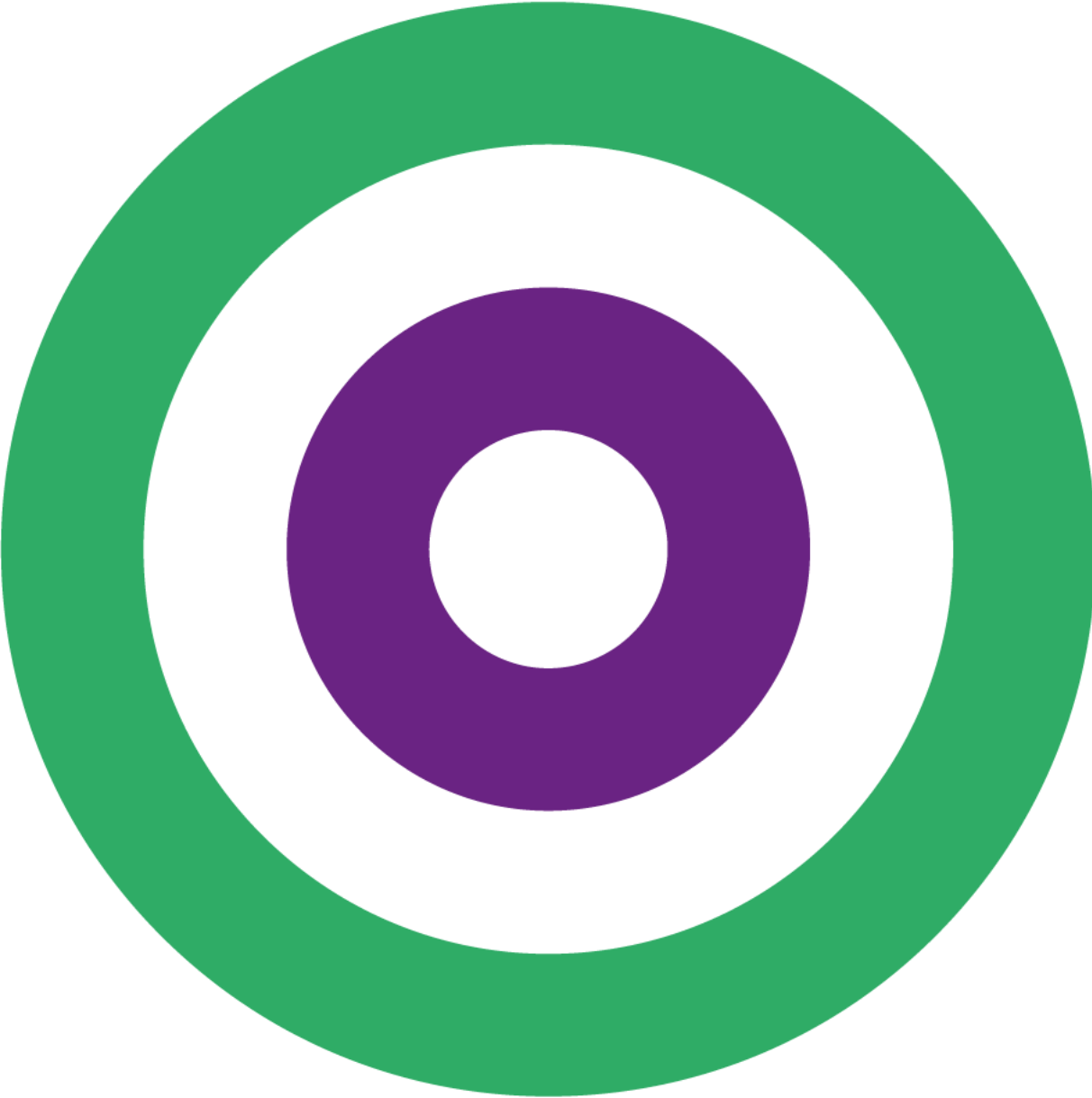


Organising to Win
An introduction
to organising



UNISON has a proud record of organising and an impressive list of achievements won by members. We know from experience that good organising is the key to our success. That's why our first objective is "to organise all those employed directly or indirectly, within those areas of employment which provide services to the public..."

Organising means different things to different people and organisations.

UNISON defines organising as *"a craft, applying skills within a methodology to shift the balance of power to workers. Reaching beyond our existing base to build member confidence, participation, activism and leadership through activity"*.

UNISON **Base Organising** is the routine development and maintenance of a strong and functional union in workplaces and branches. It is the day-to-day work of branches and regions to build and maintain an effective union.

UNISON **Strategic Organising** builds member participation and power within an escalating plan to win a specific material change (big or small). It is planned, resourced and targeted campaign activity to win with members.

Every branch, region, service group and self-organised group is expected to prioritise base organising. Building organising into everyday activity and working to an annual plan that will:

- Ensure that **membership density** remains high and that we effectively recruit new members and retain existing ones through regular activity in workplaces. These activities can include a presence at new starter inductions and regular workplace visits and member meetings (real and virtual).
- Encourage more **members to become active** in the union by providing small and accessible opportunities for participation and a supported journey into activism. From signing a petition, completing a survey, encouraging colleagues to join, or helping organise a campaign event or meeting - member participation makes us stronger.
- Support and encourage our **activists by providing training and development** that ensures they can deliver effective workplace organising, representation, and bargaining activity.

- **Keep UNISON's profile high** in workplaces so that members can see the impact of UNISON activity. This also helps with recruitment and retention as workers can see the benefit of membership. And don't forget, it's important to celebrate and highlight our successes.

But **base organising** is about more than just annual plans. It is an approach that recognises members are the union and our power and influence come from our collective strength. Strong UNISON organisation provides members with protection. It also enables us to work together to take on the big issues facing public service workers.

To help you get more members involved we have developed the UNISON Organising and Equality Impact Assessment. This tool will help organisers, officers, and activists plan activity in a way that delivers on key objectives while making the most of every opportunity to build a bigger, stronger, and more representative union.

Strategic organising is reserved for times when negotiation alone won't deliver the positive changes members need. That's when we need to find ways to build the power to pressure the employer or politicians to do something that they would not otherwise do. To get them to say yes, when they would rather say no.

This usually involves planned, escalating member activity that is built on increased membership density, participation, and activism, up to and including effective industrial action. At the same time, public campaigns can increase the pressure on the employer or politicians, until their best option is to deliver what we are calling for.

As well as building union strength, an escalation plan gives the employer or politicians the opportunity to negotiate a settlement at any point. The hope is always for a campaign to be won before industrial action becomes necessary. But, in strategic organising, success comes from a credible plan to win and readiness to escalate to action.

The UNISON "Five Phase Plan to Win" document sets out the stages necessary to build an effective strategic organising campaign. Strategic organising is resource intensive and not without consequence. Branches must always seek regional guidance before launching strategic organising activity.

Organising to Win resources

Ultimately all organising is a set of tools and techniques deployed to shift the balance of power in favour of our members. How those tools are deployed will vary in different circumstances but generally the fundamentals remain the same.

Our Organising to Win webinars and resource library provide a growing set of organising guides including:

- Organising conversations
- Leader identification and activist recruitment
- Workplace mapping and charting
- The organising and equality impact assessment template and guide
- The five phase plan to win template and guide (Strategic organising)

This guide is one of many key organising resources in the Organising to Win series.

UNISON activists and staff can access all resources at:

The Organising Space

UNISON's online platform for activists. Visit the Organising to Win tile at organising.space.unison.org.uk

Pearl

The UNISON staff intranet. Visit the Organising to Win page.

Had an organising win?

Let's celebrate and share what works! Send a summary to win@unison.co.uk