



EDUCATION PROGRAMME ACTIVISTS AND MEMBERS 2026





**‘Knowledge is power.
Organisation is power.
Knowledge and organisation
mean the right to life, liberty
and the pursuit of happiness.
Knowledge and organisation mean
the opening of the cage door’.**

— Mary Macarther, The Women Worker

Contents

- Organising Stewards Programme
- ERA Refresher
- H&S Starter
- Union Learner Reps
- Branch Officer Courses
- Follow on Courses
- Short Courses and Workshops for Branches
- TUC Courses
- Members Learning
- Application Form

Course Notes – How to apply

Welcome to Unison’s Northwest Regional education programme for 2026. For each course you want to attend, complete an application form or apply via the website and make sure it is authorised by your Branch secretary or Branch Education Co-ordinator. Once completed send it to:

northwestlearningandorganising@unison.co.uk

UNISON NW Regional Centre
12th Floor
1 Angel Square
Manchester
M60 0AG

Your application will be acknowledged on receipt and before the course starts you will be sent joining instructions.

Costs

There are no charges for you as an individual.
Your branch will be charged at a rate of £25 a day.

Your branch will be responsible for these costs and will be invoiced directly from regional office after each course. Your branch will also be responsible for funding travelling expenses. Please see your branch secretary for forms.

**Courses will start at 9:30am and finish at 4:00pm approx.
Unless otherwise stated.**

Child and dependent care

Unison will endeavour to provide child and dependent care support for all those requiring it to attend courses. Assistance is available to fund child and dependent care, at home or at a crèche, should that be necessary, if you require such assistance, please let us know as soon as possible.

Equal opportunities and facilities for disabled members

No Member should be deterred from applying for a course because of individual circumstances.

Unison believes that venues should be accessible. We are more than happy to discuss individual needs or requirements before the course if it would be helpful. Please tell us if you have specific needs.

Cancellations

If you need to cancel your place, you must notify us immediately. Failure to do so might deprive another member of a place and your branch might have to pay for the costs.

Contact us:

Bob Kelly – Regional Education Organiser
b.kelly@unison.co.uk
0795 7506 031

General Enquiries

northwestlearningandorganising@unison.co.uk
0161 661 6751
Website Learning
www.northwest.unison.org.uk/learning



Activist Training

The goal is, as set out in the NEC scheme of accreditation (as amended by motion 12 National Delegate Conference 2022) that all Unison representatives must attend:

- Appropriate introduction training for their role within 1 year of appointment.
- Equality training within 2 years of induction.
- ERA Refresher training within 5 years of accreditation.

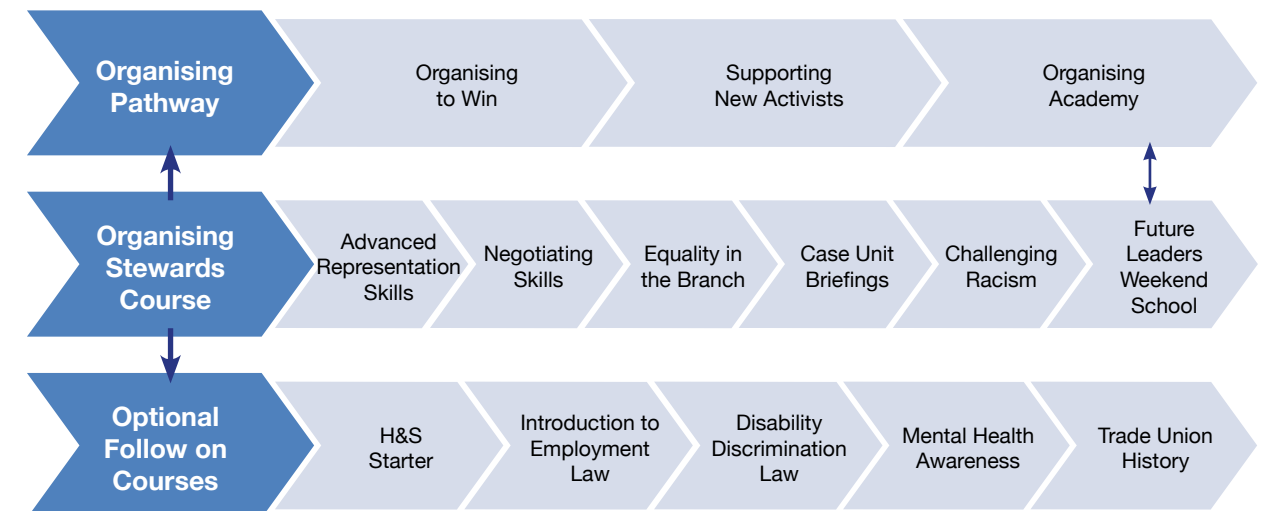
All representatives and branch officers to attend:

- Challenging Racism in the Workplace course within a maximum of 3 years of appointment.

Organising Steward's Programme

All new stewards are expected to attend the full programme of steward's courses.

The first course for new Stewards is the Organising Steward, followed by Developing Representational Skills and Negotiating Skills. There are also a number of other optional courses see below:



The Organising Steward

The Organising Steward course has been designed for newly elected and less experienced UNISON stewards organising in the workplace. As a steward you are a vital link in the union chain and have an important role to play in organising members at local level.

The course covers the following subjects:

- The Role of the Rep
- Organising
- Unison structure
- Representing members

The courses take place over 5 days usually 1 day a week for 5 weeks or in 3 and a 2 day block at locations around the region-9.30-4.00 pm each day lunch provided.

Before you come on the Organising Steward Course however you should talk to your branch mentor about the tasks you could be doing in the workplace.

Look at the Unison E-note for new stewards.

Visit www.learning.unison.org.uk

Starting Dates:

Manchester (3 & 2 Day Blocks)

16th | 17th | 18th | 23rd | 24th March
11th | 12th | 13th | 18th | 19th May
2nd | 3rd | 4th | 9th | 10th November

Manchester (5 Day, 1 Day a Week)

2nd February — 5 Mondays
1st June — 5 Mondays
14th September — 5 Mondays

Manchester (5 Day Block)

27th | 28th | 29th | 30th | 31st July

Carlisle (3 & 2 Day Blocks)

20th | 21st | 22nd | 27th | 28th April

Carlisle (5 Day, 1 Day a Week)

19th October – 5 Mondays

Liverpool (3 & 2 Day Blocks)

16th | 17th | 18th | 23rd | 24th March
11th | 12th | 13th | 18th | 19th May
2nd | 3rd | 4th | 9th | 10th November

Liverpool (5 Day, 1 Day a Week)

2nd February – 5 Mondays
1st June – 5 Mondays
14th September – 5 Mondays

Preston (3 & 2 Day Blocks)

16th | 17th | 18th | 23rd | 24th March
11th | 12th | 13th | 18th | 19th May
2nd | 3rd | 4th | 9th | 10th November

Preston (5 Day, 1 Day a Week)

2nd February – 5 Mondays
1st June – 5 Mondays
14th September – 5 Mondays

Follow on courses for Stewards

Advanced Representation Skills

This is a three day follow-on course for people who have completed initial basic training (The Organising Steward and/or the Health and Safety Starter Courses) but who now need extra skills knowledge and practice in case handling.

Manchester

3rd | 4th | 5th March
20th | 21st | 22nd October

Carlisle

27th | 28th | 29th May

Negotiating Skills

Negotiating through collective bargaining takes place at many levels from raising members issues with line managers, work rotas, overtime, local agreements or terms and conditions. This course will help participants to:

- Develop and practice negotiating skills
- Be more effective team negotiators
- Understand the process of negotiating and be familiar with different styles of negotiating
- Understand how to prepare, present and negotiate on a claim
- Develop good practice in negotiations.

Manchester

14th | 15th | 16th April
17th | 18th | 19th November

Introduction to Employment Law

This is a 3 day follow on course for stewards or union representatives who wish to know the basics of employment law. The course includes the following: Background to the law, Contracts of Employment, Unfair Dismissal, Tribunals and Equality Law

Manchester

27th | 28th | 29th January
8th | 9th | 10th September

ERA Stewards Refresher Course UNISON 5 Year Rule

If you undertake representative work or casework for UNISON then you need refresher training at least every 5 years.

Think of it, as your vital continuing professional development as a UNISON rep or your 'licence to practice'.

On the refresher course you will learn about current protocols in the union when representing members. How to organise around issues in the workplace to lessen the amount of individual casework required and look at recent legal changes and how these may affect the way we represent.

The course is best run in the branch - see your Regional Organiser to get a course off the ground. The events lists below are what we refer to as 'mop up' events. For people from branches where only one or two people need 'refreshing' i.e. too few to run a branch based course.

Course Dates:

Carlisle

Thursday 5th February

Thursday 4th June

Thursday 1st October

Online

Thursday 5th March

Thursday 29th October

Preston

Thursday 12th February

Thursday 11th June

Thursday 8th October

Liverpool

Thursday 19th February

Thursday 25th June

Thursday 15th October

Manchester

Thursday 26th February

Thursday 2nd July

Thursday 22nd October

Health and Safety Starter

If you are a new Health and Safety Rep this three day course is the first you should take. Your role and the rules and regulations governing health and safety at work are outlined. You will receive a resource pack and details of the UNISON support for Health and Safety reps and issues.

The course will help you to organise around health and safety issues in the workplace.

Some of the subjects covered include:

- The role of the H&S Rep
- Organising around H&S
- H&S Law
- SRSC Regs
- Inspections
- Safety Committees
- Risk Assessment

Start Dates:

Manchester (3 Day Block)

17th | 18th | 19th February

14th | 15th | 16th July

24th | 25th | 26th November

Preston (3 Day Block)

17th | 18th | 19th February

14th | 15th | 16th July

24th | 25th | 26th November

Liverpool (3 Day Block)

17th | 18th | 19th February

14th | 15th | 16th July

24th | 25th | 26th November

Carlisle (3 Day Block)

10th | 11th | 12th March

24th | 25th | 26th November

Learning Reps Course

To be able to work effectively as union learning representative (ULR) you need to build a broad knowledge and understanding of education and training matters. Equally, if not more important, is a good understanding of how the union works and your workplace context.

Knowing who to talk to and when, who makes the decisions and how, what policies and guidelines can help is fundamental to ULRs making a successful case for members.

This course will help you:

- Understand union structures, and how your union organises around priorities and learning
- Build a broad perspective of where you fit in the scheme of things
- Find out about developments in learning and appreciate issues affecting learning
- Work with members and other reps to define priorities
- Take a planned approach to your own and your members' development
- Develop the skills of putting the union case on learning
- Work collectively as part of the union team

ULR courses can be run on demand. If you are interested in ULR training or becoming a ULR please contact Diana Warren

d.warren@unison.co.uk

Branch Officers

This course is designed for new branch Officers, Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Coordinator, lifelong Learning Coordinator, Equalities Officer, Young Members etc.

The course is designed for you to understand how the branch works and your responsibilities and will cover the following subjects:

- Branch structures
- Organising in the branch
- Meeting skills
- Finding new activists
- Supporting new activists

The course is a three-day block

Liverpool

6th | 7th | 8th May

Manchester

8th | 9th | 10th July

16th | 17th | 18th September

Women's Branch Officer Course

This one day course aims:

- 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

Manchester

22nd May

Liverpool

6th November

Equality in your Branch

This one day course will enable branch officers and reps to:

- Understand the roles of the branch Equalities Co-ordinator, Equality Reps and Self-Organised groups officers.
- Develop their understanding of Equality in Unison
- Promote equality organising in their workplace and branch
- Develop realistic action plans

Manchester City Centre

4th February

25th March

22nd July

11th November

Liverpool City Centre

23rd September

Building a Powerful Workplace Union Organising to Win

This one day course is to help branches build campaigns in their workplaces. Based on successful campaigns run in the region it will teach skills in planning campaigns, mapping, recruitment, finding new activists and sustaining an organised workplace.

They can be run in branches or workplaces on request and tailored to branch or workplace needs:

Manchester 22nd January

Liverpool 20th May

Manchester 12th November

Organising around Change

This 1 day course will help branches and workplaces deal with change: re-organisations, consultations, redundancies, introduction of new technology etc.

The course will concentrate on Base Organising to ensure your bargaining power is in place to negotiate around the change.

Manchester 25th February

Manchester 13th October

Supporting New Activists

Becoming a new union activist can be quite daunting, so if we are to keep and develop these potential reps or branch officers then we need to support them.

This one day course will:

- Concepts of coaching and mentoring in UNISON
- Skills required by mentors and buddies
- Systems which need to be in place in the branch to enable the mentoring process

Liverpool 19th March

Manchester 24th September

Challenging Racism in the Workplace

A one-day essential course for all activists.

The course will include:

- Language and terminology
- Unconscious Bias
- Everyday Racism
- Allyship
- Embedding anti-racism into a workplace

Manchester City Centre

11th February

6th October

Liverpool City Centre

21st May

**SHOW
RACISM
THE
RED
CARD**

These courses will be tutored by Show Racism the Red Card.

Please visit their website for more information
www.theredcard.org

Green Skills

This course aims to:

- To introduce participants to the interaction between humans and their environment and their impact upon it
- To enable participants to plan a strategy for their branch to engage around environmental issues on a workplace and wider level



Manchester

22nd May

3rd December

Young Members Political School

This is a residential course spread over 2 days. The course will cover current political issues that particularly effect young members. It is a good chance for young members to be introduced to Unison and network with other young members.

The course is open to any member in the region who is under 30 years of age.

Liverpool City Centre

Friday 27th — Saturday 28th March



Short Courses

These courses can be run on demand from a branch, a group of branches, service group or SOG:

- Disability Discrimination
- H&S Inspections
- Risk assessment
- TU History
- Mental Health awareness
- Stress in the Workplace
- Economics for Everyone

Workshops

We also offer short workshops that can be run online or face to face for branches either as part of a development day or a branch meeting.

- Active members
- Organising conversations
- Knowing your members
- Base organising
- Running Campaigns
- Unison structures
- Writing motions
- Race Protocol
- Dealing with the far right

If you want training on other subjects or issues and it is not on the list then please contact us. We will endeavour to provide the training.

Contact Bob Kelly for more details
b.kelly@unison.co.uk

Courses for Activists and Members

Menopause in the Workplace

To provide an overview of

- What the menopause is and common symptoms
- The impact of the menopause on women and how it can affect work and vice versa
- What workplace changes may be needed
- Sources of information/ organisations that can support women

Manchester City Centre

26th January

19th October (Hybrid, Manchester and online)

Liverpool City Centre

10th June

Neurodiversity

A one day course to help reps and members understand neurodiverse issues in the workplace

Manchester City Centre

25th February – Part One

26th February – Part Two

Liverpool City Centre

21st September – Part One

Domestic Abuse: A trade union issue

The one day course will increase awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and enable delegates to feel confident talking about DA, understanding risk, and signposting to specialist support.

Manchester City Centre

6th July

3rd December

Challenging Sexual Harassment

UNISON is committed to promoting equality and challenging discrimination. Discrimination is a highly complex area of law and this one-day course serves as an introduction, aiming to increase the understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment, when and how it takes place, as well as what the employer responsibilities are for preventing and dealing with incidents.

Liverpool City Centre

16th April

Manchester City Centre

7th October



Whether you're looking for a reps course or you want to refresh your skills as an experienced rep or you're simply interested in becoming a union rep, we have a course for you www.tuc.org.uk/TUCcourses

You can choose from classroom or online training, a webinar or an eNote you should be able to find training that suits you.

TUC Education trains union reps to work with union members and officers to make a difference in their workplace. Training is run in partnership with further education colleges and online across the UK. Union reps attend from a wide range of industries and unions.

Whether you are a:

- Shop steward
- Workplace rep
- Safety rep
- Union learning rep
- Equality rep
- Green rep
- Or other trade union rep

You will find training available that will give you the skills you need as a rep to be effective in the workplace.

Training includes classroom and online versions of:

- Union reps stage 1
- Employment law
- Health and safety stage 1 and 2
- Union learning reps stage 1 and 2

The online programmes are freely available for self-study and can be accessed as soon as a rep takes office, at a time and place most convenient, using a smart phone, tablet or computer. And of course, the online programmes can enhance the delivery of classroom courses.

If you want updates on a particular workplace issue then eNotes and webinars are a great place to start.

eNotes are short, bitesized chunks of online learning that contain a mix of text, video and quizzes.

Webinars are short briefings held on the internet for an online audience. New webinars on issues affecting reps are run regularly.

To look for TUC courses, training, events, webinars and eNotes visit www.tuc.org.uk/training

Despite cuts to funding and budgets the TUC Education Units in the NW are still offering courses for stewards and reps. There is a full range of courses on offer at the following centres:

Warrington & Vale Royal College

Rick Cayzer

(Contact for courses in Cumbria)

Tel: 01925 494637

Email: rcayzer@wvr.ac.uk

The Manchester College

Mike Dearing

Tel: 0161 920 2835/2261

Email: MDearing@tmc.ac.uk

Stockport College

John Handley

Tel: 0161 296 5728/5720

Email: john.handley@stockport.ac.uk

Wirral Met College

Charles Wilson

Tel: 0151 237 2750

Email: CharlesWilson@wmc.ac.uk

Members' Education

Member Learning: January to June 2026

All the courses below are online and free for members to attend.
To book, please go to UNISON NW website's Learning section where you can find information about other courses and learning opportunities

www.northwest.unison.org.uk/learning/member/nw/



Course Title	Date	Time
JANUARY		
BSL for Health and Social Care	Monday 12 th January	10.00am – 1.00pm
Selling online	Tuesday 13 th January	10.00am – 12.00pm
Beginners' Spanish conversation	Tuesday 13 th 20 th 27 th Jan and 3 rd February (4-week course)	6.30pm – 7.30pm
Menopause Awareness	Friday 23 rd January	10.30am – 12.30pm
Understanding Racism	Monday 26 th January	1.00pm – 3.00pm
Challenging Racism	Wednesday 28 th January	10.00am – 12.00pm
FEBRUARY		
BSL for Education	Monday 2 nd and 9 th February (this is a 2 part course)	10.00am – 12.00pm
Get Active in UNISON	Thursday 12 th February	12.00pm – 2.00pm
National Careers Service: Interview Skills	Tuesday 17 th February	10.30am – 12.00pm
Know your Rights	Thursday 19 th February	12.00pm – 2.00pm
MARCH		
BSL Beginners	Thursday 5 th 12 th 19 th March (3-week course)	5.30pm – 7.30pm
Menopause Awareness	Friday 6 th March	10.30am – 12.30pm
Deaf Awareness Taster	Tuesday 17 th March	10.00am – 1.00pm
Excel Taster	Thursday 26 th March	10.00am – 1.00pm
APRIL		
BSL Beginners	Mondays 13 th 20 th 27 th April (3-week course)	5.30pm – 7.30pm
Digital Photography Using a Mobile Phone	Tuesday 14 th April	12.00pm – 2.00pm
National Careers Service Transferable Skills – ESOL	Wednesday 15 th April	10.30am – 12.00pm
MAY		
BSL for Education	Mondays 11 th 18 th May (2-week course)	5.30pm – 7.30pm
Get Active in UNISON	Thursday 14 th May	5.00pm – 7.00pm
Menopause Awareness	Tuesday 19 th May	1.00pm – 3.00pm
JUNE		
Next Steps BSL	Mondays 8 th 15 th 22 nd May (3-week course)	5.30pm – 7.30pm
Excel Taster	Tuesday 9 th June	10.00am – 1.00pm
Know Your Rights	Thursday 18 th June	5.00pm – 7.00pm
BSL for Health and Social Care	Monday 29 th June	10.00am – 1.00pm

Course Content

British Sign Language (BSL) for Beginners

This course will help to teach you the basics of British Sign Language.

You will:

- **Begin to develop skills in signing your alphabet A-Z, asking someone their name and finger-spelling your own.**
- **Learn to count from 1-10 and will also begin to recognise numbers 11-20.**
- **Explore how different parts of the face refer to different conversations in relation to age, money and time.**

Digital Photography using a Mobile Phone

This course will explore the use of a camera on a mobile phone. This will predominantly be centred around the iPhone; however, members can bring other devices and help and support will be given. You will explore the camera settings for your phone on your mobile device and learn what the different types of camera mode do and what they are used for including time lapse, slo-mo, cinematic, video, photo, portrait and pano. You will also learn how to add text and symbols or drawings to pictures using the add text feature. You will explore the advantages of this feature. This course will be a hands-on approach for members to get to grips with using a mobile phone for photography. All members are welcome on this friendly and inclusive course!

BSL for Education

This fun and interactive course will focus on key BSL vocabulary linked to education and learning. Members will develop a range of words and focus on signing and also recognising the signs that have been taught with a focus on the development of BSL receptive skills. The aim of the course is for members to develop confidence in their communication and interactions with the deaf in schools, colleges, universities and other educational settings. A range of learning activities will be used throughout this diverse and inclusive session and everyone is welcome!

Next Steps BSL

This course is the perfect follow-on from the BSL for Beginners; however, new learners are welcome as new vocabulary will be explored.

This course will focus on the days of the week, months of the year, colours, animals and family. Learners will learn to sign and recognise words in relation to these topics. Full support and demonstrations will be given and learning resources to further embed the learning taking place on the course. The sessions will be fun and interactive with lots of opportunities to practice with tutor and peer support.

Digital Skills: Excel Taster

This hands-on, introductory session is designed for beginners. You will learn how to navigate the Excel interface, enter and format data and perform basic calculations. You'll also explore essential functions like SUM and the use of the fill handle, as well as becoming familiar with how to name spreadsheet tabs. By the end of the session, you will feel more confident in data entry and the advantage of using Excel for data calculations.

Introduction to Selling Online

During this session you will learn how to list an item through Marketplace in Facebook; discuss the importance of photography when advertising an item for sale and how to research a fair price for the item you wish to list. You will also learn the importance of description and marketing the product through your description and photographs taken and how to 'Favourite' pages on the Internet that you may wish to return to with ease through bookmarks.

Application Forms

Build your confidence in completing the different sections of an application form

- **The importance of responding to the job description/person specification**
- **Advice on how to use the STAR technique when answering competency based questions**

Transferable Skills – ESOL

What is meant by 'transferable skills' in relation to work and learning

- **Different ways to identify and evidence their 'transferable skills'**
- **How to use transferable skills in job search and career planning How to get qualifications gained outside of the UK translated**

Interview Skills

Prepare for an interview

- **Be aware of the different types of interview they may encounter**
- **Be prepared for different selection methods used**

Menopause Awareness

To provide an overview of

- **What the menopause is and common symptoms**
- **The impact of the menopause on women and how it can affect work and vice versa**
- **What workplace changes may be needed**
- **Sources of information/ organisations that can support women**

Know your rights

An overview of your rights in the workplace and how to challenge when something isn't right.

You will also find out what support you have in UNISON to challenge and who can help.

Get Active in UNISON

UNISON is only as strong as the members who get involved and have a voice but there are so many ways to do that and make your workplace a better place to work. This session will explore the different ways you can get involved in UNISON whatever your job is, your interests are and however much time you have. We will explore different union roles and how you can support your branch and help with UNISON's campaigns plus an overview of any training you will receive.

Beginners' Spanish conversation

This is a four part fun, interactive conversation class where you will learn Spanish basics for use on holiday and for solidarity campaign trips (Cuba etc)

To get the best member learning we need Union Learning Representatives in every workplace, who will find out what members want and help coordinate delivery with us. Training on the role will be provided.

For more information on member learning or on being a ULR

Contact Diana Warren d.warren@unison.co.uk



UNISON
COURSE APPLICATION FORM

Application Details	
Name	Contact Telephone
Address	Unison Membership No.
	Branch
Postcode	Position Held
Preferred E-Mail address	

We use this information to add your name to the training database for this event and update your membership details.

Course Details
Course Title
Venue Location
Course Dates

No member should be deterred from applying for a course because of individual needs. Please give details of your access, dietary requirements, learning support requirements and other needs here – use a separate sheet if you need to –

This information tells us if you have any specific requirements that will help you to fully participate in the course.

Branch Authorisation	
I have informed my branch that I have applied for the course and I am starting to make arrangements for time off to attend	
Signature of applicant	Date
The above named has branch approval to attend	
Signature from Branch	Date



UNISON NW REGIONAL CENTRE

12th Floor, 1 Angel Square, Manchester M60 0AG