

How to

take good photographs

A picture is worth a 1,000 words, so knowing how to take good photographs for websites, newsletters and for local newspapers is a useful skill to have.

Here are a few tips to help you take good photographs of UNISON members engaged in campaign activity:

- make sure you have a camera with you – don't rely on a mobile phone as the quality is not as good
- think about what you want the picture to convey and plan how best to achieve that
- think carefully about the background – is there anything potentially embarrassing like an inappropriate piece of graffiti, could it look like your subjects have a post sticking out of their heads, are there other union banners/placards visible? When in doubt, opt for a plain background
- use the location of the photograph to tell part of the story ie include the appropriate name on the building - this can be the employer's name, the name of the local library you may be trying to save etc
- make sure you have enough light – outdoors is good – as a flash will not help if the location is very dark
- photograph members doing something ie holding banners/placards, talking to members of the public or handing out leaflets as this makes the photograph more interesting than one of members just standing in a group
- don't aim for photos of large groups of people – try and focus in on a smaller number as sometimes pictures are used quite small in newsletters and on websites
- always get some UNISON branding in your pictures, placards, flags, people in t shirts etc
- get permission from everyone in the picture, especially if you want to include members of the public, and explain how you plan to use the picture ie send to local paper or use on branch website
- make sure that people have the appropriate expressions on their faces. If you want to use the picture as part of an article or news release about cuts etc then members should look serious, not be laughing – save the fun until you've won!
- when you are ready take several pictures – one is never enough as someone may be looking away as you press the shutter – you can pick the best one later

It is a good idea to spend some time looking carefully at photographs in your local newspaper, on websites etc to see if there is anything you can learn about backgrounds, how close the subjects are to the camera and what works. Don't try and get too clever or 'arty' it's best to leave that to the professionals as they have the cameras and lenses to pull it off.