

		Timing
Arrival – Tea and Coffee		30 minutes
Activity 1	Welcome and Introductions	30 minutes
Activity 2	Getting Information on PFI And Potential PFI Projects	45 minutes
Activity 3	Identifying the Arguments	35 minutes
Campaign Skills Workshops		60 minutes
Activity 4	Tying it together - Developing a Local Campaign Strategy on PFI	105 minutes
Activity 5	PFI Checklist for Action	30 minutes
Course Review		15 minutes
Close of Course		

Working Together on UNISON Courses

Introduction

UNISON is committed to the fullest possible participation of all its members in the activities of the trade union. On trade union education courses, so long as the applicant meets the advertised eligibility criteria for the course, no-one should be put off from participating because of the actions, attitudes or language of other course members. In particular, women, black, lesbian, gay men and disabled members have the right not to be made to feel ill at ease or distressed on a course as a result of other course members' behaviour.

The following guidelines have been drawn up to help course members meet UNISON's commitment to the full participation of all its members in a practical and constructive way. You will see that underlying this guide is a commitment to the principle that everyone has equal rights to benefit from, to contribute to and enjoy the course. This means, among other things, that we should avoid language and behaviour that is unacceptable to other members, because it is sexist, racist, homophobic or offensive to disabled people.

We assume that course members will agree with these principles and hope the guidelines will assist in putting them into practice.

Working Together

A key feature of trade union education is the value it places upon the knowledge, experience and skills that each member brings with them to the course - both in terms of their trade union work and their everyday lives. It is important that everyone feels equal and able to make a contribution if they so wish. So:

- *Listen to what others have to say, and avoid being dismissive of their contribution.*
- *Wait until a speaker has finished and do not interrupt their train of thought.*
- *Aim to have reasoned discussion, not arguments.*
- *Any criticism should be constructive and help members to develop confidence, skills and knowledge.*
- *Make your own contribution as clear and concise as possible and do not dominate the discussion.*
- *Ensure that everyone who wishes to speak is given encouragement and the opportunity to do so.*

- *It is equally important that members on the course can speak openly about problems they or their members have experienced in the full knowledge that personal or sensitive information is restricted to the classroom.*
Confidentiality must be respected.

Language

Language is important and UNISON's policy is not to use language which offends or hurts people. This type of language should always be avoided as it causes distress. Often it is a reflection of stereotyped thinking about UNISON's membership and policies. Do not be surprised if you are challenged if you make broad sweeping generalisations about any group of UNISON members, e.g. that women only go out to work for pin money.

Language which contains anti-lesbian, anti-gay or disablist sentiments and which is abusive or threatening in any way should not be used and nor should jokes or comments which perpetuate discrimination.

Jargon

Jargon is a barrier to good communication. The more we become involved in trade union work the more likely we are to use jargon. Take care to explain any jargon or initials you use which other members may not be familiar with so that everyone understands what you are talking about.

Harassment

There must be no sexual, racist, anti-lesbian/gay or disablist harassment of any kind:

Sexual harassment - is defined as any unwanted and unwelcome sexual comments, looks, actions, suggestions, or physical contact that is found to be objectionable and results in an unpleasant or intimidating environment being created.

Racial harassment - is defined as any unwanted and unwelcome terms, comments, looks, actions or behaviour relating to a person's race, ethnic origin or colour which members of a racial, cultural or religious group find offensive and results in an unpleasant or intimidating environment being created.

Anti-lesbian/gay harassment - is defined as any unwanted and unwelcome terms, comments, actions, or behaviour relating to a person's sexual preference or lifestyle which is found to be objectionable and results in an unpleasant or intimidating environment being created.

Anti-disability harassment - is defined as any unwanted and unwelcome terms, comments, actions, looks or behaviour relating to a person's condition or speculation about a person's condition.

Outside Course Hours - Tea/Coffee/Lunch Breaks

What has been outlined as guidance for behaviour during course hours is equally applicable to the scheduled breaks during the course.

Outside Course Hours (Residential Courses)

The social side of courses - discussions in the bar for example - should be both enjoyable and valuable. It is important that this is true for everyone. This means on the one hand, making sure that everyone feels able to join in if they want to - just as in the class - on the other hand, not putting pressure on individuals to fall in with a group if they do not want to, e.g. drinking alcohol, going out or staying up late. If you stay up late yourself, be careful not to disturb others - everyone needs to be able to participate fully at the first session in the morning.

Time Keeping

The course has a tight timetable and members are responsible for their own time keeping. When participating in the course, you will often have a limited amount of time. Make sure you use it well and return to the main group in time for the report back.

Mobile Telephones

Using mobile telephones during the course or leaving them switched 'on' for incoming calls during the course is not acceptable. PLEASE SWITCH THEM OFF.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted during course sessions. Smoking is an access issue for some members and smokers must remember this. Smokers who have difficulty in abstaining until scheduled breaks will be permitted to take smoking breaks during group/syndicate work, but not plenary sessions. (This will be subject to the rules of the establishment in which the course is being held.)

Conclusion

These guidelines are intended for you to use during the course to counter problems as they arise, and to ensure that no-one feels excluded from the course as a result of language, actions or attitudes of other course members. They also seek to promote UNISON's policies on discrimination and equal opportunities in a positive way as far as the conduct of trade union education courses is concerned.

ACTIVITY 1

INTRODUCTIONS

Aims:

- To get to know who is on the course
- To identify existing involvement in and experience of PFI
- To identify what you want to get out of the course
- To identify what PFI is
- ◆ To begin to look at the potential threats to the services provided by members in PFI schemes

Tasks:

Task 1

For this activity you will be working in pairs. Interview your partner to find out the information below. Take notes of what your partner tells you, as you will be asked to introduce them to the rest of the group.

Ask each other the following questions:

- Name
- Branch and positions held in UNISON
- What experience, if any, you have of PFI in your workplace
- Please complete the following sentence.

By the end of this course I would like to know/be able to.....

Task 2

Then; on a flip chart

- Write up a one sentence definition of what you think PFI is
- Make a list of three potential threats that PFI poses to your members jobs and terms and conditions
- Make a list of three potential threats that PFI could pose to the services that your members provide

ACTIVITY 2 GETTING INFORMATION ON PFI AND POTENTIAL PFI PROJECTS

Aims:

- To decide what information you need to collect about potential or actual local PFI projects
- To find out where you can obtain the information
- To develop strategies for obtaining information

Tasks:

PFI is a major threat to UNISON members working in the public sector and a danger to the public services that they provide. Campaigning to raise awareness of the dangers of PFI at the early stages can be crucial. Intelligence gathering is, therefore, extremely important at local level to find out whether any PFI schemes are being considered and, if one is being considered, what service is involved. This activity will help you to identify possible sources of information on PFI and potential PFI projects.

Task 1

Working in small groups, on the left-hand side of a flip chart, make a list of the kind of information you would need to collect about:

- a) a planned potential or actual PFI project in your area or place of work
- b) General information on PFI that would help with campaigning
- c) Other Organisations that you may involve in a campaign against a local PFI project

You will need to think about:

- How you could find out whether your local authority is considering a PFI project
- Other PFI schemes which you could use as examples
- Government information about PFI (e.g. policy papers, guidance for employers)
- Alternatives to PFI
- Likely allies in any anti PFI campaign

Task 2

Try to identify where you could obtain that information and write up your possible sources on the right hand side of the flip chart.

Think about what you will do if your employer refuses to give you information, saying it is commercially sensitive. There is information on disclosure of information on the following pages.

Please use any of the materials available to you as these contain useful information on this. There is space on the next page for you to make your own notes on this.

Getting Information on PFI – Notes

Use this space to make notes of what information you might need and where you could find it.

Information Needed	Where To Find It

Name of Organisation	Contact Details Name Address Phone	Their position on PFI / Could they help in our campaign ?

FIRST STEPS CHECKLIST

Branches should negotiate with the employer to adopt the NJC Framework Agreement on Best Value, which covers all situations where local authorities are proposing to contract out services. This does not mean that branches are signing up to PFI. The agreement is mechanism for ensuring that UNISON is provided access to information and any discussions on PFI proposals and for the involvement of staff and trade unions in the process that will help in campaigning and protecting members' interests.

With regard to PFI the adoption by the employer of the NJC Framework Agreement on Best Values means that there should be-

Consultation and negotiation with trade unions at the earliest possible stage. That is as soon as the local authority suggests any proposal for a PFI project. The draft Best Value and Performance Improvement Circular advises that that procurement decisions by Best Value authorities should take into account workforce issues stating that " Staff and trade unions should be involved in the option appraisal stage, and where there is a decision to outsource staff and unions should be involved in the selection process and in the subsequent detailed work around the transfer."

- Full disclosure of all relevant information, including copies of key documents such as:
 - outline business plans/cases
 - full business plans/cases
 - copies of invitations to tender
 - invitations to negotiate
- Time off and facilities for stewards and branch officers involved in PFI projects, including facilities for training.

It should include a commitment to

- Disclosure of any strategic outline case at the time it is drawn up and/or at the same time
- Disclosure of assessment of whether staff should be included in a PFI scheme setting out the reasons why staff should be included and allowing the union sufficient time and information to develop any objections.
- Disclosure of outline business case and final business case prior to publication.

The 4Ps document "*Guidance for Local Authorities Disclosure of Information and Consultation with Staff and other interested Parties; Local Government, Public Private Partnerships and PFI under Best Value*" refers to the NJC Framework Agreement on Best Value. The 4Ps document also makes it clear that "During stage one of the PFI process local authorities have to challenge and identify the possible need for capital investment, and this will involve a rigorous examination of: the need for investment and any constraints; what is desirable and affordable; and what are the alternatives? It is imperative that the stakeholders are consulted and given the opportunity to comment at this stage." This must be read in the light of the draft Best Value and Performance Improvement Circular requiring local authorities to consult with staff and recognised trade unions.

Also at paragraph 2.27 of the 4Ps document which must be read in conjunction with the draft Best Value and Performance Improvement Circular it states that "an initial explanation of the strategic planning and business objectives supporting the case for investment and why PFI is an option should be made publicly available on request alongside the OJEC notice.", however this does not go as far as the provisions in the NHS , where there are mandatory guidelines on disclosure"

The 4Ps document also usefully states that "it is important to keep people informed about the progress of a scheme right through not only the procurement, but also the construction and implementation stages". This is acknowledges that there should be consultation throughout the PFI process.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION WITH STAFF

– A BRIEFING

This briefing outlines the key points from the **4Ps Guidance to Local Authorities on Disclosure of Information and Consultation with Staff and other Interested Parties on PFI** and key points from UNISON's response.

The 4Ps (Public Private Partnership Programme Ltd) produced the guidance in conjunction with the DETR and the Treasury Taskforce on PFI in 2000. This should now be read with reference to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's draft circular on Best Value and Performance Improvement, produced in July 2002, which will supersede Best Value Circulars 10/99 and 02/01 and therefore takes precedence over previous Best Value Guidance and Guidance produced by the 4Ps.

Key Points from the 4Ps Guidance

- ❖ Information and consultation on PFI projects must be in line with the principles of Open Government.
- ❖ Information and consultation on PFI projects must also be in accordance with the legal duty of local authorities to consult with key stakeholders.
- ❖ Recognises that trade unions and employees are key stakeholders. Note that under the draft circular on Best Value "Best Value and Performance Improvement", local authorities will be under a duty to consult staff and trade unions
- ❖ The key principle to the provision of information and consultation it is a matter of **when** and not **if** information will be provided to key stakeholders.
- ❖ Local authorities will decide when information is deemed confidential.

Key Points from UNISON's Response

- ❖ *UNISON has highlighted the secrecy of the PFI process under which commercial confidentiality is used to deny proper disclosure of information.*
- ❖ *UNISON has raised concerns about a number of local authorities refusing UNISON branches access to information on PFI proposals, in some cases this has occurred even after PFI contracts has been signed. It is also a matter of freedom of information to the public*
- ❖ *there are few PFI projects available following contract signature in the Treasury Taskforce library, despite the Government's commitment to*

ensure that such documentation would be kept in the Treasury Taskforce library.

- ❖ *The PFI process and information and consultation on PFI proposals should comply with the duty to consult under the Best Value legislation.*
- ❖ *In the event of a transfer of staff the PFI process and information and consultation on PFI proposals should comply with the requirements to inform and consult trade unions under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981, as stated in previous Government Guidance and in the guidance.*
- ❖ *Disclosure of information and full consultation on PFI proposals with key stakeholders - trade unions, employee, user and local community representatives, **before** any decision is made to opt for a PFI proposal. Information and consultation with key stakeholders should begin at stages one and two of the PFI process and continue throughout all 14 key stages of the PFI process.*
- ❖ *There should be mandatory guidelines on disclosure as for example is the case in relation to NHS PFI schemes. All key PFI documents including Outline and Full Business Cases for PFI schemes must be made publicly available within one month of their respective final approval. The definition of publicly available includes:*
 - ◆ *1 copy of each must be placed on local authority premises for employees, service users and other key stakeholders to see;*
 - ◆ *1 copy of each must be provided to the Chairperson of trades unions representing local authority employees;*
 - ◆ *1 copy of each must also be sent to the main local public Library where it must be available for viewing.*
- ❖ *Where any information is withheld about a PFI scheme, local authorities should be required to give a full explanation for non-disclosure rather than hiding behind blanket phrases of 'commercially confidential' or 'not in the public interest.'*
- ❖ *As the Guidance states disclosure should focus on **when** and not **whether** information should be disclosed, to this end, at each of the 14 key stages of the PFI process, there should be a clear timetable for the release of PFI documents with which all authorities would have to comply.*

BEST VALUE

All forms of procurement, and contracting out should be subject to the Best Value regime in England, the Welsh Improvement Plan in Wales and forthcoming Best Value legislation in Scotland.

The draft circular on Best Value and Performance Improvement, lists PFI as one of the service delivery options which is the outcome of Best Value. In the draft circular "Best Value and Performance Improvement" that applies to all Best Value authorities in England, local authorities will be under a

statutory duty to consult recognised unions, employees' associations, and staff throughout the best value process with full disclosure of information on all matters affecting the workforce. Branches should argue that this principle should be applied to staff affected by PFI schemes.

The Government has conceded a key matter on which UNISON has long campaigned since the inception of Best Value a duty to consult staff and trade unions. At paragraph 38 of the draft circular it states that "in reviewing functions, authorities must consult recognised unions and employees' associations, and staff engaged in that function. The Government intends to give statutory effect to this through an amendment to Article 6 of Statutory Instrument 1999/3251". Furthermore, "the mechanisms for involving staff and trade unions should be set out clearly, including how the views of staff will be taken into account in decision making processes".

ACTIVITY 3 IDENTIFYING THE ARGUMENTS

Aims

To explore:

- How to tackle arguments made in favour of PFI
- The most effective arguments to use against PFI

Preamble

In order to mobilise opposition against PFI you need to identify

What your objection to the scheme is

What arguments against PFI you can use.

What arguments in favour of PFI the employer might put forward and how you will counter them.

Campaigning against the Private Finance Initiative is not easy. The community and even staff may welcome the much needed capital investment without considering the long term implications for service delivery and cost. Local Councillors, Members of Parliament (MPs and MSPs), and Assembly members will often be ignorant of the true facts, or the long-term implications. Other unions whose members are not directly affected may not be supportive. And the local media will lose interest unless there is something new to report.

The case against PFI, however, is a strong one and in some areas has been made successfully. National campaigning has resulted in changes to the PFI process and at local level even where schemes eventually go ahead local campaigns have strengthened our ability to negotiate better protection for members.

Task 1

Working in your group and using the materials available to you identify the key arguments that might be used in favour of PFI and which UNISON would have to counter and the key arguments against PFI in relation to:

- Your employer
- UNISON members/other employees
- The general public, user groups and other outside bodies such as your local council/local councillors and political representatives such as MPs

Try to work out

- ◆ What arguments each of the groups listed may use to support the concept of PFI
- ◆ How you would counter arguments in favour of a PFI proposal. What are your alternative arguments?

You will need to think about issues such as:

- The cost of PFI
- What the potential effects on members and other employees are and who will be most affected
- What will happen to the facility or service in the short and long term
- Alternatives to PFI
- How you would counter arguments in favour of a PFI proposal. What are your alternative arguments?
- What information you will need to gather to develop and support your arguments against PFI

Task 2

Write the arguments you identify (both in favour and against) up on a flip chart and prepare a brief report (no more than five minutes) for the rest of the course on your discussions. If you identify arguments which might be used by others to support the PFI proposal, for example one the employer might use, you should say how you would counter that argument.

Task 3

When each group has reported back the tutor will ask you to identify what you think are the strongest arguments against PFI to use. This will help you to identify any potential weaknesses in your arguments that need to be addressed and those arguments that you should make most forcefully.

CHECKLIST ARGUMENTS AGAINST PFI

COSTS

- The real cost of PFI arising from the “buy now pay later” financing of PFI projects.
- The Authority does not have to find the money up front to meet the initial capital costs, in the short term any PFI deal may be more affordable than conventional procurement, but in the long term costs are higher than in conventionally financed equivalent projects – interest free credit does not apply here.
- The high setting up costs of a PFI contract.
- The lengthy negotiations with private sector consortia on the PFI bid involving solicitors and consultants.
- The bidding process for contractors is extremely lengthy and costly.
- The private sector borrows at much higher rates than the public sector, so the cost of funding the project is costly.
- PFI consortia usually want an excessive rate of return on their investment, e.g. the rate of return for Sky Bridge was over 20%.
-
- Refinancing PFI deals can give rise to excessive returns to the private sector

LOSS OF FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- PFI contracts can be anything up to thirty-five . This commits the public sector to paying for services for long periods of time and limits the ability of public bodies to switch resources in the future. This means that where there is a need to cut spending the PFI contract payment will be protected and non PFI expenditure may have to carry proportionally deeper cuts.
- How will a public Authority know what type of hospital, School, Health Centre or other facility it will need in 30 to 60 years time? Will the facility still be of use or value to the local authority? Will it still be necessary or appropriate at the end of the contract?
- PFI and the duty of Best Value are incompatible, the statutory requirement to make continuous improvements and meet any Best Value performance indicators creates potential conflict with PFI contracts.

IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES

- Cuts in terms and conditions for staff. Please also refer to Local Government in PFI Newsletter number 8, which contains a report of a survey carried out on the impact of PFI, which contains evidence of two-tier workforce and cuts in terms and conditions.
- The development of a two-tier workforce
- Most of those affected by facilities management within PFI projects are likely to be women in manual jobs - cleaners, catering staff and other ancillary workers. There are also men carrying out jobs such as caretakers and grounds and buildings maintenance staff, who have been transferred to PFI projects.

UNISON continues to campaign for fair employment and fair wages legislation to apply to all staff whether they work directly for local authorities or for local authority contracts including PFI. The proposals in the Best Value and Performance Improvement Circular, is a small step in the right direction, however falls short of mandatory fair wages and fair employment legislation in local authority contracting. The proposals include

- A new Code of Practice covering transferred staff and new staff. The Code is to be supported in statutory guidance and written into individual contracts between local authorities and contractors
- For staff transferred from a local authority to a service provider (contractor) there will be new legislation making statutory within local government the provisions in the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice on Staff Transfers in the Public Sector and the annex to it, A Fair Deal for Staff Pensions.
- Under the Code private contractors and other service providers who employ new staff to work on local authority contracts alongside transferred staff will be required to offer employment on “fair and reasonable terms and conditions which are overall broadly comparable to those of transferred employees, “
- Under the Code the service provider will be required to offer new recruits :
 - Membership of the local government pension scheme or;
 - Membership of a good quality employer pension scheme. For a defined contribution scheme the employer must match employee contributions up to 6% wished or;
 - A stakeholder pension scheme under which the employer will match employee contributions up to 6%.

Some UNISON branches have negotiated far better contractual clauses for transferred and new staff to tackle the two-tier workforce and protect the

terms and conditions of transferred staff through “TUPE plus” contractual clauses. .

- Demoralisation, demotivation of staff.
- Reductions in quality of services.

NATIONAL AND POLITICAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST PFI

- UK’s public finances are in a very healthy state. In 2001 the public sector net cash requirement (PSNCR) formerly known as the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) recorded a surplus of £7.4 billion. This means the Government can afford to significantly increase public borrowing directly to finance much needed investment in our public services without adversely affecting the PSNCR.
- Public spending by the Government is at its lowest for 40 years and the Government has cleared £32 billion of public debt. This is a key indication of continued under investment in public services.

CAMPAIGN SKILLS WORKSHOPS – ORGANISING THE DETAILED ELEMENTS OF YOUR CAMPAIGN

Introduction

Please again note Local Government PFI Newsletter number 8, which contains a report of a survey carried out by UNISON Direct in 2001 on branches which had gone through PFI, it examines on the impact of PFI, which contains evidence of two-tier workforce and cuts in terms and conditions. Many branches made general comments which branches will find useful and shows the differences in approach when no staff are involved such as:

“Branches should be involved right from the start, check all and any documents thoroughly, especially with regard to pensions”;

“ The project involved buildings and equipment only. The main problem was the health and safety issues regarding what furniture/equipment any staff would be expected to use. Reps should be included in negotiations right from the start, even if there are no staff involved.”;

“no employees were involved, therefore Unison not heavily involved”;

“Branch deeply opposed the scheme, but it went ahead anyway. The branch fear that it will be difficult/impossible to contact members as they will lose touch with the members. They also fear that the branch will have problems recruiting stewards under these new contractors. Also the branch have noticed changes in attitudes from private companies after contracts have been signed, they seem a lot more reluctant to contact the branch and update them”;

“This branch meets with another seven branches regularly to discuss the PFI issues and keep each other informed. These branches are all involved with the same private company so look to each other for helpful info”;

“Did not involve a transfer of staff. The branch were happy to see this project going ahead as it does not affect members of staff and actually makes life easier for members who work directly with the salt. However the branch would have liked to see the council purchase this outright, but realise that they did not have the funds to do this. On the other hand the branch are opposing an education PFI which involves cleaners etc, as the long term economics are horrific “

UNISON should continue to oppose the PFI scheme, but as this is not always possible we should ensure that UNISON negotiates a fair deal with the contractor and have a good working relationship with them. This branch are happy to provide any other branch/region with advice esp. when dealing with Jarvis. This is quite a new scheme for the branch - started in July so everything is still in the early stages

During any campaigning against PFI you will need to map out three separate elements of the campaign plan

- Carrying out campaign research
- Publicity and campaigning
- Involving and organising members

Task

For this section of the workshop you will be asked to select a campaign element to work on and complete the following planning activity.

Before you do this however you will need to decide as a whole group

1. What your campaign aims are

- ◆ The concrete steps that you will need to take to achieve them
- ◆ Who will do what
- ◆ How you would involve members in the campaign
- What events will you plan
- What publicity will you need to generate
- What are your key dates

2. Try to identify

Your direct targets – who you are aiming at in your campaign activities

Your indirect targets – people or organisations that may not agree with you completely but can help you put pressure on your direct targets.

Allies – Other individuals or groups that share your views and can assist you – for instance those groups that you identified in activity 2.

In each case think about

- ◆ Who they are
- ◆ What do you want from them
- ◆ What arguments can you use to persuade them to agree with you or assist you
- ◆ How you will get access to them or publicise your case to them

Planning Activity 1 Carrying Out Research

Aims – To identify our information needs
To identify what we need to find out to assist the campaign
To identify useful sources of information

Task :

In your team review the groups conclusions to activity 2 - Finding Information.

Try to identify

What additional information you may need to collect to assist with a campaign in your workplace.

In relation to

- UNISON members/other employees
- Your employer
- Service users, the general public and bodies such as school governors and tenants associations, political representatives such as MPs and local councillors.

Think about

- What you want them to do
- What arguments will you use to persuade them to do it
- What evidence will you need to produce to persuade them to agree with your view of PFI
- How you could use your campaign research.

You may need to collect information on matters like

- The cost of the proposed PFI scheme
- The impact it may have on the services that you provide
- Members likely to be affected by the PFI proposal
- The effect that a PFI scheme might have on members jobs and terms and conditions

Then, when you have defined the information/evidence that you need for your campaign prepare a report outlining

- what it is,
- how you would use it
- why you think it important to use it in relation to the three target groups,
- how you will go about finding it.

Planning Activity 2– Publicity and campaigning

Aims – To look at how we could publicise our case
To plan out publicity events
To begin to use a targeted approach

Task

Your team task is to plan out what sort of publicity and campaign strategy you could use to highlight your objections to PFI and achieve your campaign aims.

Try to identify

What publicity and/or events you could use to pursue your campaign aims in relation to

- UNISON members/other employees
- Your employer
- Service users, the general public and bodies such as school governors and tenants associations, political representatives such as MPs and local councillors.

Think about

- What you want them to do
- What arguments will you use to persuade them to do it
- How you would publicise your case to them
- What events/leaflets/other means of publicising your views you could use
- Who would do what
- How you would fund your campaign
- A campaign and publicity timetable

Then, when you have sketched out answers to the above questions prepare a report outlining your teams conclusions

Planning Activity 3– Involving and Organising Members

Aims : To work out how you will involve members
To work out what you want members to do
To work out how you will keep members informed.

Task : In your team draw up a communications strategy for your branch that outlines

- How you would inform members about PFI
- How you would involve them in the campaign activities
- What you would want them to do
- What publicity you would use to persuade them to do it

You are asked to draw up your communication strategy in outline only, when you have done this prepare a report describing your strategy and setting out

- Who would do what
- When
- How you would keep members informed on a workplace or departmental level
- How you could also use your campaign to improve union organisation at workplace level.

ACTIVITY 4 TYING IT TOGETHER - DEVELOPING A LOCAL CAMPAIGN PLAN ON PFI

Aims:

- To develop a local campaign plan against PFI
- To use the “twin-track” approach in a campaign strategy
- To do a SWOT analysis of your campaign

Tasks:

Now that you have done some preparatory work it's time to tie it all together and develop a local campaign plan to be put in place over the next 3 months. The aims of your campaign are to:

- Discourage the employer from using PFI
- Raise awareness of the arguments around PFI among members; service users; the general public and interested bodies

Negotiate for the employer to adopt the NJC Framework Agreement on Best Value with specific reference to PFI and other forms of procurement.

Task 1

For this activity you will be working as a branch team. Using the information available to you develop a campaign plan to use in relation to the key target groups that you will need to aim your campaign at.

- UNISON members/other employees
- Your employer
- Service users, the general public and bodies such as school governors and tenants associations, political representatives such as MPs.

Keep the “twin-track” strategy in mind when you are developing your campaign strategy. You may be trying to negotiate with the employer to defend your members' interests at the same time as you are campaigning against the employer's PFI proposal.

Task 2

Please write your plan up on a flip chart using the format on the following page. You can use the page in the Coursebook for your own notes.

Task 3

The tutor will help you to draw up a branch team campaign plan that incorporates all the activities identified by groups.

* List the name of the target sub-groups e.g. , Members of UNISON, Political representatives, the public.

Notes

ACTIVITY 6 PFI CHECKLIST FOR ACTION

Aims: To draw together what you have learned in the course
To decide on an action plan for your branch.

Preamble

Whether or not your employer has already started the PFI process or there is currently no PFI proposal, there are still things you can do to protect members and the public services in which they work.

Tasks:

Some of the key tasks for unions in dealing with PFI are to

- ◆ Get the local authority to sign up to the NJC Framework Agreement on Best Value and remind authorities that they should consult with trade unions in line with the draft Best Value and Performance Improvement Circular, to ensure early warning of any proposals and union involvement in the process.
- ◆ Raise awareness among members.
- ◆ Obtain information about potential bidders and other PFI contracts.
- ◆ Plan in advance for a branch PFI team.

This forward planning could be crucial in the union's success in challenging PFI proposals.

Working in pairs, make a checklist of the action you can take in your branches to prepare for a potential PFI proposal or combat an existing one.

COURSE REVIEW

Aims:

- To review whether you feel the course has achieved the aims set
- To complete individual evaluation forms

Tasks:

1. Working in pairs or groups of three, look at the aims in the Coursebook and on the flip chart completed in the Introductory Activity and decide whether you feel the course aims have been met.

Please be prepared to report back.

The tutor will give you an evaluation form. Working individually, please complete the form and hand it back to the tutor before you leave.

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