



Fighting cuts

A toolkit for UNISON branches



Introduction

The Tory-led coalition government is trying to rip up our public services on a scale never seen before. This pack puts tools into your hands to help you stem the tide of the brutal Tory led government's cuts to public services. It brings together economic arguments, legal rights, publicity ideas, campaigning tools, information and UNISON resources to help you, your members and the local community fight the cuts and defend jobs and public services.

This resource draws on lots of other advice UNISON has produced, but tries to summarise it and signpost other resources for you. It covers all branches, although there are some sections which are targeted at specific sectors (eg, local government). An online version will be available on UNISON's website.

The toolkit covers all these areas:

Arguments against the cuts

Alongside the Million Voices materials (www.unison.org.uk/million/branch-resources.php) this gives the economic truths behind the cuts.

Campaigning tools

Prioritising your actions, using the media and new social media, pulling in a celeb, and finding those knockout statistics.

The political angle

Targeting councillors and MPs, and making local political agreements.

Alternatives

Looking at council finance, fighting privatisation, and what the different types of service delivery organisation mean.

Your community

How do cuts affect a family and the local economy and how can you mobilise the local community?

Bargaining and organising issues

Making sure we can organise, facing down redundancies, handling attacks on terms and conditions, negotiating through reorganisations, using the equality angle, protecting health and safety, and what you need to know about volunteers.

If you have any comments, or suggestions for further factsheets, please email your service group at:

Local Government

localgovernment@unison.co.uk

Healthcare

health@unison.co.uk

Community

cvsector@unison.co.uk

Police and Justice

b.priestley@unison.co.uk
d.bryant@unison.co.uk

Higher Education

education@unison.co.uk

Energy

b.environment@unison.co.uk

Water, Environment, Transport

b.environment@unison.co.uk



Challenging the economic myths

Will jobs lost in the public sector really be replaced by jobs created in the private sector?

A central claim repeatedly made by the Government is that new jobs created in the private sector will more than offset the jobs lost in the public sector.

".....private sector job creation will far outweigh the reduction in public sector employment"

George Osborne 29 November 2010

What does the evidence show so far?

When the unemployment statistics for May to June 2011 (Q2 2011) were published they showed an increase of 80,000. At Prime Minister's Questions (14 September 2011) David Cameron said:

"These figures are disappointing but we shouldn't ignore the fact that since the election there are 500,000 more jobs in the private sector and employment overall, there are more people – 300,000 more in work than there were a year ago."

But David Cameron is including the 314,000 jobs created in the Q2 2010 and many of those were created before the election. None of them were created as a result of Conservative led Coalition policies.

Three months later (14 December 2011) David Cameron was at it again.

"Today at PMQs the Prime Minister said that the private sector had created 581,000 jobs since the coalition came to power, with 336,000 being lost in the public sector over the same period."

"It is true that between Jan-March 2010 and July-September 2011 (the figures released today) private sector employment levels rose by 581,000. But 54% of the rise (314,000 jobs) took place between Jan-March 2010 and April – June 2010, and the election was in May. It is fair to assume that at least a third of the change in private sector job levels took place in April 2010, and given the Government wasn't formed until the 12th of May, it's hard to see how the Prime Minister can take responsibility for jobs change over that month, before any of his policies had been agreed."

Nicola Smith (TUC) 14 December 2011

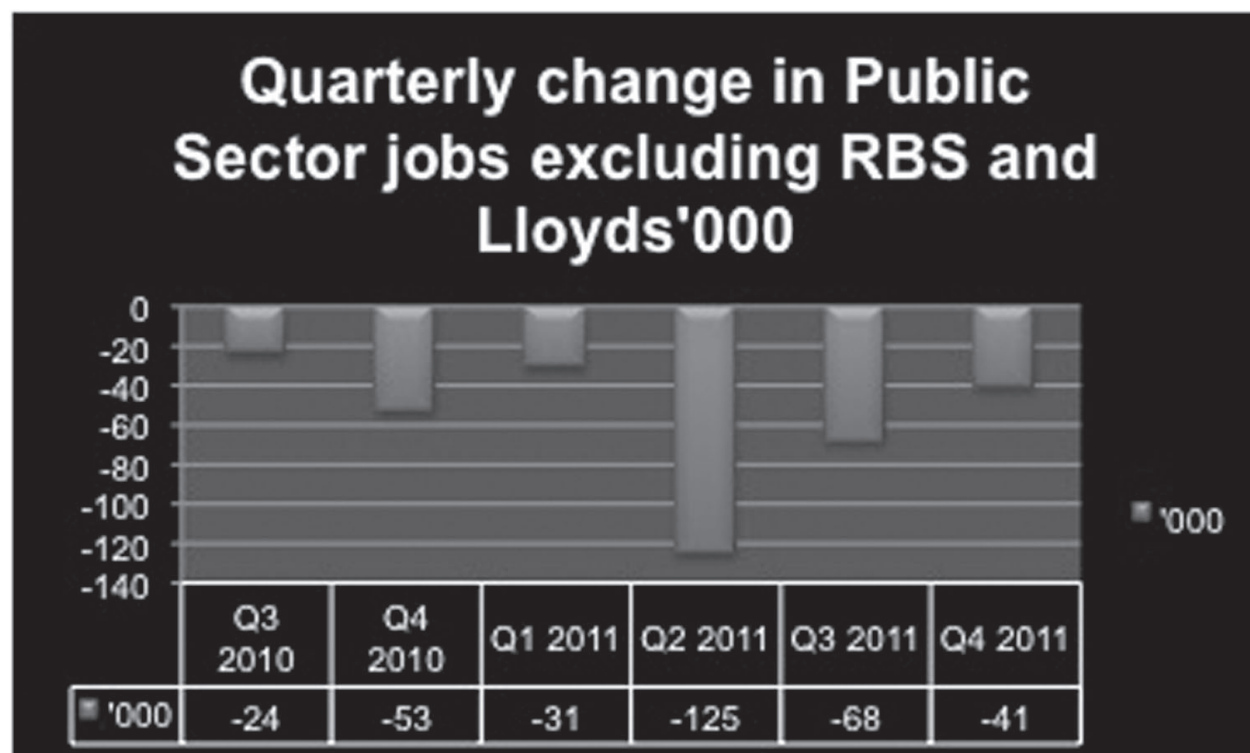
Channel 4's Factcheck points out

"At the end of PMQs Mr Cameron offered a more frank assessment when he said: 'The reason that unemployment is going up is because we're losing jobs in the public sector and not growing them fast enough in the private sector, so we need to do everything we can to get our economy moving'"



The ONS statistics show that between June 2010 and December 2011 there had been an increase in private sector jobs of 320,000 and a decrease in public sector jobs of 350,000 giving an overall fall in employment of 30,000.

	Employment '000s						
	June 2010	Sept 2010	Dec 2010	Mar 2011	June 2011	Sept 2011	Dec 2011
Private Sector	22853	22858	22947	23059	23115	23128	23173
Public Sector	6292	6263	6212	6180	6054	5979	5942
Total	29145	29121	29159	29239	29169	29107	29115





Planning, prioritising and delivering the cuts campaign

Any campaign against cuts needs proper planning. It will take a committed group of activists to come together to devise the most effective strategy. It is important that you plan your campaign carefully. Set out here are some ideas for helping you to plan, prioritise and execute your campaign strategy.

Planning

For any campaign you need to agree your campaign theme, your campaign objectives and the strategies and action plan to deliver them.

Campaign theme

The theme of this campaign will be opposing the cuts and setting out alternatives to the government- and employer-led attacks on jobs and services. You could identify one or two high profile cuts, closures or changes to fight, or run a more general campaign aimed at raising awareness and articulating an alternative to a slash and burn approach to public services. It will help if you have a specific early objective such as opposing the closure of a library, abolition of a local wheelchair service or Sure Start facility. You will need to think about what slogan or strap-line will best capture the imagination of your allies and target audience.

Remember a good campaign must:

- have a good chance of success;
- be widely felt;
- be deeply felt;
- be an issue that can involve members and potential members;
- be worth the effort;
- be easily understood.

Objectives

Your campaign team will need to ask: what you want to achieve; how you will achieve it and how you will know when you have done it. The easiest way to do this is to set SMART targets:

- Specific: there should be a clear precise outcome;
- Measureable: the campaign results in something you can measure;
- Achievable: it should be possible for people to do it;
- Realistic: you should have the resources to see it through;
- Timed: you should have a completion date.

Examples might include:

- to raise awareness of the [cuts/closure etc] among politicians by lobbying all MPs within the area by September 2011;
- to communicate UNISON activity on the issue by producing a monthly cuts bulletin for members by October 2011.

Strategy

You will need to think carefully about the various strategies that you will employ to deliver your campaign. Most effective campaigns will contain a mixture of different types of strategy, including:

- an organising strategy: to recruit and retain members around the cuts campaign;
- a bargaining strategy: to defend terms and conditions;
- a community strategy: to involve local communities and opinion formers in your campaign;
- a service user strategy: appealing to the users of local services and representative groups;
- a political strategy: to involve local councillors and MPs in the campaign.

Action plan

For each strategy, you should draw up an outline action plan to deliver the desired outcomes. The plan should cover:

- what to do;
- how to do it;
- who will do it;
- a timetable for implementation;
- resources: people, money, materials and equipment;
- any training needed to do it;
- the regional and national support required to deliver it.

Working through this will allow you to develop a list of all the major stages that need to be completed in order to achieve your campaign objectives.

Prioritising

In order to be able to deliver on your action plan and run the cuts campaign you will need to ensure that you are able to devote sufficient resources to it and prioritise it above other work. It is very easy for urgent



matters to interfere with your carefully laid campaign strategy. To help you cope with this remember:

- urgent matters may press upon us and require instant action, but are often not that important;
- on the other hand, important matters, like the campaign against the cuts, contribute to your high priority goals, like fighting to save jobs and services;
- it is easier to react to urgent matters than to important ones because important matters require more initiative and a more pro-active approach.

One of the most useful tools to help you to prioritise your workload during the campaign is to use the following grid to rank your work demands.

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important		
Not important		

Many of your campaign objectives will fall into the 'important/not urgent' box of this table, ie they are medium-term objectives that you are working to deliver over a matter of months, and do not have to be done tomorrow. On the other hand, you will have a pressing case load of personal cases that are 'important/urgent'. While it is difficult to re-prioritise the 'important/urgent' work, you should stop doing anything that is 'not important/not urgent', and critically examine which tasks in the 'important/urgent' box you can re-prioritise in favour of your medium-term campaign goals.

Drawing up timelines

Working through your campaign action list will allow you to scope all the major stages that need to be completed in order to achieve your campaign objectives. Break each stage down into smaller tasks or steps in as much detail as you think you need. By doing this you can produce a chart showing the overall logic and timing of your campaign.

Your chart should show all the actions in a time sequence. This will need to take account of what should happen first and which tasks depend on each other.

Estimate how long each task will take to complete. It is important to look at 'task time' rather than 'person time', because organising a meeting may take you three weeks from start to finish even though you are only investing two hours of your own time.

Make sure that colleagues who have responsibility for actions within the plan are absolutely clear about what they need to do and by when they need to do it.

UNISON has produced a campaigning guide (www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19308.pdf) and runs a strategic campaigning training course (www.unison.org.uk/utrain/pages_view.asp?did=8604).



Using the press and media

Effective use of the press and media is essential if you want public support for your campaign against the cuts. It is also one of the most effective ways of influencing decision makers. This means that your branch will need to develop links with the media including local and regional newspapers, local radio and TV. Set out below are some ideas to help you to develop your media contacts, skills and effectiveness. They include: media strategy; making contacts; dealing with newspapers radio and TV; how to write press releases; letters and how to do a radio or TV interview.

Is the story newsworthy?

This is vital. The press like human interest stories. How will the cuts affect members of the public? What will happen if the service disappears? How will job cuts affect an individual with a family to support and his/her family. Can you supply a case study or provide an individual for interview? If your issue is about terms and conditions, can you re-cast it as an issue about the quality of the service where the people work?

Media strategy

Your branch's media strategy should be about grabbing maximum public attention and getting support for your campaign against the cuts. You will need to consider:

- what you can achieve through media coverage;
- who you will contact;
- how you will contact them;
- what message you want to get across;
- what sort of events will attract publicity;
- when to release the story;
- how to follow it up;
- who will deal with subsequent media interest;
- what briefing they will need.

Media contacts

If you already have media contacts, talk to them about your media strategy and get their advice about the questions above. Your branch publicity officer may already have a list of local media contacts. If not, you should list the contact details for all your local newspapers, free newspapers, local radio and TV. Speak to each of these and find out who is the journalist you need to speak to about cuts to local services. Start to build up a relationship with these individual journalists so that they get to know you as the point of contact for UNISON in relation to cuts to local jobs and services.

Dealing with weekly newspapers

- Find out what the last day in the week is for sending in your story (copy) for publication.
- If you are announcing an event or press conference send it in a week beforehand to ensure that it goes into the paper's news diary.
- Ring up two days before the event to check that your event is in the diary.
- Ring up the day before the event to ask which journalist is going to cover it.
- If you are publishing a report, send it to the paper two days before your release date and check that it has arrived.

Writing to newspapers

- Letters to local or free newspapers very often get published.
- Keep your letter short (250 words max).
- Try to refer in your letter to something that's been in the paper.
- Send the letter to the editor.
- Phone the letters' page to check that your letter has been received.
- Remember that some newspapers, particularly free news sheets sometimes accept feature articles from organisations – ask your local media if they do this.

Local radio

- Getting on local radio can really boost the profile of your campaign. Talk radio, or radio phone-ins are the easiest way to get on radio. As well as phoning in as a branch representative, it is also possible to phone-in in a personal capacity as a member of staff. It is not necessary to give your full name when doing this.
- Send your branch press releases to local radio in the same way you would to local newspapers.

Local television

Television works with images and personalities, so to get coverage on local TV think about:

- organising an interesting-looking event that can be filmed;
- ask someone well-known in the community to attend the event, eg, an MP;
- banners and placards to add visual interest.



How to write a press release

A press release is your opportunity to create empathy among the public with your campaign against the cuts. You should aim to set out your story in a positive way. One way to create sympathy is to raise public concern about the cuts, say around the loss of vital community services.

The function of a press release is to give advance notice of an event, provide a report of an event, announce a new campaign or give general background information.

What should be included?

The five Ws are all important.

- What is happening?
- Who is doing it?
- Where is it happening?
- When is it happening?
- Why is it happening?

Style and content

- Use your branch's headed press release paper.
- Put the UNISON contact and telephone number for the story at the top and bottom.
- Make sure the release is dated.
- Give it a short and snappy headline.
- Use short sentences.
- Don't use jargon.
- Provide direct quotes from someone in the branch.

Preparing for interviews with the media

If you are asked to take part in an interview on radio or TV you will need to prepare properly. You will need to find out:

- what the programme is;
- who they want to speak to;
- how long the interview is;
- whether it will be recorded or live;
- whether it will be a debate with other interviewees;
- what the questions are.

Before the interview:

- decide what main points you want to get across;
- make notes on the answers to the questions you expect to be asked;
- have two or three real life examples of what you are going to be asked about to bring the interview to life.

During the interview:

- try to make your first answer a summary of the union position;
- keep your answers short and to the point;
- don't use jargon or assume any prior knowledge on the part of the interviewer or listener or viewer.



Using social media in campaigning

Not all campaigning and organising needs to be done face-to-face. We are increasingly using online resources to get our messages across and find support for our campaigns. One of the advantages that social media has is its capacity to 'go viral'. This means that a message can be spread from one user to another very quickly giving us a much larger reach. Social media must be part of our new campaigning tools, in conjunction with more traditional methods of face-to-face campaigning.

Setting up a website

This section looks at using social media, but you may first need to consider whether you are online and if not whether the branch needs a website. Further advice about going online and setting up a website or blog can be found in the UNISON guide effective campaigning – using the new media and social networking sites, [here](#).

What is social media?

All social media is internet-based. This means that sites are active 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and they require a more interactive relationship with the audience than a traditional website. Social media requires time and commitment to update information and to read and moderate comments or contributions. The media are used to establish a presence for your branch or campaign, interact with the audience and build your membership.

The four main types of social media are:

1. Blogging

Blogging involves writing and posting a regular column, which allows longer analysis and comment. You will need to have set up an online blog or full website before you can do this. Blogs can host a variety of information and perform a number of functions:

- resources for campaigns;
- comments, details and debate;
- help people find each other;
- host interactive maps to add local information;
- allow people to add their own stories and advertise events;
- bring blogs together and signpost to other relevant blogs;
- ask people directly to do something.

Examples of blogs:

TUC Touchstone

The Other Tax Payers' Alliance

UNISON Scotland

2. Forums and networks (including Facebook)

Forums and networks allow an exchange of views and sharing of information in a shorter form than blogging. The main social network that people use is Facebook. Below are some examples of UNISON Facebook groups and other networks to join.

Setting up a Facebook group

Setting up a Facebook group is easy but you will need to keep the page up-to-date – if you don't people may lose interest. For help setting up a Facebook group for a branch or a specific campaign click [here](#).

Having a Facebook group for your campaign will allow you to post updates easily, such as information about a meeting or demonstration, or a link to a relevant newspaper article. It can also be a good means of getting members of the group to do something that makes a quick impact, for example emailing or writing to their MP or local newspaper or attending an event.

When you set up a group you should:

- include details of how people can take part;
- refer to a specific request or action;
- include links to other relevant information or websites;
- give regular updates;
- moderate comments;
- close the group when appropriate.

UNISON Facebook pages

UNISON

UNISON NHS

UNISON Million Voices

UNISON young members

Examples of network websites:

False Economy (supported by UNISON)

Left Foot Forward



3. Twitter

Twitter is based on sharing information through a 140 character message. You can choose which other users (people or organisations) you want to 'follow' and similarly others can 'follow' you. It is a quick and easy way of connecting with other people who share your interests or who might be interested in what you have to say. Many big organisations, campaigns and MPs now use Twitter so it can be an effective means of getting your message across to a wide and very public audience. Some have found it is a better way of getting a response from politicians, both national and local, who are keen to show they are in touch with their electorate.

You can find out about the different ways of using Twitter and get more technical details from the *Twitter website*

UNISON tweets

UNISONnourhs

UNISONtweets

4. YouTube

YouTube allows people to share video footage with a wide audience by uploading their own videos and posting them on social networking sites such as Facebook. UNISON has started to use videos and TV on its main website and regions and branches are encouraged to do this too. Short films even be made and uploaded using many smart phones – for example showing a press stunt or demonstration – and don't have to be slick and polished to get attention.

You can find out more about using YouTube and get more technical details from the *YouTube website*.

See examples of *UNISON YouTube videos*.



Using celebrities in your campaigning

Celebrity endorsement can ensure that your campaign gets media coverage. However in this media savvy age, attaching any celebrity to your campaign will not work. There needs to be a real connection between the celebrity and the campaign they are promoting.

Does your campaign need a celebrity?

- Be clear about the aims and objectives and what you want to gain from involving a celebrity. If you are in doubt that celebrity involvement can achieve your outcomes then consider leaving them out.
- How are you going to use the celebrity in your campaign? Will the celebrity be a spokesperson or an endorser?
- Consider the possible stages in your campaign that could get media coverage and where a celebrity may fit in.
- Celebrities mean photo opportunities. Photos are an easy way to get you good print media coverage.
- Celebrities can help make your campaign message more appealing to certain audiences.
- A celebrity lends credibility to your campaign and a positive association.
- But people may remember the celebrity and forget the campaign message.

Choose a celebrity wisely

- Consider who you want your campaign to reach and pick a celebrity who will appeal to them. The wrong celebrity endorsement can end up putting people off getting involved.
- Look for a celebrity who has some kind of connection to your campaign issues. Believability is a key factor. Ideally they'd have some experience of being a service user.
- National media will only be interested in big A-list stars. However, local media will be very keen to hear from local celebrities.
- A committed local celebrity attached to a local campaign can be far more effective than a campaign endorsed by a 'too busy' big name star.
- Does the celebrity have the skills for what you want them to do? For example can they provide a good speech at a campaign fundraiser or articulate the campaign to the media in an interview?
- Consider whether there are risks involved in your choice of celebrity. Celebrities don't always behave perfectly or stay on message.

How to recruit a celebrity

- Celebrities like to get involved with local issues. Find out about any celebrities who live in your area or region. Search on the internet or look through local newspapers and magazines for any mentions of local celebrities.
- Write a personal hand written letter asking a celebrity to get involved with your campaign. Call their agent, publicist or personal assistant and get them interested too.
- Alternatively use agents' websites such as Big Talent Group (www.bigtalentgroup.co.uk) and Troika (www.troikatalent.com) to identify celebrities. Fanmailaddresses.com has the contact details for 12,000 celebrities. An online subscription to the service costs £24.99 for 12 months. You will need to think about how you approach celebrities this way.

The good celebrity pitch

- As a general guide, the pitch letter, inviting a celebrity to support your event, should be no more than one side of A4 with clear, simple messages and only a brief description of the event or initiative including size, date etc. There are lots of good causes competing for a celebrity's time, so what will make your pitch stand out?
 - Be very clear and specific from the outset about what you would like the celebrity to do and don't change this at a later stage.
 - Make your request as flexible as possible – for example, provide different dates and different opportunities to get involved.
 - Don't make it too ambitious if you're approaching a first-time supporter.
 - Personalise your pitch by making reference to why you have asked them in particular and how they are relevant to the initiative.
 - Make clear what added value they will bring to the event and what difference they will make. They will want to know what impact they will have.
- You may say that you will pay for transport but please note that you should never have to pay a celebrity for their support.



Final checklist for the event

- Once everything is in place for your event, make sure you send your celebrity a final full briefing note. This should outline the context of the event, what is expected of them, audiences, times, dress code and messages, etc.
- A briefing note should also include practical information such as a map and transport to the venue, name and telephone number of the main contact person on the night, etc.
- Cancellations? Do you have a plan of action if your celebrity cancels at the last minute? This can happen due to the nature of their work, especially because you are not paying the artist a fee. This is why it is risky to build an event around a celebrity. It's best to do it the other way round – organise an event then see if it would benefit from celebrity endorsement.

Stage manage your celebrity

- Get someone to look after your celebrity, to make sure that they are not being pestered or left on their own, or that they do not slip away without anyone thanking them for coming.
- Manage the celebrity's entrance and exit carefully as they are often on a tight schedule.
- Make sure you get the best media coverage possible.
- Make sure the celebrity feels supported, valued and thanked during an event.

After your event

- After the event, follow up with a thank you and feedback from the event. Think before you ask the celebrity to do something again straight away.

How to make a celebrity partnership last

- Brief your celebrity supporter before they take on any public engagements or media interviews.
- Keep your celebrity supporters interested in your campaign and informed. Make sure to thank them and let them know what a difference they made to your campaign.
- Choose carefully what you ask your celebrity to do for you and do not bombard them with requests.



Statistical sources

There are a number of sources of statistics and information you can use to help build your case against the cuts. Don't forget your council's policy and planning department too.

Office of National Statistic (NOMIS) – labour market

www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp

This is a key source of information on your local population, the labour market, business and benefits. More detail is provided below.

Resident population

This includes current and historic data providing numbers and percentages relating to men and women in the local authority area. It also includes a table on those between the ages of 16 and 64. It also provides a comparison with other local authority areas.

Labour supply

This shows current and historic data providing numbers and percentages relating to the employment profile of all those between the ages of 16 and 64 in the local authority area. It breaks this information down into occupational groups, qualifications and earnings (on a gender and full-time and part-time basis). It also provides a comparison with other local authority areas.

Out-of-work benefits

This includes data on a current and historic basis on those who are available for and are actively seeking work for at least 40 hours a week and claiming job seeker's allowance. It also includes the gender and age profile of those claiming job seeker's allowance. In addition, it includes numbers and percentages relating to those claiming employment and support allowance and incapacity benefits, income related benefits, as well as lone parents, carers, people with disabilities and the bereaved.

Labour demand

This shows data on the number of jobs in the local authority area broken down by industrial sector and part-time and full-time working. Information on gross weekly and hourly pay for full-time workers by gender is also included. In addition there is information on unfilled job centre vacancies.

Businesses

This shows the number and percentages of business registration and de-registration on a current and historic basis.

Annual survey of hours and earnings

www.statistics.gov.uk

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides information about the levels, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours paid for employees within industries, occupations and regions.

The ASHE tables contain UK data on earnings for employees by sex and full-time and part-time workers. Further breakdowns include by region, occupation, industry, region by occupation and age-groups. These breakdowns are available for the following variables: gross weekly pay; weekly pay excluding overtime; basic pay including other pay; overtime pay; gross hourly pay; hourly pay excluding overtime; gross annual pay; annual incentive pay; total paid hours; basic paid hours and paid overtime hours.

The Other Tax Payers' Alliance and False Economy

www.taxpayersalliance.org

www.falseeconomy.org.uk

These blogs are about the cuts, alternative solutions, the taxation system and other economic and social dimensions to the cuts debate.

Institute of Fiscal Studies

www.ifs.org.uk

The Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) aims to promote effective economic and social policies by understanding better their impact on individuals, families, businesses and the government's finances. Their findings are based on analysis, detailed empirical evidence and in-depth institutional knowledge. It produces critiques of budget proposals. It outlines current and historic rates and thresholds for the main direct and indirect taxes, as well as details of benefit rates, number of claimants and expenditure levels in its tax and benefit tables. It also produces public finance information for the UK and some comparative figures for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries as well as figures relating to various measures of inequality and poverty in the UK over time.



Employers' organisations

Local Government Employers

www.lge.gov.uk

You should be able to access this via your council. It includes Local Government Employers policies, guidance and procedures.

Local Government Association

www.lga.gov.uk

This provides up-to-date information on developments in local government, elections and expenditure. It publishes briefings and surveys.

NHS employers

www.nhsemployers.org.uk

Universities and Colleges Employers Association

www.ucea.ac.uk

Association of Colleges

www.aoc.co.uk

Government departments – England

Department for Communities and Local Government

www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment

This produces statistics on new build housing starts and completions, councils' tax base and information on house prices and mortgage completions in England. It also produces statistics on capital expenditure, receipts and financing, council tax, national non-domestic rates, revenue expenditure and financing and the local government pension schemes.

Other departments produce relevant statistics for their area:

Department of Health www.dh.gov.uk

Department for Education www.education.gov.uk

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
www.bis.gov.uk

The Fawcett Society

www.fawcettsociety.org.uk

This site contains statistics on the impact of the budget cuts on women.

Welsh Assembly

<http://statswales.wales.gov.uk/index.htm>

This site holds statistics on employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and out of work benefit claimant rates, labour market indicators, employee and self-employment jobs. It also has indices of production, the index of construction, the index of market services, as well as details of exports, VAT and PAYE enterprise births and VAT and PAYE enterprises. Information can also be obtained on average earnings and gross value added and gross disposable household income per head.

Scottish Parliament

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications

Similar information to that of the Welsh Assembly is held on this site.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com

This provides statistical information on all the equality strands. It also provides guidance on a range of equality issues, including carrying out equal pay audits and equality impact assessments. It has offices in England, Scotland and Wales.



Working with politicians

Influencing elected politicians at all levels is vital to campaigns against cuts. But for lots of reasons some UNISON branches have got out of the habit of doing this. This briefing aims to help you re-connect.

The advice below concentrates on councillors and members of Parliament (MPs). The same principles apply to working with members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), Assembly members (AMs) in Wales and London, and members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Northern Ireland but in these cases, you will need to coordinate your strategy via your UNISON region.

Find your elected representatives on www.theyworkforyou.com or www.writetothem.com.

Local councillors

What is the political landscape?

What is the political composition of your council? A Conservative majority? A coalition of two parties? Every area has a different set of political party councillor dynamics. Your political tactics and methods will vary, but you will need to build short-term and long-term relationships with councillors.

Map the councillors

Mapping councillors and deciding political tactics requires having information about each of your councillors:

- their political party (including any independents);
- the ward they represent, potentially the wider area their ward is in, their party, their majority (are they potentially vulnerable?), when they are next up for election;
- details about who is in the council cabinet, and what their responsibility or portfolio is;
- who sits on which scrutiny committees.

All this information will be on your local council website.

This will help you decide if you want to target all parties, certain opposition parties, specific wards with key services, the ruling cabinet, portfolio holders with responsibilities or members of scrutiny committees. It is also useful to know who the key 'movers and shakers' in the parties are – but this won't be on the website and you may have to find this out from friendly councillors.

Influencing individual councillors

Engagement with councillors should overall build upon long-term sustained good relations and

communications between the branch, UNISON members and councillors at regular intervals. Personal contact is the most valuable tool, so try to make sure there is a link between senior members of the branch and key councillors.

Backbench councillors will often be most responsive to specific issues that affect the area they cover, and useful general methods of keeping in touch include:

- a UNISON newsletter sent regularly to all councillors or selected councillors;
- personal letters and contact from members – councillors respond better to personal letters and contact rather than to mass copy-cat letters on specific issues;
- UNISON responses to formal consultations.

Influencing your local council

There are some democratic tools that you can use to bring concerns to the attention of politicians.

- Work with councillors to put motions to council meetings.
- Ask questions in open public meetings.
- Ask scrutiny committees to conduct an investigation and review of an issue.
- Use deputations, petitions, referenda, and the 'community call for action' (in England).

These are best used as part of a wider campaign, so tell the media what you are doing.

Deputations

Deputations are a way of lobbying the council, and each council has its own rules, which are normally on the council website under 'Democratic services'. You make a formal request about an issue that the council is responsible for or that directly affects its area or residents. Often you will need a certain number of residents to sign up to support the delegation. You will have time for a short speech, and councillors may ask questions and then discuss the issues raised. You may be able to secure a further meeting with senior councillors, or ask for the scrutiny committee to review a matter.

Example:

Havant Council www.havant.gov.uk/havant-142

Petitions

Petitions to the council show public feeling on a subject, and can be used as an organising tool. Most councils have a system for handling petitions – in England this is a legal requirement – which sets out



who can sign (eg, under-18s, people who work but do not live in an area), what the council may do in response (eg, accept it, hold an inquiry, provide a written response) and how long it will take to respond.

Example:
Ipswich Council www.ipswich.gov.uk/petitions

Scrutiny committees

Scrutiny committees review ('call in') decisions of the council and cabinet, but may also look at non-council issues in the local area. There is often a main overview and scrutiny committee, and then other sub-committees for reviews of services or specific issues. They can make reports and recommend that decisions are changed or reconsidered, although they don't have the power to enforce this.

Scrutiny meetings are often open to the public and usually set out the plan of work at the start of each year, so you should try to get a contact on the committee. In England, individual councillors can refer an issue to the overview and scrutiny committee through a 'councillor call for action'.

Example: Southwark Council
www.southwark.gov.uk/info/10058/about_southwark_council/445/how_decisions_are_made/5

Members of Parliament

Your MP, MSP or AM has a duty to listen to your concerns. MPs, MSPs and AMs are sensitive to the opinion of their electorate and local constituents. Most want a reputation as a good constituency MP, so consider sending them regular email updates. Westminster MPs have both a constituency office (staffed by a secretary or caseworker) and a Westminster office (staffed by a secretary and a researcher). MPs typically spend all day Friday and Monday morning in their constituency.

Meeting your MP

You can meet your MP, MSP or AM locally (contact their constituency office) or in Parliament. When writing:

- identify yourself as a local UNISON branch representative and say you represent members who live and work in their constituency;
- keep the letter brief but do enclose any relevant reports or information;
- be clear about what you are asking them to do;
- request a reply.

After meeting, write to thank your MP, MSP or AM for their time, state what you understood to be the outcomes of the meeting or event and remind them of the actions they agreed to take on your behalf.

For lobbying at Westminster see UNISON's campaign guide www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19308.pdf.

Events with MPs

To organise an event with an MP, ask their office who to talk to. MPs are more likely to turn up if they know the local media will be there, or if the issue is one of their specialist interests. Stress that by attending they will keep in touch with concerns of constituents. You can ask an MP to: speak at a meeting; headline an event; be part of a 'question time'; or even try a public service job for the day.

Using MPs, MSPs or AMs in other ways

You can also ask your MP to raise issues at a higher level. They can write to ministers, ask written or oral parliamentary questions and sign early day motions showing support for a particular issue or campaign.

Remember, get Labour Link to make contacts for you. Ask your UNISON region who your regional Labour Link officer is.



Local political agreements

Branches need to be in contact with local politicians and election time is one of the best times to influence them. Some UNISON branches have asked candidates of all parties standing for election to sign up to a pledge to defend public services and public service workers.

Because UNISON is affiliated to the Labour Party, some branches have gone further and made pre-election agreements with their local Labour party, setting out specific policies that Labour will follow. These local political agreements are sometimes called 'mini-Warwicks' after the Warwick agreement between the national Labour Party and the trade unions.

But the process of discussion leading up to these agreements is just as important, as it builds trust and the person-to-person relationships in the difficult context of councils facing huge cuts from the Conservative led government.

Be aware that political campaigning at election time is tightly controlled, and the UNISON regional Labour Link committee approve any expenditure or resources used during an election in support of the Labour Party.

If you agree a local political agreement, please let us know by emailing localgovernment@unison.co.uk

Model letter from Labour to union members

Below is an example of a letter from Labour to union members.

Dear friend

Over recent times, Labour councillors and union colleagues have worked together on a number of campaigns, standing up for after-school services for working parents, protecting jobs from being exported out of the locality and holding the council to account over poor contractual arrangements in the care sector. The policies contained in this document describe Labour's plan to help address the issues facing the public sector and to make xxxx a better place to live and work.

By working together we can improve the relationship between the council and its staff, take positive and collective steps creating a fairer xxxx.

Councillor xxx

Leader, xxx Labour



Agreement between UNISON and a Labour Party

This is an example of an agreement between a UNISON branch and a Labour Party.

A manifesto for staff

An incoming Labour administration in xxxx council will act to make xxxxxx a fairer and better place to live and work in. We recognise that to achieve this we need to work in partnership with council staff – both directly employed and contracted. The staff manifesto was agreed between the Labour Party, and xxxx UNISON and sets out our plans to improve the relationship between the council, the trade unions and its staff.

A better relationship with staff and their trade unions

As a priority we will ensure effective ongoing consultation and negotiation in a forum agreed with the recognised trade unions. This will include councillor involvement and the executive member with responsibility for human resources.

We will ensure there is meaningful consultation with staff and their trade unions on changes in the workplace. As well as our commitment to be a council that listens to local residents, we will also listen to staff and work with them to improve and protect services.

We will do all we can to avoid compulsory redundancies and campaign for the council to receive more resources from the government. We oppose the Conservative/Liberal Democrats 'savage cuts' policy direction and believe it would be bad for local residents.

We will seek to ensure these principles are applied within a commercial organisation in which the council has a financial interest and will put pressure on other contractors to adopt these principles.

We are committed to local employment and service provision and will seek where possible to ensure the council and its contractors employ local people. We will deliver more local apprenticeship schemes.

Staff pay and conditions

Inflation means that our staff face a real terms pay cut, and we oppose the pay freeze or cut for 2010 and 2011.

We believe that a two-tier workforce is detrimental to quality services and will require contractors to give new starters no less favourable conditions than transferred staff.

We will strive to ensure that a living wage is paid to all members of staff, including those that work for external contractors, and we will look at the processes

with which to do this immediately, seeking to amend existing contracts if necessary.

We propose to look at the mechanics of implementing the single status agreement immediately across all council contracts.

We support the retention of a high-quality, adequately funded, final salary pension scheme including current retirement provisions, and will encourage a higher take-up. We will support open admission agreements for staff working for contractors, which will ensure better funding for the scheme.

We will significantly reduce the use of temporary agency and contract staff. We will end abuse evident in the use of individual contractors and reduce the costly use of external consultants.

Ending contracting chaos

We strongly believe that the provision of council services through directly employed and accountable staff provides best value, and will look to bring services back in-house where it is in the interest of staff and residents. We will include trade union representatives in the mechanics of the contracting process.

We will introduce strict contract compliance to ensure quality service standards and fair employment practice including in areas such as pension provision, health and safety and equalities.

Labour will look at securing a better accountability mechanism for the monitoring of contracts by residents.



Privatisation and cuts in local government

Alongside the ideological agenda of cuts to public services, many politicians have accepted the groundless myth that private services are more efficient than public ones. There are plenty of examples of excellent, efficient public services. UNISON has resources to assist branches in tackling privatisation threats.

Engage

Senior council officers and leading local politicians will consider major service or privatisation behind closed doors. So it is crucial to have a working relationship with them.

Plan ahead around elections (especially local ones) and talk to all significant political parties beforehand about the value of in-house services. See if they will sign up to working with UNISON and keeping services in-house. After the elections, talk to the council leader and chief executive about their plans.

Also try to involve backbench councillors, using the advice that is available:
www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B5150.pdf.

No matter what changes are proposed, the employer should conduct an equality impact assessment on them and there is local government service group guidance on using these at
<http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/AA9891.pdf>
This can slow down the process and help you get a foot in the door to negotiate. It is also a way to link up with potential allies in the community.

Pre-empt

There are many examples of how in-house services can be reformed with the involvement of trade unions. Newcastle is the most often quoted example: www.tni.org/tnibook/public-service-reform-not-we-know-it. But UNISON research has detailed many others: www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19226.pdf. Don't wait to be presented with proposals, but try to maintain a dialogue with your employer about their plans for service change, and encourage them to involve you from the start.

Before any proposals come forward, try to get your employer to sign up to a decent agreement on procurement – there is a model procurement agreement at: www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/MPA_FV.doc and one on access to information at: www.unison.org.uk/file/Model%20Information%20and%20Confidentiality%20Agreement.2.doc.

Discredit

There is a common view among senior officers and politicians that privatisation is a cost-efficient option. But the debacle in the flagship Liverpool Direct project shows this is simply not true: http://www.unison.org.uk/activists/pages_view.asp?did=12082

Privatisation and cuts can have a devastating economic impact on the local economy, with every £1 cut taking an extra 64p out of the local economy: <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B5365.pdf>
Branches can contact their region about getting studies done on the impact of privatisation and cuts, such as the one undertaken for Suffolk.

Campaign

There have been many examples where privatisation proposals have been fought and won. A series of case studies and videos are on www.unison.org.uk/localgov/success.asp

Service contract adverts (known as OJEU's) are monitored by the local government service group and sent to regions as a safety net.

If a procurement process goes ahead, there is advice and training from UNISON:
www.unison.org.uk/activists/procurement
and consultancy support available from UNISON nationally and from the Association for Public Service Excellence (www.apse.org.uk).

You may want to consider secondments or other arrangements, and there is general advice available at www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B5075.pdf and more specific at <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/UNISON%20LG%20Secondments%20advice%20-%20final.pdf>

There is also the experience of other branches to draw on when faced with shared workforces: www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B5011.pdf.

Funding is also available to support branch campaigns – from the general political fund and the regional pool. Contact your regional organiser about access to this money.

Follow the members

If members are faced with outsourcing, ensure that TUPE and other protections are enforced http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/PCU_Organising_guide.pdf



For Scottish branches, further resources are available on UNISON Scotland's Public Works campaign site
www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks.

More information is available on
www.unison.org.uk/localgov/cuts.asp.



Service delivery options in local government

Why is this important?

As public sector workers confront the prospect of major cuts in spending, the government and others are encouraging employers to look at outsourcing or redesigning services.

The way public services should be provided is different from how commercial activities are carried out. They should:

- be publicly accountable;
- be open and transparent;
- be of high quality;
- deliver value for money;
- give workers a fair deal;
- minimise the risk of service failure;
- use the experience of users and workers;
- help deliver public policy objectives, such as equality.

UNISON's preferred option is for council services to be directly provided in-house because this can best deliver on all of these objectives. But there are other types of 'service delivery vehicle'.

Most forms of outsourcing involve limited companies of different types. If a council is setting one up itself, this will take time to create, and incur large costs from lawyers and consultants. Most outsourcing involves the procurement process, which can be lengthy and is expensive, especially if 'competitive dialogue' is used. Once the contract is issued there are ongoing monitoring costs.

If a service is outsourced the public body has limited control over it, and even if councillors or council officers are board members of an arms-length company, they are legally bound to make decisions in the interests of that company, not in the interests of the local authority.

It will also require a well resourced contract monitoring unit, or risk exposing the council to being ripped off.

However, if an outsourced service fails (for example the company providing it goes bankrupt) then the public authority has to pick up the pieces and the workers may find themselves redundant – it can be high risk.

Even if an outsourced option looks good to start with (e.g., a mutual) bear in mind that if it loses the contract next time, workers may transfer to a private company.

Freedom of information, the public sector equality duties and other positive requirements of public sector organisations do not directly apply to many outsourced services.

The table below takes you through the different types of service delivery vehicle.

More information

There is a more comprehensive list of service delivery organisations [here](#)

There is more information on mutuals [here](#)

The costs of privatisation are exposed [here](#)



Type of service	What is it?	Democracy	Workforce	Risks	Examples
Direct provision	Fully part of the public sector directly provided services by one or more authorities. Cheap and easy to set up. Eg, in-house, delegated services, joint committees, provision for another authority.	Direct council influence, freedom of information (FOI), and equality duties apply, public service ethos.	Council employed, local government pension scheme (LGPS) access, full equality duties and FOI, staff may transfer between councils, or be 'lent' using a section 113 agreement.	Councils may have rivalry or disagreement.	Highways services between counties and districts, 'Tayside contracts'; also Adur and Worthing councils.
Public sector influenced	Some public oversight, but may have tax advantages and be able to trade and generate income. Eg, housing E.g., housing ALMOs, council trading companies, trusts, joint venture companies	Limited public oversight as a shareholder and on board, but operates in own corporate interests.	Staff transfer (or secondment), not council employed, LGPS admitted body status possibility, local bargaining.	Can and do go bankrupt, can be used to make cuts or major reorganisations at arm's length, ultimate risk of service failure remain.	Essex Cares, Sefton New Directions, City Building (Glasgow) LLP, leisure trusts, SouthWestOne.
Outsourced	Small and large businesses have to bid for contracts periodically. The market means the big tend to take over the small. Eg, social enterprises, mutuals, charities, community interest companies, privatisation.	The contract is the only influence, often less public service ethos.	Transfer of undertakings (TUPE) transfer, poorer employers, pensions at greater risk, harder to organise staff.	Can and do go bankrupt, small organisations less financially secure, expensive to change contracts, cost of contract monitoring.	Directions, Greenwich Leisure, Capita.
Others	Volunteers, ad-hoc community groups and self-employed also provide public services.	No council influence, service users may influence a bit.	Unpaid, or (agency staff) rock-bottom conditions.	Risk of service failure.	"Big society" and personalisation of social care.



Community campaigning

Why it's important

The attack on public services by the government is so extensive that to fight it we will need to work with others against the cuts and in favour of a decent life for all. People are confused about the origin of the economic crisis.

The government story is simple – Labour spent us into debt and we have to shrink the state and hand over services to private companies or volunteers. If we just try to defend jobs, pay and pensions, the public may see us as just looking out for our own interests. Arguing that public service cuts and reforms hurt the whole community means we can:

- show the social and economic benefit everyone gets from public services;
- identify allies who would be willing to work with us;
- make the campaign proactive, so we don't just focus on defending what we have, but start to develop a community alliance with a common agenda for all politicians.

In almost every area there are organisations we can work with – service user groups, rights groups, faith groups, trades councils, other unions, and community groups of all sorts. This will involve engaging with other organisations' agendas, finding common ground and trying new tactics alongside tried and tested ones like demonstrations, petitions, political lobbying, negotiation and industrial action.

How do we build community alliances?

We need to reach out beyond our traditional allies to other organisations who share our issues and concerns. There may be conflicts over who controls the agenda and differences in approach. Community activists may have experience of unions asking for support for one campaign, but then abandoning the coalition. We have to make it clear that we are building relationships for the long term, not just for one campaign.

There is no set model for this, but the ideas below may be helpful.

Different models of alliances

UNISON-centred	Broad-based
Single issue coalition	Multi-issue alliance
Community groups asked to support our policy	Members support each other
Short-term	Long-term, sustainable
Leader-to-leader relationships	Member-to-member relationships

Key parts of a community campaign

Start by listening

Talk with stewards and members about how the cuts will affect them. This will give you an idea of where to build links around common concerns. A local GP may not be worried about a council pay freeze, but may be concerned about a patient who can no longer afford her family's prescriptions.

Find other organisations to work with

Use your assessment of the likely impact of the proposal you are fighting to identify other organisations working on similar issues. For example, if members in library services face redundancy, identify all the groups who regularly use or rely on the library's resources or your members' expertise, eg, local parents' groups, schools, Age UK etc.

Map your members' affiliations

UNISON members and activists may also be active in many other organisations: professional bodies; voluntary organisations; school boards; councils; sporting or religious organisations. At the next meeting, get members to talk about which organisations they are involved with and record this.

Use one-to-one contact

One-on-ones are the mainstay of community organising. They establish a relationship with long-term benefits. Arrange a one-on-one with the leaders of community organisations with your members who are involved. Get to know their agenda, how cuts will affect them, and use this to find common ground between their concerns and UNISON's.

Form a working group

Based on your one-to-ones, bring together a working group – 10 to 20 people – of core leaders who have time, energy, a 'can-do' attitude, and represent a



cross-section of the community. Together the group would:

- identify the most significant problems that people are facing;
- identify one small, achievable change that would make a difference;
- plan a campaign to tackle that issue;
- carry out a power analysis to develop your strategy.

Power analysis

Who has the power to give you what you want? Can you stop the closure of a library on your own or only with other key community groups? Do the decision makers believe that you have the power to change things?

Be clear about:

- who you are targeting;
- whether you can influence them directly – if not, who can?

- what your current power is – who can you mobilise and do you have strong allies?
- whether the campaign is achievable, even if it does not solve all of the problems you are facing. Small wins build confidence and skills.

Take creative action to move the campaign forward

Build public pressure on decision makers by taking well-planned, careful and creative action. You need to get a reaction. Actions should be:

- polarising – a simple, dramatic message;
- personalised – target the person with the power;
- within your experience and outside of theirs – fun, innovative and creative.

More help on campaigning is in:

- UNISON's strategic campaigning guide (www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19308.pdf)
- Community campaigning guide (www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19910.pdf)

Power analysis of a Tory council leader





Effective organising in campaigns against cuts in services

Organising approaches

Organising involves using a campaign to recruit new members, raise membership participation in the union, identify and train new activists, and build your collective strength to increase your chances of success in your campaign.

Branches and regions use various organising approaches. They all have common aims:

- to recruit more members, contacts and stewards;
- to raise UNISON's profile and increase influence;
- to find out from members what is happening in their workplaces and to inform them of UNISON's activities.

UNISON will have much greater influence with local management and with employers in an organised workplace with a high density of union membership.

Members will have a stronger sense of confidence and a greater ability to change things, and there will be a much higher chance of winning recognition in non-recognised workplaces.

Most branches are already engaged in many organising activities during campaigns and below sets out the most effective organising activities resulting in an organised workforce.

1. Mapping members – see UNISON activist zone web pages https://www.unison.org.uk/activists/sh2_members.asp
2. Talking to members about their key issues and concerns.
3. Encouraging participation in the union by members who have traditionally been under-represented in the union's structures helps to build organisation and therefore a stronger union.
4. Creating a broad-based union membership that sends a powerful message to employers that the union speaks for the whole workforce. This also helps encourage new members to get involved and be active.
5. Involving members in campaigns by giving them appropriate tasks to do. This means that the branch will be better able to deal with issues; it will also be active and much better placed to retain new and existing members.

6. Identifying which means of communication will work best in each particular workplace – meeting place and times, email, social media, newsletter etc.
7. Asking stewards to identify 'leaders' or potential shop stewards for each workplace and appointing a branch member or organiser to keep in regular personal contact with them and be part of a branch network.
8. Using the organising approach of empowering workers is more likely to succeed than telling members the benefits of joining and promising them a servicing role in which members expect stewards to solve their problems for them.
9. Developing a community organising strategy to reach as many potential new members as possible.
10. Removing any barriers in the way of people joining a union. Effective organisers aim to remove as many of these as possible.
11. Using a number of specific techniques to help you influence someone to take the step and join. Speak to your regional organiser for advice.
12. Using appropriate language when addressing potential members. You need to be assertive and clear in your arguments but not pushy and you should use inclusive language. Avoid union jargon as far as possible and illustrate your arguments with real-life examples of how the union has been effective in their workplace.
13. Consider which recruitment material to use and whether you need to produce your own to supplement national and regional materials.

UNISON runs a regular organising course – contact your region for more details.

For further guidance on campaigning use the UNISON guide, Effective campaigning
<http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19308.pdf>



Attacks on pay, conditions and pensions

These are tough times. We know our members' priority is to maintain job security and they may be thinking that they would rather cut their hours, pay or conditions than lose their jobs. But we need to get into workplaces and let members know that most of these attacks won't protect jobs and will make working life worse in the long term. We cannot allow conditions like annual leave and sick pay schemes to be whittled away.

What do we want?

We must protect key terms and conditions. Unions can pool information and work jointly at local level to resist changes. Branches are in the best position at local level to balance negotiating priorities, effective resistance and job security.

Our objectives in negotiations are to:

- protect members' jobs, terms and conditions and pay;
- maintain quality services to the public;
- stop employers undermining national bargaining structures;
- talk to, recruit and retain members.

Areas under threat

Your employer may propose making changes to elements of the terms and conditions of service of your members which may include:

- working time – extending the hours of the working week;
- annual leave – reducing leave allowances and thresholds for increasing allowances;
- out of hours – paying overtime at plain time rates, reducing on-call payments, increasing hourly thresholds for payment of out of hours work;
- sick leave – dropping down to statutory levels of sick leave payments, refusal to pay full sick leave for an initial period and aggressive management of sick leave;
- maternity pay – dropping down to statutory levels of maternity leave payments;
- pay – cutting pay beyond the freeze recommended by the government for those earning above £21,000, withholding progression up incremental pay scales, inclusion of capability clauses to hold staff back from progression.

Key steps to take when negotiating

Below are some clear steps you should take to assess your employer's proposals and consider what action to take at local level.

1. Get engaged with your employer over the wider context of change and their strategy. What are their plans for transformation or restructuring? Does UNISON have better ideas?
2. Find out from your regional organiser what UNISON is saying about negotiating changes in your area of work.
3. Seek help to examine your employer's accounts and budgets to see whether any or what levels of cuts are justified.
4. Is your employer prepared to enter into a no compulsory redundancies agreement as the starting point for any negotiations around terms and conditions issues? Is it feasible that the employer can deliver what they offer?
5. Get copies of the national agreements and make sure you know what's in them. (These are available on employers' websites or contact your service group).
6. Get the full details of any proposals and the level of alleged savings by your employer and analyse that information carefully. Remember, not all employers need to make the cuts they are proposing.
7. Let your regional organiser know immediately about the proposals and seek guidance on the requirements in terms of the formal consultation process.
8. Assess the impact of the proposals on terms and conditions for current and future members.
9. Are the proposals across the whole workforce or are just certain groups affected?
10. Find out whether the proposals have been considered or agreed by, for example, councillors or board members and if not, let your councillors or board members know what's happening.
11. What alternatives can UNISON put forward? You can get specialist help to look at them through the service group.
12. Find out what – if any – alternatives have been explored by the employer. Will these proposals really help them deliver savings or better services in the long run?



13. Will your employer pilot the changes to assess the consequences and impact?
14. Check on the use and cost of consultants and agency staff and seek to reduce them as a starting point for cost savings.
15. Ensure any proposals have been or are fully equality impact assessed by your employer and check to see if you agree with their assessment. You can order and use the equality impact assessing guide to cuts, jobs, pay and conditions.
16. Ask for more facility time to negotiate if necessary.

Involve and engage members and organise

It is vital that branches ensure that all activists and representatives are briefed on your employer's proposals. Set up a branch organising team to ensure information is passed on to members from the negotiators. Include branch equality officers. Use the information you have on your membership to identify key groups or areas that will need additional resources and support, such as small or more remote workplaces like schools. Above all, use activists to make as much face-to-face contact with members and non-members as possible. Try to:

- ensure all members are talked to directly by stewards at every stage of the process;
- hold workplace meetings;
- get the message out to members about the proposals and why you are resisting changes – explain what the local arguments are for protecting terms and conditions;
- try and describe the changes to terms and conditions in ways that also relate to the safety and effectiveness of the service under threat;
- ask members to get involved in cascading information or become workplace contacts if they are not prepared to become stewards;
- keep members updated by word of mouth, your branch internet site and telephone trees.

Recruit

- Recruit non-members. We need to continue to build our density and our bargaining strength. The more members we have, the stronger we will be in protecting terms and conditions and jobs. There has never been a better time to recruit.

- When talking to members, ask them to talk to one colleague or friend about what the union is doing and follow this up with a recruitment call.

Time needed to consult members and negotiate

Branches will need to make clear to employers that they will want to inform and consult members carefully over any initial or final proposals before they can sign any collective agreement involving changes to members' contracts.

Changes imposed by an employer – keep them short-term and reviewable

The worst scenario for members is when employers impose changes to contracts through dismissal and re-engagement using section 188 notices.

We want to avoid this, and if it is not possible to resist an employer's proposals you may be forced to negotiate with employers in order to reduce the impact on members and try to maintain jobs and services.

If you can't stop your employer making changes, then negotiate only short-term reductions in pay or conditions with clauses to ensure that they are reviewed at least annually – and improved when financial pressure is off.

Industrial action

If further negotiating is impossible and all disputes procedures are exhausted, advice should be taken from the regional organiser. Any consideration of industrial action should be in accordance with the code of good branch practice (www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/17711.pdf) and the industrial action handbook (www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/17518.pdf).

Sources of information

- Equality impact assessing guide to cuts, jobs, pay and conditions.
- Local government – advice and guidance on defending NJC pay and conditions against reducing workforce costs.



Equality impact assessing cuts to jobs, pay, and conditions

If your employer is a public sector body, it is their responsibility to assess the likely impact on equality that any changes to jobs, pay and conditions will have and to produce clear evidence of this consideration. Branches should argue for the retention of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) methodology as the best way for employers to demonstrate they are complying with equality law. You may also be able to use relevant collective agreements and/or joint guidance to ensure this method is chosen. UNISON's role is to check that the employer has not applied a faulty analysis in their equality impact assessment (or documentation showing the employer has given consideration to any equality impact) and there are a number of steps you should take as below. Any changes to pay and grading structures or pay related conditions should be referred to legal services and the relevant service group. Stewards in workplaces not covered by these duties should seek to use these principles to address equality issues. This is particularly true in workplaces which provide public services, but are not public sector employers.

Step 1 – Initial discussion with employer

- Seek a meeting with management to discuss the employer's strategy for making savings.
- Insist that any proposals affecting jobs, pay and conditions, service delivery or working methods are impact assessed and that UNISON is fully consulted and involved in this process from the outset.
- Agree a method for properly assessing EIAs within the process of developing a proposal.
- Seek UNISON representation on relevant working groups overseeing EIAs or at least access to the statistical data to enable the union to conduct its own analysis.
- If the employer does not conduct a full impact assessment on proposals affecting jobs, pay and conditions, service delivery or working methods, stay in negotiations but reserve the union's position.

Step 2 – Branch response and branch organisation

- Lead branch officers, branch equality officers, activists and members will need to work together to develop branch input into an EIA and identify negotiating strategies. They will have the following roles:
 - o lead branch officers – lead negotiations;

o branch equality officers – ensure EIAs are used as a bargaining and organising tool and act as key advisers in negotiations;

o self-organised groups – provide experiences and understanding for negotiating on EIAs;

o stewards – help members get involved and provide evidence of the impact on their working lives and service delivery;

o members – express their collective view.

- Identify branch negotiating team and time off, facility and training needs for branch involvement.
- Meet with your regional organiser to discuss branch involvement and training needs.
- Plan a recruitment and organisation campaign to increase UNISON density and ensure that you have active stewards in every workplace.
- Aim to have equality reps in every workplace.
- Get every existing UNISON member to recruit at least one non-member.
- As changes are proposed, bring together affected members to discuss alternative options for saving money or mitigating the impact.

Brief members and non-members on what is happening.

Step 3 – Intelligence gathering

- Request and read the details of your employer's current equality objectives and policies and check proposals for change against these. These may be standalone policies, part of a collective agreement or part of a statement on intent which can be found on the employer's website.
- Use your service group's guide to finance.
- Use your service group's redundancy pack.
- Map the equalities make-up of your workforce – remember, some terms and conditions may apply to other bargaining groups.
- Gather relevant internal survey results or customer feedback data.
- Branch equality co-ordinators can help branch negotiators by identifying and analysing information about the employer's equality performance.
- Consult UNISON's bargaining information system for relevant regional and national data.



Step 3 – Campaigning

- Contact service user groups on threats to services and make sure they provide input into the EIA consultation and are involved in any campaigns.
- Remember that members are also service users and part of the local community and their experiences and contacts can be used to build up alliances.
- Make sure that sympathetic board members or councillors receive a copy of any briefings to members and service users.
- Make links with the local press and media and brief them regularly.
- Keep your region and the service group informed of all developments.

Step 4 – Analysing your employer's methodology and data

- Check the analysis on the potential for discrimination or significant adverse impact on equality groups.
- Calculate what percentage of equality groups are affected by the changes and what percentage of those are not. Alternatively, insist that the employer does the calculations and check the results.
- Seek advice on your assessment from your regional organiser as necessary.
- Find out from those affected exactly what the changes will mean for them.
- What evidence is there of steps to mitigate an adverse impact?
- Determine whether these changes are the only means of making savings or whether there are alternative proposals which could be considered.
- Use relevant information provided by members to negotiate for the retention of the current arrangements or better alternatives than those proposed.
- For all other proposals where the branch's assessment differs from the employer's, submit the branch's calculations back to the employer, asking for the proposal to be reviewed for alternatives or mitigation.

Step 5 – Challenging the EIA

- Follow the UNISON equalities duties protocol if the employer fails to produce an EIA (or equivalent documentation) or performs an inadequate impact assessment or ignores the outcomes.
- Take advice from your regional organiser if the branch thinks the employer's justification for continuing with the proposal may be legally challengeable.
- Remember – an impact that is adverse but is not legally challengeable needs to be dealt with as a collective bargaining or campaigning issue.
- Invoke the dispute procedures.
- Seek legal advice via your regional organiser on whether discrimination or equal pay claims can be mounted.
- There may be other breaches eg, in national minimum wage regulations or health and safety. Seek legal advice via your regional organiser. If you have one, write to the employer's Monitoring Officer if the employer has done or is about to do anything in contravention of the law or which would constitute maladministration.

Examples of where branches have used EIAs to mitigate cuts:

- A district council in the South West proposed to introduce car park charges. Following an EIA the council agreed to mitigate charges for pregnant employees and those with disabilities and/or caring responsibilities.
- A Scottish council proposed cuts to leave, overtime, car allowances and to freeze increments. Equality Impact Assessments were produced on the proposals and in negotiation the branch successfully resisted the proposed incremental freeze and cuts to overtime and car allowances. The council also agreed to introduce a living wage.
- A Metropolitan Council in Yorkshire/Humberside dropped proposals on unpaid leave and premia payments.
- Welsh branches have been successful in resisting the more radical proposals to cut premia pay
- Branches are also getting councils to revisit previously implemented cuts. A County Council in the South West has revisited its cuts package and the branch has gained some ground in terms of mitigating an incremental freeze and achieving improvements to stand by & call out allowances.



Flexible working

One of the responses of employers to cuts is to reorganise jobs and services. This can take many forms, but inevitably, unless carefully done, will result in increased workload and stress issues.

This factsheet describes the various ways an authority may reorganise, the impact and the actions you can take.

Reorganisation proposals

- Your employer might introduce homeworking in an effort to cut down the costs of using its own offices.
- It may want staff to be more flexible so that they can be moved to areas as and when there is, for example, a service delivery breakdown.
- It might introduce 'hot desking' to increase flexibility, cut costs and introduce a different culture.
- Your employer might even ask staff to relocate offices.

Impact

- Working at home regularly can result in isolation and a tendency to work longer hours and it might be harder to manage stress. Working in an office environment facilitates face-to-face conversations where staff can take time to talk over problems and come up with solutions.
- There is likely to be a requirement to have broadband installed and there will be other overhead costs such as heating and lighting.
- IT technical support may not be so readily available.
- Flexibility may mean a requirement to carry laptops and accessories around, which could create health and safety risks.
- Relocation may make journeys to work longer and could put greater pressures on carers and people with disabilities.
- Not having your own desk and different ways of working may lead to stress related illness.

Dealing with change

Some employers will try and impose changes to homeworking or to a normal place of work. Branches should take a number of steps.

- Make clear to the employer that these are potential redundancies and that the full redundancy consultancy processes should be followed.
- Consider invoking disputes procedures.

- Check out the contractual terms and conditions of the workers involved – depending on what these say, there could be a breach of contract if the employer seeks to impose the change.
- Get legal advice on any mobility clauses – even where these do exist, the employer will only be able to use them to implement homeworking if this was what the parties (ie the worker and the employer) intended the clause to cover. There are legal tests around reasonableness that still need to be applied even where a mobility clause exists – ie take account of the individual's circumstances and the effect on them. Many people's homes are simply not suitable for homeworking – either in terms of the physical environment or because of family use.
- Ask your employer to look at office accommodation used by other public service organisations in the vicinity – is there scope for shared use?

Where hot desking, homeworking and flexible working are introduced you will need to have policies and agreements to cover a range of issues including:

- protocols around contact numbers and provision of mobile phones;
- training and protocols in the proper use of hot desking;
- protocols and provisions around the storage of confidential documents;
- risk assessments and Disability Discrimination Act assessments covering the carrying of laptops, provision of special seating and work station set-ups and the impact of longer travel time etc;
- relocation compensation;
- a homeworking allowance to cover additional heating, lighting, fuel and insurance costs – as a guide, Ofsted and Care Quality Commission currently pay an annual allowance of £460; try to get an agreed formula for how the allowance will be increased each year.



Health and safety

As spending cuts take hold, there is a danger that health and safety hazards could increase. Under-staffing, excessive workloads, cutting corners on equipment, maintenance or training, an increased threat of violence from members of the public who are losing benefits and services – these are just some of the things branches need to watch out for. Use our Safety First poster to highlight the possible problems faced by you and your colleagues.

However, your employer's statutory obligations under health and safety legislation and the role of union health and safety representatives do provide you with some useful tools with which to fight the cuts.

Find out about safe staffing levels

- Check if there are statutory guidelines that apply to the service. Services like schools and early years have guidelines on staffing ratios set by the regulators. In other services, such as social care, staffing numbers are governed by minimum or essential standards. These vary across the four UK countries.
- Look at the risk assessments and staffing complements – and prepare to challenge the employer on how they can ensure the safety of service users and staff if staffing numbers are cut.
- Watch out for cut-backs on night shifts and other out of hours provision.

Workload and training

- Many members will find their workload starts mounting if vacancies are left unfilled or jobs go. Devise a simple diary that members can use to record their hours and to note any instances when service user needs had to be ignored or corners cut. After a week or two collate the diaries and prepare a report for elected members and the local media.
- Many employers will look to training budgets as an easy source of cuts. However cutting training could increase risks to workers and to service users. Make sure there are policies in place that give all workers a training needs analysis and a personal development plan. Get union learning representatives to support workers to record training needs requests and any refusals from employers to provide training that is required. Compile a report for elected members and the local media.

Impact assessments

- Ask for risk impact assessments to be completed on proposed cuts.
- Use the UNISON stress at work guide and get agreement to carry out a stress audit. This will be your baseline – when cuts proposals come, ask for a stress impact assessment to be carried out. Remind the employer of the personal injury cases UNISON has won on behalf of members whose employers have failed to act on stress. Make sure you keep written records of everything you have raised with the employer – this will allow you to show that the risks were foreseeable.
- Get your health and safety reps to use the UNISON guide to workplace inspections and use the 'Cutting corners' materials to raise awareness among members.

Lone working and violence

- Staffing cuts are likely to lead to greater risks arising as a result of lone working and violence. Use the UNISON guides to lone working and tackling violence at work to identify the risks and demand protection. Make sure you keep written records of everything you have raised with the employer – this will allow you to show that the risks were foreseeable.

Duty of care, codes of conduct

- Employers have a duty of care to their employees – part of that is to provide a safe working environment and to respond to concerns, stress, and other issues, which may interfere with employees' ability to function effectively.
- The duty of care also applies to everyone who works with members of the public. It means not performing tasks which are beyond the practitioner's level of competence.
- In addition registered staff such as social workers and occupational therapists have a professional duty under their codes of practice to raise concerns. For example, the code of practice for social care workers states that you must bring "to the attention of your employer or the appropriate authority resource or operational difficulties that might get in the way of safe delivery of care."
- The duty of care and the codes of practice are useful tools to back up members wanting to make a stand against cuts. Often workers fear doing this alone, but that is where the union comes in. You can co-ordinate open letters and petitions on behalf of workers who want to demonstrate that they are



complying with their code of practice by raising concerns.

- In addition, most professional bodies publish codes of professional practice or other good practice guidelines. These codes give you a professional reason to oppose, for example, a reduction in the time available to complete accurate records. There are professional bodies for all sorts of groups of staff, from accountancy to medical secretaries, so when members come under threat, find out what groups they work in and identify the relevant professional organisations.

For more information see forthcoming Duty of Care: a UNISON handbook revised 2011.

Other services, other unions

- Staffing cuts will not just put members of your branch at risk – they will affect service users and other workers in other services. Use local media and service user contacts to publicise what you see as the dangers.
- Look at all the other services your members work with – for example cuts to support staff in schools could put teachers and pupils at risk. Contact local teaching union representatives about joint publicity and campaigns. Local government branches should contact UNISON health, police and probation branches for support where cuts to council staff will put greater pressure on health services and vice versa.

Recruitment

- It is important to recruit colleagues who are not in the union so that they receive the protection you know is available from UNISON. It is also important to encourage more members to take up the role of safety representative. We have produced a campaign pack to help with this. The Safety in Numbers Toolkit includes a suggested campaign actions sheet, the role of the safety rep sheet, a model article for your branch newsletter or website, a brief guide to campaigning, a campaign poster and a campaign leaflet. The toolkit (stock number 2754) is available from the online catalogue at <http://www.unison.org.uk/resources/onlinecatalogue.asp>



Volunteers and cuts

Volunteers make a valuable contribution to society. Many UNISON members already work closely with volunteers or volunteer themselves outside work, and the trade union movement itself is built on the involvement and engagement of volunteers. However, there is a difference between real volunteering and using volunteers as a source of cheap labour. The Tories 'big society' concept is based in part on the idea of volunteers providing public services. The misuse of volunteers, interns, and other non-employees may be attractive to employers faced with cuts. For example, one of the options in the Local Government Employers' document, Reducing Workforce Costs, is to consider moving to a service model based on volunteer staffing. Paid staff and volunteering roles are different and volunteering should not be used by employers as a means of reducing professional, fully trained paid staff. Likewise, branches should be wary of employers encouraging unpaid internships or 'placements' in which individuals are covering work that should be undertaken by paid staff.

Legal status of volunteers

In law, in order to be a volunteer, individuals must agree to work completely voluntarily and for free. This means that an organisation cannot require anything from the volunteer, such as that they be trained or work a minimum amount of hours. Individuals are unlikely to be regarded as volunteers if they are required to work for an employer in return for any pay benefits in kind or training or if they have agreed to be available for work at certain times. A pattern of behaviour can represent a contract even if there is no written contract.

Individuals who are not genuine volunteers should be entitled to be paid at least the national minimum wage (NMW) and get paid holidays and other employment rights. There is one exception. Some 'voluntary workers' do not have the right to the NMW even though they have a contract with an employer to do work. This exception applies to voluntary workers working for a voluntary organisation or statutory body. Such 'voluntary workers' can receive no more than limited expenses and benefits in kind. Paying more than limited expenses triggers full NMW entitlement. Although these 'voluntary workers' are not entitled to the NMW they will be entitled to other employment rights. Any apprentice who has a contract of employment is entitled to full employment rights, including the apprentice rate of the NMW. Students on courses of education, which include a work placement are not entitled to the NMW.

Negotiating points

- Is the employer using genuine volunteers or has the distinction become blurred and entitled them to employment rights? The Trades Union Congress has produced guidance about who might qualify for employment rights and what they might be on the 'rights for interns' website (www.rightsforinterns.org.uk). While the website is primarily aimed at interns, it will also be useful for branches covering employers who start using volunteers and different non-employee relationships.
- Are volunteers proposed as substitutes for jobs currently filled by paid staff? If so there may not be a genuine redundancy situation. Volunteer roles should complement the jobs of paid employees rather than replace established posts or cover staff vacancies and shortages.
- Volunteers are not free. Employers may see contracting out to the community and voluntary sector as a way to capitalise on the sector's unpaid volunteer 'workforce.' This builds on the common misconception that the sector is staffed only by volunteers and that volunteers can take on some of the tasks paid staff do in the public sector. Employers need to consider carefully the costs of developing and maintaining a volunteer programme. There needs to be an infrastructure for recruitment, training and support of volunteers.
- There can be a considerable turnover of volunteers, which may threaten service delivery and continuity. Some roles will not be appropriate for volunteers because they require complex knowledge of issues such as legislation on health and safety or child protection.
- Systems must be in place to monitor the effectiveness of using volunteers.

Trades Union Congress and Volunteering England charter for strengthening relations between paid staff and volunteers

Branches may want to negotiate a policy on using volunteers appropriately. This should include a guarantee of no job substitution, good 'employment' standards for volunteers and clear roles for volunteers and paid staff involving human resources departments and unions.

The Trades Union Congress and Volunteering England have developed a charter setting out key principles and good practice, which branches can use as a model to develop more detailed policies and procedures with



employers in any discussion around the involvement of volunteers – see <http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-17329-f0.cfm>.

The charter's principles are outlined below.

- All volunteering is undertaken by choice and all individuals should have the right to volunteer, or indeed not to volunteer.
- While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards for their activities, they should receive reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- The involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff and should not be used to displace staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service.
- The added value of volunteers should be highlighted as part of the commissioning or grant-making process, but their involvement should not be used to reduce contract costs.
- Effective structures should be put in place to support and develop volunteers and the activities they undertake and these should be fully considered and costed when services are planned and developed.
- Volunteers and paid staff should be provided with opportunities to contribute to the development of volunteering policies and procedures.
- Volunteers, like paid staff, should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination.
- All paid workers and volunteers should have access to appropriate training and development.
- There should be recognised machinery for the resolution of any problems between organisations and volunteers or between paid staff and volunteers.
- In the interests of harmonious relations between volunteers and paid staff, volunteers should not be used to undertake the work of paid staff during industrial disputes.

Additionally, the police and justice service group has produced model volunteer policies and procedures which can be adapted for other services. The web link is www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/policecommunityvolunteersUNISONgoodpracticeguide.pdf



Talk, listen, act – the power of one-to-one conversations

If we are going to make an impact on the cuts, we need to start by getting our members to believe that it is worth trying to fight back.

Opinion polling shows that the Tory-led government are continuing to win the argument. Cuts are widely seen by the public as inevitable, and that includes large sections of our own membership.

The facts and suggestions for action in this cuts resource provide you with a range of tools. But what is the best way to educate members, potential members and the public about the real reasons for the financial crisis? We need to bust the myths the Government is peddling, and convince people that there is an alternative and they can do something about it.

While there's a place for mass communication like fliers, leaflets and meetings, the one-to-one conversation is often the most effective way of getting someone to connect with the union. This is because it allows us to get to the root of what is worrying them/ their family and give them a sense that they can do something to make a difference.

Often UNISON activists are used to answering members' questions and being the experts so it can be difficult to take a different approach. Whether you are out and about trying to engage the public, or going round workplaces talking to members and potential members, these simple tips can help you plan to get the most out of your conversations.

Tips for one-one conversations

- Plan to do 70% listening and 30% talking/asking questions
- Think about how you will introduce yourself. For example "Hi I am Jo from UNISON, the public services union, and we are here listening to members/workers/ the public about how the cuts are affecting you."
- Get started by asking wide questions like:
 - o "What are your concerns about the cuts/ reforms/restructuring etc?"
 - o "How will this impact on you and your family?"
 - o "How are you feeling about what is going on at work/in your community/in this service?"

- Use what you find out to ask follow-up questions on their particular areas of concerns to get them thinking about how it fits in to the bigger picture. For example "You're concerned about pensions, so what impact will the changes have on you? How will this affect your retirement? Will it change your plans? Why do you think the Government is pursuing this? Who will benefit the most from these changes?"
- From here you need to try and tip them into drawing a conclusion from how they're feeling. This is where a couple of closed questions can be effective and to the point. For example: "Do you think this is fair? Do you think this is the right course of action?"
- Now ask questions about how we can do something about the situation. For example: "What would you like to happen about this issue? Do you think we could make a difference if everyone stood together on this? What are the alternatives?"
- Gradually feed in some information about the union's campaign. Be prepared with some examples of things we have won and what members have done to achieve it
- Finish by asking the person you are talking to to take some small achievable action. Be prepared with a couple of options. For example: sign a petition, come to a meeting, talk to other people, sign a pledge, join the union, give their contact details
- Keep records of who you spoke to when – and follow it up! Keep in touch with the members you spoke to and find out if they've been able to talk to any potential members
- One-to-one conversations are also a great way to spot new activists and gradually involve them in the union



Cutting Carbon, not Jobs

In the current cuts driven agenda UNISON branches are under pressure to focus on saving jobs and fighting cuts. But using our natural resources efficiently at work and reducing waste is now economically critical to many organisations. Whether for legal or ethical reasons, all public sector organisations, and those delivering public services, are duty bound to reduce energy consumption, costs and CO2 emissions.

In response to the risk of climate change, a growing number of UNISON branches are now electing environmental reps to campaign for cost effective green measures, recognising that action plans are needed to reduce energy and resource use as an alternative to job losses.

Employers failing to act

A TUC survey of over 1300 union reps in 2009 found that many employers are failing to make the necessary environmental improvements and take full advantage of the financial savings to be achieved by taking energy, waste and water management, seriously.

Many organisations are also significantly underestimating the financial returns from environmental projects. A recent study of 1,000 energy efficiency projects carried out by the Carbon Trust found that companies can expect to see an internal rate of return of 48% on average, with pay back within three years. There are few other investments that can boast anything like this rate of return.

Austerity measures, and the failure by employers to recognise the full value to be gained from action on energy efficiency, means that important environmental projects are being sidelined when they have the potential to slash costs as well as carbon emissions. Money that could be spent protecting jobs and terms and conditions, is instead being wasted while energy costs keep rising.

UK businesses and public bodies could save £500 million - and two million tonnes of CO2 - by engaging staff in cutting energy use, paper waste and travel. Furthermore, most organisations can save between 10 - 20% of their energy costs through simple low-cost and cost-free measures. But to do this, workers on the ground must be involved.

UNISON environmental reps have the confidence of their members and are in a unique position to secure the active participation of the workforce. UNISON green projects are showing that workers can be the most effective agents for change.

Why campaign on green issues?

Climate change presents a challenge to everyone. We face the challenge of securing both economic and environmental recovery. The changes that need to be made will transform our workplaces and our whole economy, trade unions need to be involved to win workplace commitment, encourage reluctant employers to participate and to make sure change is fairly negotiated.

- The bottom line is that making workplaces green saves money, and helps make jobs sustainable.
- Energy inefficiency in the workplace puts financial pressures on organisations and means extra costs are passed onto our members as consumers and service users.
- UNISON involvement in green issues can strengthen the union by bringing in new members and reps into the branch.
- You can anticipate future changes and priorities and gain an increased awareness of external pressures on an organisation e.g. rising energy costs, non-compliance with regulations, financial penalties or fines.
- Environmental improvements can make workplaces healthier, safer, less stressful and more comfortable places to work.
- Action in the workplace can encourage greater energy and money savings at home, helping tackle fuel poverty.
- Cost savings can be fed into staff bonus schemes or ring fenced for investment in environmental improvements.
- Encouraging employers to focus on environmental issues can lead to the creation of green jobs and boost the local economy.

Making the business case.

When making the argument for UNISON's involvement on energy matters, consider the incentives that are most likely to appeal to your employer.

- **Economic competitiveness and reducing overheads** - with energy costs forecast to rise by as much as 81% over the next decade, cutting expenditure is a priority. Sound environmental management can also lower landfill bills, water bills, transport costs and the costs of consumables, hardware and repairs.



- **CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme** – a mandatory scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency and cutting emissions in large public and private sector organisations. If your employer participates they must monitor and report their CO2 emissions from energy use and buy allowances to cover their annual emissions. Ask your employer if they are covered by the scheme and for energy use to be included on the next joint union/management agenda.
- **Tax incentives** – workplaces can save tax by going green e.g. exemptions from the Climate Change Levy and Enhanced Capital Allowances that enable businesses to buy energy and water efficient equipment.
- **Subsidies and grants** – loans (some interest free) for energy projects from the Carbon Trust, feed-in tariffs for electricity generated from small scale renewables and other low-carbon generation technologies, subsidised eco-driving training for drivers and advice on fleet management to help lower running costs and reduce vehicle emissions.
- **Improved recruitment, retention, morale and productivity** – 60% of UK employees say it's important to work for an organisation that has an active policy to reduce its carbon emissions.
- **Attracting customers and green investment** – customers, businesses in your supply chains and government all prefer organisations with a clean and green record.
- **Union involvement** – A team of green reps with facility time can help overcome barriers and play a crucial role in getting the workforce on board.
- **Compliance with UK and EU legislation** – employers are under ever increasing pressure to comply with new environmental laws and regulations

UNISON environmental reps in action.

Bristol City Council.

Unions at Bristol City Council have negotiated a joint environmental agreement with management – thought to be the first full formal agreement with any local authority in the UK.

The agreement covers 12 green reps, two per dept, each spending 24 days a year working on environmental issues with access to training. Steve Crawshaw, UNISON elected chair of the joint union/management environmental committee says *“recruiting green reps was certainly easier than finding shop stewards or health and safety reps...I've had new union members tell me that they only joined the union because they wanted to become a green rep”*.

One of the environmental projects the union has been involved in is implementing a programme of eco-driving training, training 60 drivers so far. The training should help deliver fuel savings of at least £350 per year for each diesel van covering 25,000 miles per year. UK Road Safety Limited quotes a 10% fuel saving where operators actively monitor and manage their fleets post training. There should also be a reduction in costs of vehicle maintenance as well as the potential to reduce exposure to risk from road traffic accidents and workplace stress.

Great Ormond St. Hospital for Children.

A UNISON led project at Great Ormond Street Hospital has won the support of management and all other unions and professional bodies on site, setting up a joint management-union environment committee. The main focus of the work is a rolling programme of environmental audits of every department and ward using environmental checklists designed by the committee. With its remit agreed by the Trust's management board, all members have time off to carry out their green rep duties. Sarah Lewis, UNISON branch secretary and chair of the committee highlights what motivates staff: *“The NHS creates one million tons of carbon emissions every year. If the NHS shaved 15% off its energy consumption it would save £50 million per year on its energy bills. That's the equivalent of 7,000 heart by-pass operations”*.

Support and further information

A draft “job description” for environmental reps and a model agreement to get employers on board can be found at www.unison.org.uk/green.

The TUC provides a wide range of toolkits, support and case studies. For advice and ideas on the first steps to take in your green campaign visit: www.tuc.org.uk/greenworkplaces.

For a list of TUC accredited training courses go to www.unionlearn.org.uk/courses/index.cfm/sb/14/

Legal rights for UNISON environment reps.

UNISON is calling for statutory rights for union environment reps to help them influence the environmental agenda at work. The campaign includes a call for a statutory right to a reasonable amount of time off to carry out their role and to attend training.

But even without these new rights, UNISON branches are pushing ahead and negotiating at a local level for environmental issues to be included in the bargaining agenda.