

Building Stronger Unions

**TUC support for effective union organising,
campaigning and recruitment**



Introduction

The most recent Trade Union membership statistics published in May 2017 revealed the extent of the organising challenge that faces our movement.

Union density, membership and collective bargaining coverage are now at record lows with unions significantly under-represented in the private sector, particularly amongst workers who would benefit most from union membership and representation via collective bargaining.

Added to this is the challenge of an ageing membership and activist base.

There are three key challenges that the movement must address urgently if it is to start to maintain and increase its relevance and effectiveness;

Build membership and increase collective bargaining in the private sector

Organise young workers

Increase membership and find the next generation of activists in companies and sectors where we already have recognition.

A recent survey of some of the TUC's largest affiliates and unions organising in key sectors of the economy revealed that these challenges are reflected in the organising and recruitment strategies of unions, but also that there is a continuing need for support from the TUC to build capacity and increase the effectiveness of union campaigns.

This prospectus sets out the range of support the TUC can provide to affiliates. It covers formal training from the TUC Organising Academy, specialist support to assist in the development of strategy and campaigns, digital support and services to reps provided by TUC Education.

If you would like to discuss how the TUC can support your union's organising and recruitment work, please contact Carl Roper, TUC National Organiser at croper@tuc.org.uk or 020 7467 1211.

Training and strategy development

Since 1998 the TUC has provided training and development support to union officers engaged in organising and recruitment campaigns. This is supplemented by the TUC's capacity to deliver bespoke training and strategic development support to individual unions.

The TUC Organising Academy

The Organising Academy provides accredited training on organising and campaigning via a partnership with The Manchester College. The *Diploma in Organising* is a 16-day comprehensive introduction to union organising and is particularly suited to union officers and organisers involved in organising campaigns for the first time. The *Supporting Organising* course is a three-day programme for union staff who although not on the 'front-line' are involved in supporting organising campaigns. Both programmes are also available, by arrangement, to individual union groups.

Dates for Organising Academy courses in 2018 can be found on the TUC website at;

www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/tuc-organising-academy-2017-course-programme

The Organising Academy with the support of TUC Education is currently developing an on-line Advanced Organising course which will be suited to officers and senior activists who would benefit from a broader understanding of the strategic challenges faced by the movement and the strategies that will need to be employed if the movement is to overcome them. It is hoped that this programme will be available in early 2018.

The TUC Leading Change Programme

The TUC Leading Change programme is a development programme for senior union officers. Delivered in partnership with Birkbeck University and the Harvard University Labor and Worklife programme, the programme is delivered over four modules the programme provides a comprehensive overview of the strategic challenges faced by UK unions along with the chance to hear from academics and union practitioners on ways in which they can be addressed.

Strategy Development

The TUC holds the sole UK licence for use of the Strategic Choice Assessment Tool. This allows unions to assess their current capacity in respect of internal organisation and strategic leverage/influence and in doing so, identify where resources might need to be devoted to build capacity and increase effectiveness.

The TUC is also able to assist in the development and delivery of union organising campaigns through delivering one off briefings on union organising practice. These have included effective campaign planning, one on one communication and facility time. The TUC's National Organiser is available to advise on and provide bespoke support for affiliates.

Bespoke briefings

The TUC is also able to provide briefings for union committees and other groups both nationally and regionally on different aspects of the organising challenges that unions face and how to develop best practice on organising and campaigning.

Digital Support

Online Petitions

The TUC operates a devolved petitioning platform as a resource for unions to use in running online campaigns. This is similar to campaign tools offered by Change.org or 38 Degrees, but has several advantages for unions:

- It can manage co-branded campaigns, putting the union's identity first, and giving the unions email and web channels to contact people who are signing their petitions.
- The TUC's campaign supporters' list can help provide initial signups for union campaigns, leveraging community or customer support behind worker campaigns.
- We can segment key supporters by interest group for use in other ways, and to act as a gateway to organising.

The TUC Digital team are available to consult on affiliate online campaigning using this tool. We can help with developing strategy for a longer-term campaign, using a petition as a hub, but mobilising support at multiple points in the campaign, either from TUC wider set of digital campaign tools, or directing supporters to a union's own tools.

For example, in support of Unite's Fair Tips campaign, we worked with them on a petition to Pizza Express. During the campaign, we went back to supporters, getting them to share social media messaging that Unite had developed. The 10,000-signature petition allowed us to identify around 150 workers at the restaurant chain.

When the campaign was successful, we were able to send the workers we had identified a positive message about Unite and give them contacts for organisers. We followed up the campaign with the same supporter group by running a tool to gather comments from waiting staff and diners for the government's consultation on tipping. This gave Unite useful statistics and user comments to incorporate into their wider submission.

Recruitment Support

The TUC maintains a unionfinder tool on its website, and on its advice site, workSMART.org.uk. This services more than 5,000 searches a month. The TUC has a longer-term vision to improve the quality of this tool and the intelligence we can provide to unions from it, but there are already content options we can offer to unions to present their offer in a more effective light to prospective members.

The TUC is currently investigating the possibility of developing shared tools that could assist unions in organising campaigns, building on the petitioning tool's ability to gather support and segment relevant workers. This work is currently in pilot stage with two unions for late 2017. The aim is to learn from live organising campaigns and develop a product for affiliates to use to boost their own online organising tools.

Digital Leadership

The TUC has organised a range of seminars for union digital practitioners, campaigners and organisers, to show and discuss best practice within unions and from external organisations. These are free to affiliates, and the TUC will be building this programme into a more structured digital unions network during 2017.

Building on the TUC's Digital Health check, which helps unions evaluate their wider digital offering, the TUC Digital Team can provide advice to affiliates on making the best use of technology to support their campaigning and organising.

Contact: John Wood – jwood@tuc.org.uk

Support for our workplace reps and activists

Restrictions on paid time on for training on subjects related to trade union activity have made it difficult to provide traditional classroom based training for union reps on organising and recruitment. However, there are specific organising and recruitment modules elements to most of the core rep's courses (including Union Reps, Health & Safety and ULR) and the TUC continues to provide support via a range of media, on and off line.

The TUC uses eNotes and other online materials to provide guides related to building union strength in workplaces. These include eNotes and downloadable Reps Guides on Health and Safety and Organising, Building a Stronger Workplace Union, Migrant Workers, Vulnerable Employment, Facility Time and 'One on One' Communication. The TUC runs webinars on aspects of building union capacity and effectiveness which have proven particularly popular with union reps.

The TUC also provides support to reps in helping them to network and support each other. **Unionreps.org.uk** is a free interactive discussion forum that allows union reps to discuss and share ideas. With over 20,000 users, this website has for the last 10 years provided a platform for union representative to share and help each other with workplace concerns. The forum features multiple bulletin boards focusing on health and safety, education, equality, employment law, organising, environment, pensions and more.

Last year the TUC launched a mobile app for the TUC's Unionreps community. With the growth of mobile technology and the need for reps to access information away from a desktop computer the app provides a perfect solution to allow reps to access help and support straight to their mobile devices. This app builds upon TUC's commitment to offer union representatives support and confidence to tackle workplace issues and help strengthen our online community.

The TUC also publishes a comprehensive guide for reps, the 'Workplace Manual' which is now in its second edition.

Contact: Jackie Williams – jwilliams@tuc.org.uk

