**Unite the Union**

*Education Department*

**Branch Administration**

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| **Candidates**  **Name** |  | | |
| **Address:** |  | | |
| **Telephone Number:** |  | **Email** |  |
| **Name of Tutor:** |  | | |
| **Date of Course:** |  | | |
| **Course Code:** |  | | |

****Workbook

March 2022

****

**Unite Branch Administration Course**

**Summary**

The concept of this course is to develop Branch Officials within Unite. To provide Branch Officials with the knowledge, skills and passion to drive forward the ideology of our union, to develop our activist base and grow and strengthen our membership.

We are aware that particularly for new Branch Officials, the roles can be challenging and there is little information available to identify where and how support can be attained. We aim to change that and hope that course participants will see education as a tool for change and in that sense when something is identified as a need the course delegates will identify a route to raise that need in the union and influence change in order to shape the Branch Officials role, functions, training and support mechanisms in order that they are fit for purpose.

***A Branch secretary is a key player in the Unite team within the region and should be afforded access to all required services that Unite can offer.***

# ACTIVITY 1: Introductions and our stories

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Get to know each other.

Work out aims for the course.

Practice interviewing and note taking.

**TASK:**

For this activity interview another course member to find out some facts about them and then introduce that member to the rest of the course.

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| Name? |

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| Short Biography (Partner, Children etc.) |

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| Employer and Job? |

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| How many members represented? |

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| Experience of raising issues with Employer including grievances & disciplinaries? |

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| Outside Interests (Clubs, Associations, Hobbies etc.) |

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| What do you want to get out of this course? |

# ACTIVITY 2: Unite The Union Structure & Getting Involved

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Develop an understanding of Unite’s Structure at Local, Regional & National Level.

Identify the three pillars of Unite’s strategy.

Identify how Unite Reps can get involved in the Union at all levels.

**TASK:**

**Your tutor will deliver a short presentation on the structure of Unite.**

Identify your sector, branch type, Regional Industrial Officer, Regional Office, Area Activists Committee, Equalities Officer, and your role in the branch

Also identify if you are involved in any regional or national committees.

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| **Sector:** |

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| **Branch Type:** |

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| **Regional Industrial Officer:** |

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| **Regional Office:** |

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| **Area Activists Committee (Location & Officer):** |

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| **Equalities Officer:** |

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| **Your Role & Regional or National Committees:** |

# ACTIVITY 3: Unite In The Community

The following activity is centred on supporting and establishing the creation of Community branches and sustaining and supporting them from our industrial branches.

**Aims**

* To determine how our long-standing branches can enable community branches to become established
* To identify practical steps existing industrial branches can take to support the development of sister community branches

**Task**

* In your group read through the resource material which describes the establishment of community membership within Unite, discuss any personal experience you may have of community membership and record this
* Following your discussion identify 6 key benefits to Unite of community membership and 6 potential weaknesses
* Finally determine what practical steps your branch could take to assist in the formation or development of Unite community branches in your area

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| Benefits | Weaknesses |
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| Practical Steps To Assist Formation & Development |
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# ACTIVITY 4: My Branch Structure

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Understand your own Branch Structure

Compare your structure to other course member’s structures

**TASK:**

For this activity look at the resources to see examples of how Unite branches work in different circumstances. E.G. Sole workplace Branch, multiple unions etc. Sectoral / Geographical branches etc. and compare to your own circumstances. Take account of the number of branch members you have, other unions operating in your workplace and what recognition rights you have. Then sketch your own branch structure below.

# ACTIVITY 5: Branch Vision & Perspectives

When it comes to our branches we need to have a vision of what we want them to look like in order that we can develop a strategy that assists us in reaching that vision.

**Aims**

* Identifying branch priorities
* Identifying strategic goals for our branches

**Task 1**

Consider the exercise we conducted earlier base-lining our branches and identifying what they look like, now we will begin the journey of shaping our branches into what we want them to look like

* What are the functions of a branch?

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* What is the purpose of a branch?

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* What part should branch’s play in our overall organising strategy for growth?

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* What part should branch’s play in advancing our Unite 3 pillar strategy?

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**Task 2**

How do you develop your branch to ensure its continued relevance in the future and what vision do you have for how your branch will operate in 12 months, 5 years and ten years from now?

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| **12 Months From Now** |
| **5 Years From Now** |
| **10 Years from Now** |

# ACTIVITY 6: Organising Through Media

**Aims**

* To consider what communications methods might prove useful to Unite workplace teams
* To consider the advantages of using the old and new media in any campaign

**Task**

* Discuss what methods of communication could be used in an organising and recruitment / retention campaign and discuss the pros and cons of each method.
* Discuss how Unite can use the various methods to get its message out and to promote the union in the wider community.

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| **Method** | **Pro’s** | **Con’s** |
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| **Report on How to “Spread the Word”** |

# ACTIVITY 7: Communication Skills

In any Unite branch the leadership of that branch, above all else, needs to have excellent communication skills in order to drive the branch forward. A useful addition to any branch leadership team is a communications officer. The activity below is designed to identify the value of strong communications strategies within branches.

**Aims**

* To identify the need for strong communications plans in branches
* To identify the value of a new media communication expert within the branch

**Task**

Imagine your branch is involved in driving a campaign forward in your local area or workplace and you devise a campaign strategy which includes organising public support through meetings and attempting to get an apathetic branch membership focussed on your important campaign through workplace and community activity and awareness building.

Determine the steps in your communication strategy might look like and examine how you may use your campaign to engage with difficult to reach groups of people in Unite and the community

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# ACTIVITY 8: Creating Effective Teams

We use the concept of teams widely within Unite and this next activity is designed to consider what we mean by an effective team. We will concentrate on our Unite workplace teams, but the concept is fully transferable to any team within Unite.

**Aims**

* To identify the skills required in an effective Unite branch team
* To consider the range of knowledge required in an effective Unite branch team

**Task**

Your task within your allocated group is to design a perfect Unite team from scratch. You will list the skills you would want, the knowledge, the motivation of people within the team, what type of personalities you would like to have in your perfect team etc

Now imagine you have just managed to find 8 people who are willing to be in your team who fit the character and interest profiles you have identified, how will you organise your team, what challenges do the members present, how will you determine who leads the team or will you let them do that?

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| **Skills Required** | **Branch Role** |
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# ACTIVITY 9: Leadership Skills

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Understand the different styles of Leadership.

Identify the ideal style of leadership

Discuss how you can adapt your leadership style as appropriate

**TASK:**

For this activity the tutor will split you into groups to discuss words you associate with leadership.

Consider the previous activity and nominate a spokesperson to report back to the main group on the styles you have identified and the characteristics that are required to make a “good” leader.

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| **Associated Words** |
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| **Styles and Characteristics of a “Good” Leader** |
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# ACTIVITY 10: Organising Effective Meetings

One thing central to any functional Unite group is regular effective meetings. In a healthy organisation almost all decisions will be made at these meetings and there will be a sufficient level of discussion to ensure all those attending have a good idea of the activity and arguments in the different struggles the organisation is involved in.

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Plan and organise regular team meetings

Identify the activities required at various stages of a meeting.

**TASK:**

Identify what should be done before, during and after a meeting

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| **Before The Meeting** |

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| **During the Meeting** |
| **After the Meeting** |

# ACTIVITY 11: Organising a Branch Meeting

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Understand the various roles of Branch officials

Practically demonstrate how a branch meeting should function

**TASK:**

For this activity the tutor will designate meeting roles at random and a role play shall be carried out. You will be given some time to prepare a report on your allocated function and the meeting shall run to an agenda prepared jointly by the Chair and Secretary.

Depending on course size, delegates may find themselves covering multiple roles but note that the Chair cannot cover the secretary’s role

The roles to be allocated are: -

Chair

Secretary

Treasurer

Equalities Officer

Workplace Representative (Shop Steward)

Health & Safety Representative

Union Learning Representative

Political Officer

Communications Officer

# ACTIVITY 12: Branch AGM

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Understand the structure and purpose of an Annual General Meeting

**TASK:**

For this activity the tutor will split you into groups and, using the resources, construct your ideal AGM agenda. Then nominate a spokesperson to report back to the main group to compare ideas in open session.

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| **Branch AGM Agenda** |
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# ACTIVITY 13: Writing a Branch Motion

**Aims**

* To understand how to write a motion for submission to conference
* To understand the procedure for amending the motion

**Task**

In your group write a motion that could be submitted to the National Policy Conference.

The tutor will allocate topics to the groups.

The motions will then be proposed to the full course and any amendments will be proposed, seconded and debated as per normal procedures.

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| Motion to Conference |

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| **Amendment** |

# ACTIVITY 14: Unite Political Strategy & Branch Political Life

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Get to know Unite’s political strategy and its rationale.

Understand how each branch can influence the political strategy

Understand the importance of the political levy

**TASK:**

For this activity the tutor will give a presentation on the Political Strategy and show a short video on the political levy. Discuss the best strategy for engaging branch members in political discussions and how to encourage members to sign up to the political levy.

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| **Strategy to Engage Members in the Political Discussion** |

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| **Strategy to Encourage Members to Opt IN to the Political Levy** |

# ACTIVITY 15: Back To Branch Action Plan

**AIMS:** To help us: -

Ensure our branches are effective, organised and fully mapped

**TASK:**

Detail what changes, if any, you need to try and implement when you get back to your branch.