

Learning and Organising UNISON Greater London



UNISON Activists Education & Training Programme

January – July 2023



Learning to Organise: Organising to Learn

Introduction

Welcome to the Greater London region education programme for 2023. We are once again running a full programme of courses this year which includes a mixture of online and classroom based to make learning accessible to you, however you prefer to learn.

Firstly, thank you for stepping up to be active in UNISON; for your commitment to your union and our members and for your passion to support your colleagues at work. Stewards and activists are the backbone of any union and UNISON's stewards and activists are second to none. To support you in your role we have designed an education programme to train and help prepare you; whether you are a Steward, H&S Representative or Branch Officer we have the training available to ensure you feel confident in undertaking your role. UNISON's courses are respected nationally and will provide you with the skills and confidence to carry out your role in supporting our members. As well as receiving the training and skills you need, you'll also have the opportunity to meet other UNISON activists who will be experiencing the same issues at work as you and your members; you'll have the chance to learn from each other's experience and the benefit of networking with other trade unionists.

The unending cuts forced on us by this government have hit public services and the most vulnerable in society the hardest and we need active members now more than ever to work together and support each other in the workplace. The best way for UNISON to help and organise its members is to have activists like you in the workplace who can support them.

Our training programme ensures that UNISON is there to support you as well. Good luck in your role, enjoy the training and remember that you're never alone in UNISON; there are 1.3 million of us to support you.

To ensure this booklet is as up to date as possible we are first publishing courses January – July, look out for the September – December update coming soon!

With best wishes,



Jo Galloway
Regional Secretary | UNISON Greater London

Meet the Team

Our Education Administrator is **Amanda Mayers** who is responsible for organising and arranging the activist education programme. Contact her about the progress of your course application/s; joining instructions about how to get to your course; course vacancies and numbers etc:

Email: a.mayers@unison.co.uk

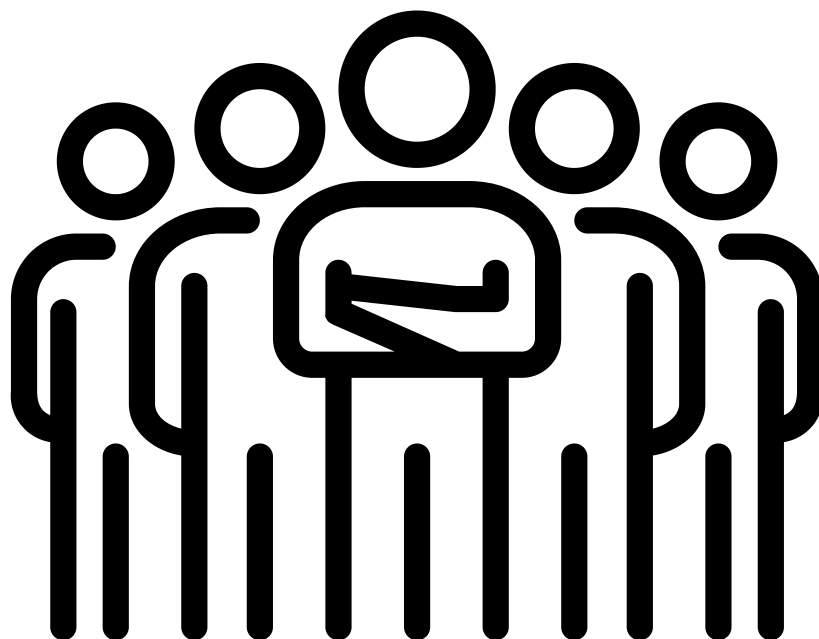
Telephone: 020 7535 6561

Find out more about UNISON education on the regional website [here](#).

UNISON's National Learning and Organising Services website for activist education information can be found [here](#) and find out about TUC education [here](#) and follow the links under education and training.

Regional Education and Training Committee

This Committee oversees the work of the Education Team within the Region, receives regular reports from the Regional Manager and plays an important part in monitoring education within the Region. Regional Education and Training Committee members are elected from Regional Council, Regional Committee, Service Groups and SOGs.



What you need to know

Finding your course:

This programme is organised to make it as easy as possible for you and your branch to identify the courses that suits you. This programme is designed on a month-by-month basis so that the course that you may wish to attend could cover two calendar months but you need to look for the relevant start date.

Timing:

Most of our courses run from 9.30am (prompt) to 4.30pm. The start time will be clear in the details that we send you when you are booked on a course. Whatever the final details say: for everyone's benefit, please join online/get there on time.

Venues:

We try to run our most popular classroom-based courses in Central London so these are easily accessible for most by public transport.

Course fees and expenses:

There is no cost to you as an individual. Where we show a course fee that will be paid by the branch. Travel and subsistence fees will also be paid by the branch. We will provide you with a claim form to give to your branch. They should also pay any additional childcare costs that result from attending a course – it is best to discuss this with your branch before attending.

Course numbers:

Many of our courses can only run if we have at least 15 participants. Unfortunately, if we don't recruit at least 15 participants onto these courses they cannot run. This is disappointing and frustrating all-round. In these circumstances we try and offer alternative courses if they are available. We are happy to tell you about numbers in advance if you are anxious to know whether or not your course is likely to run.

Cancellation:

If for any reason you find that you cannot attend a course that you have applied for, then you should let your branch know as soon as possible as they may be able to find someone else to fill your place. You should also let Amanda at the regional office know (see contacts). If you fail to attend without informing us before the course starts there will be a penalty charge made on your branch.

Branch courses and branch development:

As well as courses run at regional level we can help organise courses and sessions for individual branches. For example, we may be able to arrange for introductory stewards courses at branch level, and can assist with branch development workshops to help with recruitment and organisational effectiveness. Your branch education co-ordinator or branch secretary will arrange local publicity when something is organised for your branch. Minimum numbers will apply to enable courses to run. To find out more your branch should discuss this with your Regional Organiser who will contact the Education team.

Opportunities with the TUC:

We work closely with the TUC education service in London. They help us run many courses, and we encourage UNISON members to attend their courses. They publish a brochure with course details three times a year, which is sent to branches. The TUC offers IT training; and watch out too for the further education diploma and certificate courses in trade union studies that they support.

Registering for a course

Online application link:

There is an online application link/form for each course you wish to attend. This ensures we have all the necessary information to process your request and contact you with more details. A link for each online application can be found with details of the course [here](#). Alternatively email Amanda Mayers, Education Administrator – a.mayers@unison.co.uk with the course you are interested in and she will forward this to you.

Reasonable adjustments:

If you require any reasonable adjustments to enable you to attend a course please include details on the application so that we can make arrangements.

Contact your branch:

There is a fee for attendance on most courses, which your branch, rather than you as an individual should pay. Your branch should have a budget set aside for education and training but please contact your branch to seek their support for you attending before a course fee is incurred. The branch can also help you with paid time off and they will pay your travel and meal expenses in addition to any course fees. If you don't know who your branch secretary is, ring us on 0207 535 6561 to find out.

A course fee will be applicable for all courses, except Lost in UNISON Induction as outlined below:

Online courses:

For Online courses a charge of £30 per online course is applicable. This is on the basis on ensuring that there is a consistent approach to both activists education and member learning across all UNISON regions and to reflect cuts to the Union Learning Fund and other learning budgets. The £30 per course charge will be claimed via the branch reclaim system and equates to £5 per day for the introductory stewards or H&S course (which are 6 days) and £10 per day for the more advance 3 day courses such as employment law and negotiating skills.

All branches should ensure monies are allocated for training of their activists/ reps in their budgets and so for the majority of branches the fee going forward shouldn't pose a problem. However, if a branch, particularly those smaller branches with low income, encounter issues with this/if this creates potential barriers to attendance on training you should speak to their Regional Organiser in the first instance.

Classroom based courses:

For classroom-based courses, where lunch and refreshments are provide a charge of £20 per day is applicable. For example, a six day introductory stewards course would cost £120.

Start arranging time off:

At the same time as you apply we strongly advise you to begin arranging time off. Inform your manager, using your local procedure, and if they ask you to, provide them with information about the content of the course. We can get you this information, if necessary. Don't delay your time off request by waiting until your place is confirmed.

Registering for a course

Apply as soon as possible:

Please don't leave it to the last minute to apply for a course. Many of our courses are oversubscribed and places are allocated on a first come, first served basis so apply early to secure your place. Details will be provided on deadlines for applications to be received, this ensures sufficient time for your application to be processed and confirmation and joining instructions sent to you. Once we have received your application, we will send you an acknowledgement email and approximately 7 days before the course start date, the tutor will send you final details about the course, joining instructions and a map of the venue, where applicable. If for any reason you do not receive this information, please contact Amanda at the regional office – a.mayers@unison.co.uk

Travel expenses:

To get your travel expenses you should claim from your branch. You might also want to claim a lunch allowance, if none is provided at the course. Childcare costs should also be paid by the branch.

Cancellations:

If circumstances change and you no longer are able to attend - please let us know as soon as possible so your place can be offered to someone else if there is a waiting list. Please note that after you receive final details, we will expect you at the course. If you fail to attend, without giving us any notice, your branch will be charged a £15 penalty for each day of the course. If the course is cancelled - we know that course cancellation is frustrating and inconvenient and we do our best to avoid it - we will let you know as soon as we can and try to find you another course.

Paid time off your rights:

You have a legal right to reasonable paid time off for training in your union industrial relations duties. You should give your manager at least a few weeks notice, and if asked to, provide them with information about the content of the course. So when you complete your registration form, at the same time ask management for time off using your local procedure – don't delay by waiting until your course place is confirmed. If you need help at any stage ask your UNISON branch.

What the law says about time off:

Stewards and other branch officers have rights given by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, backed up by the ACAS Code of Practice on 'Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities' revised in 2003. You can find the Code of Practice [here](#).

Union Learning Reps have rights from the same Act and the same ACAS Code of Practice applies.

Safety Reps have similar rights described in the Code of Practice and Regulations on Safety Representatives and Safety Committees (1977).

These are reproduced as a UNISON publication of the same name.

Have a look as well at the UNISON publication 'Time to Act – negotiating time off for trade union duties and activities' stock number 2359.

Paid time off for part-time workers:

If you attend a course for which paid time off is available and those course hours exceed those you normally work then you should be entitled to receive pay or time off in lieu for those extra hours. If you need help with this, please contact your branch secretary.

Courses at a glance: January – July

January

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Introductory Organising Stewards	6, 13, 20 & 27 January & 3 & 10 February 2023 (FRIDAYS)	In person in Central London or Online	CLOSED
Introductory Safety Reps	9, 16, 23 & 30 January & 6 & 13 February 2023 (MONDAYS)	In person in Central London or Online	CLOSED
Introductory Organising Stewards	17, 18 & 19 January & 24, 25 & 26 January 2023	In person in Central London or Online	CLOSED
Stewards Refresher for ERA re-accréditation	18 & 25 January 2023 (Wednesdays)	Online	CLOSED
Lost in UNISON Stewards Induction Session	19 & 26 January 2023 10am – 1pm (Thursdays)	Online	CLOSED
Equality in your branch / Equality Rep Training	24 & 31 January & 7 February 2023 (Tuesdays);	Online	CLOSED

Courses at a glance: January – July

March

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Introductory Organising Stewards	3, 10, 17, 24 & 31 March 2023 (Fridays)	In person in Central London or Online	CLOSED
Stewards Refresher for ERA re-accreditation	8 & 15 March 2023 (Wednesdays)	In Person, Central London (TBC)	CLOSED
Lost in UNISON Stewards Induction Session	14 March 2023 (Tuesday)	In Person, Central London	CLOSED
Introductory Organising Stewards	14, 15 & 16 March & 21, 22 & 23 March 2023	In person in Central London or Online	CLOSED
Employment Law	13-15 March 2023	Online	CLOSED
Dealing with Re-Organisations and Redundancies	27-29 March 2023	Online	Register

Courses at a glance: January – July

April

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Introductory Safety Reps	20 & 27 April, 4, 11, 18 & 25 May 2023 (Thursdays)	In person in Central London or Online	<u>In Person</u> <u>Online</u>
Introductory Organising Stewards	21 & 28 April & 5, 12, 19 & 26 May 2023 (Fridays)	In person in Central London or Online	<u>In Person</u> <u>Online</u>

Courses at a glance: January – July

May

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Branch Women's Officers Training	2nd May 2023 (Tuesday)	In Person, Central London	Register
Stewards Refresher for ERA re-accreditation	3 & 10 May 2023 (Wednesdays)	Online	Register
Branch Secretaries Training	9, 10 and 11 May 2023	In person in Central London	Register
Introductory Organising Stewards	9, 10 & 11 May & 16, 17 & 18 May 2023	In person in Central London or Online	In Person Online
OLBA Training	10 May 2023	Online	Register
Lost in UNISON Stewards Induction Session	10 & 17 May 10am - 1pm	Online	Register
Challenging Racism in the Workplace - for lead Branch Officers	11th & 18th May 2023 (Thursdays)	Online	Speak to your organiser
Finance and the Organised Branch, training for Branch Treasurers	Tuesday 16 & Wednesday 17 May 2023	In person, Central London	Register

Courses at a glance: January – July

May continued

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Going to Conference for first time delegates	Friday 19 May 2023	In Person, Central London	Register

Courses at a glance: January – July

June

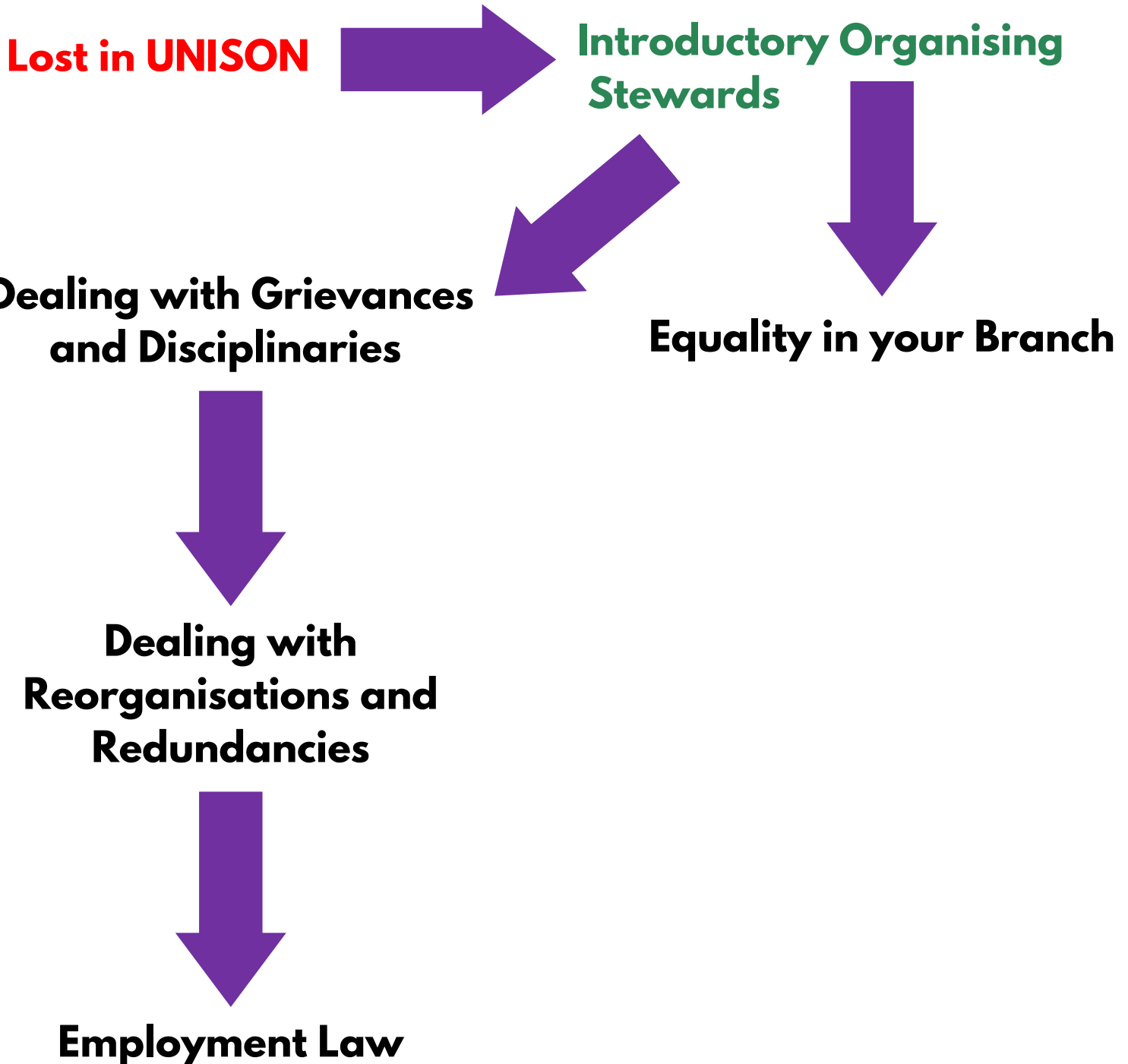
Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Introductory Organising Stewards	16, 23 & 30 June & 7, 14 & 21 July 2023 (Friday)	In person in Central London or Online	In Person Online
Stewards Refresher for ERA re-accreditation	21 & 28 June 2023 (Wednesdays)	In person, Central London	Register
Branch Communications Officer Course	21 June 2023	Online	Register
Branch Chair	Wednesday 28 & Thursday 29 June 2023	In person, Central London	Register

Courses at a glance: January – July

July

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Lost in UNISON Stewards Induction Session	4 July 2023	In Person, Central London	Register

Suggested training route for Stewards



Lost in UNISON Induction Session

For those newly elected to the role, or anyone interested in finding out more

Many potential stewards are reluctant to commit until they know what's in store. Likewise, many feel overwhelmed when they first start. They are unsure of the role, or what's expected of them, not knowing where to get advice, information and support or how they fit into the bigger union. Lost in UNISON is a new steward induction/taster session for potential and new stewards where you get a grounding in the structures of UNISON, explore the scope of the role, identify sources of support and access further training.

UNISON is committed to helping and developing you, our new stewards through this initial period while you're considering putting yourself forward or recently elected and finding your feet.

We'd like to invite you to attend a steward induction session which will give you some training in steward basics, and will allow you to:

- explore your role
- meet other new stewards
- develop your skills
- have an opportunity to become part of a new mentoring
- gain the experience and confidence to be an effective steward program designed to support new stewards in their workplace in your workplace and the branch.

The course will also look at the difference you can make immediately in your workplace with a bit of basic organising. It's fun and informal and has been developed by existing stewards to meet the needs of new and potential stewards.

Lost in UNISON is available to attend online or in person. The course will be two short sessions each of 3 hours (10am -1pm) online in January and May and in person in March and July - you do need to be able to attend both sessions. To register please complete the relevant form for the date you would like to attend.

We strongly recommend that once you have completed this training session, you sign up to attend a six-day Introductory Organising Steward course. (See information on ERA accreditation).

Introductory Organising Stewards

For newly elected stewards to obtain ERA (Employment Rights Act) accreditation

This course is aimed at newly elected and less experienced UNISON stewards and is delivered either online or in a classroom. It builds on the Lost in UNISON induction session and will help you to understand the steward's role in organising members at local level and help you to feel confident in carrying out your duties as a steward.

Completing this course ensures that you are ERA accredited and you really can't do with it!

Employment Rights Act accreditation - As a consequence of the Employment Rights Act the union has a legal responsibility to designate that elected stewards/ reps are 'competent' to represent members at grievance and disciplinary hearings – (known as ERA accreditation/ certification). The union has agreed that it will meet this objective by requiring all new reps to attend the Introductory Stewards course and for other reps who have been activists for a number of years but have not been able to attend any formal training to complete the three-day Stewards Refresher course which will provide them with ERA accreditation/ certification.

All new reps should attend this mandatory Introductory Organising Stewards course within a year of becoming elected.

In particular the course will help you:

- Work with members to tackle issues in the workplace
- Work with members in resolving cases
- Know where and when to seek advice and guidance
- Understand how procedures work in practice
- Handle grievance and disciplinaries and similar types of cases as the representative of UNISON members within your workplace
- Become certified as competent to accompany members at a disciplinary and grievance hearing in line with Employment Relations Act 1999
- Understand the broader roles in which UNISON operates, including internationally
- Understand the role of an organising union in public services
- Recognise the importance of equalities in UNISON

Stewards Refresher

To maintain ERA accreditation

This Steward Refresher course is for UNISON Stewards who last attended training more than five years ago OR reps and branch officers who have never done an Introductory Organising Steward course but have been carrying out the full role of a steward i.e. representing members on grievances and disciplinaries.

It is designed to meet the requirements of the Employment Relations Act (ERA) on re-accreditation, whereby as a consequence of the Employment Rights Act the union has a legal responsibility to designate that reps are 'competent' to represent members at grievance and disciplinary hearings – (known as ERA accreditation/certification). UNISON's NEC determined in 2010 that all UNISON reps should attend a Stewards Refresher course every five years to maintain their ERA accreditation.

The course will provide the opportunity to refresh and update skills as well as to brief on any legislative changes and/or updates to UNISON's policy and procedures.

The course is eight hours in total, over two days. This will comprise of either online sessions (via MS Teams or Zoom) or in person (March, April and June) from 9am - 1pm, with some limited course work in between.

Introductory Health & Safety

For new Health & Safety reps

If you have an interest in safety in the workplace and are a new health and safety rep you will get a lot from this course. It deals with the legal framework both domestic and European, of health and safety in the workplace. It covers the employers legal responsibilities and where you and the union fit into this very important process. The course also explores how we can organise around workplace health and safety issues.

The course will cover:

- The role of a health & safety rep
- Health & safety law
- Facilities, time off and training for health & safety reps
- Workplace Inspections
- Risk Assessments
- Organising around health & safety issues
- Supporting a member to take forward a health & safety issue

It assumes they are new or inexperienced in health and safety issues. It aims to provide them with a basic understanding of:

- the need to build local trade union organisation to help the union improve safety standards and protect members
- their rights as union safety representatives and their members' rights to a healthy and safe workplace, with adequate welfare facilities
- the skills they need to enable them to carry out their job as a UNISON safety representative effectively

Equalities Courses

Equality is at the heart of everything our union does, and Equality Reps aim to make sure people are treated fairly at work without discrimination. This three-day course is aimed at anyone interested in becoming an equality rep to help you understand the role as well as finding out more about discrimination legislation and promoting equality in your workplace.

CHALLENGING RACISM IN THE WORKPLACE COURSE

As trade unionists, regardless of our race, we have always had a responsibility to challenge racism in all forms. Our campaign 'Challenging Racism in the Workplace' launched almost 14 years ago has helped to hold employers to account using workforce statistics – but it is still the case that Black members are more likely to face disciplinary or capability procedures than any other worker.

To make real change now and in the future across London public services, we must work collectively in UNISON to do so. We all have a role to play in the fight for equality and tackling racism.

'Challenging Racism in the Workplace' is part of UNISON's core work on race equality, using the collective power of our union to tackle discrimination. Given the challenges of pursuing individual claims we want to move to a more collective approach to challenging racism where it's proven we've been more successful. To achieve this, UNISON is working to support branches to identify key issues and make sure that challenging racism becomes core union business.

I'm pleased that the Greater London Region is rolling out the online 'Challenging Racism in the Workplace' course designed for Branch Officers and workplace reps.

The course is designed to familiarise branch officers and workplace reps with the key elements of the Equality Act 2010, including the duty it places on employers to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The course will also help to develop a branch action plan for raising race equality issues with employers which should give confidence to your Black members to raise issues with UNISON.

The aims of this course are:

- To raise your awareness of the opportunities the Equality Act 2010 provides to identify institutional racism and ensure that the issues are dealt with
- To improve your knowledge of the tools you can use to engage with your employer on tackling race discrimination
- To explore how an organising approach can be taken to tackling racism in the workplace.
- To build confidence in negotiating with employers and anticipating any challenges
- To develop a realistic action plan for the branch

If you're interested in applying for this course, please speak to your Regional Organiser.

Branch Officer Courses

Branch Secretary

Tuesday 9, Wednesday 10 & Thursday 11 May
In person, Central London

Attendees will need to be able to attend on all 3 days.

The course is aimed at newly elected Branch Secretaries, or those who have been in post for the last year or so, and will look at:

- the role and responsibilities of UNISON Branch Secretaries,
- developing ideas and strategies to build strong branch organisation,
- branch finances,
- campaigning and recruitment
- encouraging more member engagement as well as leading a branch in changing times
- It will also provide the opportunity to meet other Branch Secretaries, network, share knowledge & experiences and develop practical skills.

It is anticipated that places will be in demand and anyone wishing to attend is encouraged to register as soon as possible.

The £20 course fee will apply per day (as lunch and refreshments are provided)

[Register here](#)

Branch Chair

Wednesday 21 June & Thursday 22 June
2023
In person, Central London

Attendees will need to be able to attend on both days.

This is two-day, classroom-based course aimed at those that have been recently elected to the role or elected in the last few years but not trained. Attendees must be able to attend both days.

The course will aim to cover:

- Role of the UNISON Branch Chair
- Preparation in advance of the meeting such as drafting the agenda
- Facilitating meetings in such a way as to remove barriers to participation and ensure a meeting is as accessible as possible.

The £20 course fee will apply per day (as lunch and refreshments are provided)

[Register here](#)

Branch Officer Courses

Branch Women's Officer

Tuesday 2 May 2023
In person, Central London

This one-day course is aimed at Branch Women's Officers and aims to:

- To define the role of a UNISON branch Women's officer or contact
- To establish how to access resources, make useful links and develop strategies for supporting women members in their branches
- To consider how to campaign and get equality issues on the recruitment and bargaining agenda

The £20 fee per day will apply (as lunch and refreshments are provided)

Register [here](#).

Branch Communications Officer

Wednesday 21 June 2023
Online

This online course is aimed at both Branch Communications Officers and other branch officers who are interested in communicating with members and activists. COVID-19 has meant there is a greater importance in how we communicate with members online.

This course will help you to:-

- Develop knowledge about the range of possible branch communications
- Increase confidence in producing branch communications
- To debate the pros and cons of different methods for different purposes
- To learn how to schedule and plan content in advance

The £30 course fee will apply.

Register [here](#)

For Branch Treasurers

OLBA (Online Branch Accounting System) Training

Wednesday 10 May 2023
Online

The training will be run by UNISON's finance team and will include an introduction to OLBA, managing your accounts, the current account, income & branch funding, entering receipts & payments, reconciling your accounts, reports and performing other administrative tasks on OLBA.

Places are not guaranteed until your place on the course has been confirmed.

OLBA access for your Branch Treasurer should be available once the branch officer update form has been completed & returned following your branch AGM and RMS has been updated to confirm they hold this position. Any queries regarding OLBA access should be sent to olba@unison.co.uk.

The £30 course fee will apply.

[Register here](#)

Finance and the Organised Branch Course

Tuesday 16 & Wednesday 17 May 2023
In person, Central London

This two-day course is aimed at Branch Treasurers and Branch officers interested in the role of branch finances. It will involve group work, discussion and action planning. It is NOT designed to make the learner a 'financial expert' but to introduce them to some of the key issues facing individuals, the trade union and the employing organisation.

In particular, the course aims to help the learner to:

- Identify the main duties and responsibilities of a UNISON branch treasurer
- Understand the branch accounting cycle
- Understand the role of the branch treasurer in budgeting and managing finances as part of the Organising Framework process
- To identify the role that branch finance plays supporting and achieving UNISON's priorities and objectives
- To recognise the role of the branch treasurer in organising and supporting the branch

The £20 course fee per day will apply (as lunch and refreshments are provided)

[Register here](#)

****Please note, you must have been trained on OLBA before attending this course****

Other courses

Going to Conference

The 'Going to Conference' one day course taking place on Friday 19 May.

It will be in person and aims to help those registered as a delegate to a forthcoming conference:

- play an active role in Conference business
- demystify the process
- understand Conference rules and procedures,
- prepare and making a short speech
- and generally how to get the most out of Conference.

A £30 course fee applies which should be paid by the branch and lunch will be provided.

[Register here](#)

Just a reminder that information regarding all of our courses can be found here or by contacting **Amanda Mayers**: a.mayers@unison.co.uk

