

Branch Officer Training Course Programme

2025



UNISON

*Yorkshire and
Humberside*

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Welcome

Welcome to Yorkshire & Humberside's Regional Education and Training Programme. Firstly, we want to say a huge thank you for everything you do for our members in UNISON in Yorkshire & Humberside and thank you for taking on these really vital roles.

Having active reps in branches is crucial to support our members but is also really rewarding for you as an individual. These activist courses are designed to set you on your journey in your role – equip you with the basic knowledge and information you need to get started, or to help you develop your skills.

They will also provide you with a very valuable networking opportunities with other reps from other branches across the region. We offer support within the branch and within the Region so you don't ever feel alone.

We are now delivering more training at more locations across the Yorkshire and Humberside region, removing barriers to participation by bringing learning closer to our branches and activists. Every year we look to include courses at Local Learning Hubs within each of our constituent counties – Sheffield in South Yorkshire, Northallerton in North Yorkshire, Hull in East Riding, and Grimsby in Lincolnshire, to supplement the training available in West Yorkshire at our UNISON Regional Centre in Leeds. The programme is designed to increase access to the most up to date training UNISON can offer both for new and developing existing activists. UNISON needs to continue to increase our activist base, and attract better equipped and motivated activists. The courses provided are aimed at building confidence and developing skills abilities. We are sure that both you and UNISON will benefit from the experience. **It is never too late to learn.**

UNISON College brings together learning, education and training that we provide for UNISON members and activists into one coherent offer. Building on our long tradition of providing high quality training, it will equip our activists with the confidence, knowledge and experience they need to advocate for our members and empower our members to take control of their lives and shape their career. UNISON College is growing and developing all the time offering both online and face-to-face learning, together with a wide range of courses, workshops and e-notes.

Branch development is vital in recruiting and organising and retaining members. We are constantly striving to increase membership and provide a better service. Increasing membership and developing new activists from all sectors of the union will make us stronger and more representative of our members.

Branches and the Region will contribute to ensure no member should be out of pocket attending UNISON courses and that access is freely available to as many members /

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activists as possible. Any additional travel costs or carer costs can be claimed from your branch, but you do need to speak to your branch and get their agreement in advance.

We also offer a separate members-only training programme detailing some of the courses/workshops UNISON offers for all members. You can obtain a copy of this from our website.

We pride ourselves on offering an extremely friendly relaxed and supportive learning environment, and this gives opportunities to meet new people make new friends and build networks with other branches and activists learners to build on knowledge and skills. Working together with other Trade unionists to achieve common goals is at the fundamental core of our organisation and we offer many opportunities for development.

We reviewed our branch fees for both online and face-to-face learning at the start of 2024. Our branch charges for 2025 will remain the same. Our online multi-day courses will continue to be £50 per delegate for courses such as our 5-day reps training courses, workplace reps refresher courses. Our online courses that run for just one day will remain at £25 per delegate, per day or £15 per delegate, per half day. Our face-to-face fees are £30 per day, per delegate or £15 per half day, per delegate.

We have increased our Residential courses due to the rising costs of hotel fees. Our Residential courses (when offered) will now be charged at £250 per delegate (1 night residential) or £100 per delegate if non-residential, for courses such as our Branch Officer Training Weekend where the event is taking place in an external venue. Our fees are being reviewed on an ongoing basis, and we will advise you if there are any further changes.

So please access and enjoy our learning offer and don't be afraid to comment on things that went well or not as well as we are always striving to improve your learning experience, and all feedback is carefully considered and used to improve our delivery.

I hope you will participate and enjoy what we have to offer, and we firmly believe UNISON has the best trained activist of any other union in the UK.



Wendy Nichols
Regional Convenor



Karen Loughlin
Regional Secretary

2025 Calendar of Courses

Training Course	Dates	Apply by	Venue
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	29 April 2025 (9.30-13:00)	28-Mar-25	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	1 May 2025 (9.30-13:00)	31-Mar-25	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	7 May 2025 (9.30-13:00)	07-Apr-25	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Welfare Officer Training	13, 20 May 2025 (10:00-13:00)	14-Apr-25	Online, via There for You
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	15 May 2025 (9.30-13:00)	14-Apr-25	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Secretary	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Branch Chair	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Education & Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Equalities Officer	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Health & Safety Officer	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Labour Link Officer	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Communications Officers	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
International Officer	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Environmental Officer	17, 18 May 2025	07-Apr-25	DoubleTree by Hilton, Leeds
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	28 May 2025 (9.30-13:00)	28-Apr-25	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	25 June 2025 (9.30-13:00)	26-May-25	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	9 September 2025 (9.30-13:00)	11-Aug-25	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team
Welfare Officer Training	9, 16 September 2025 (10:00-13:00)	11-Aug-25	Online, via There for You
Welfare Officer Training	11, 18 November 2025 (10:00-13:00)	13-Nov-25	Online, via There for You
Branch Treasurer OLBA Training	20 November 2025 (9.30-13:00)	20-Oct-25	Online, via UNISON National Finance Team

The Branch Officer Training courses running on 17-18 May 2025 will take place all day on Saturday and until 13:00 on Sunday.

Branch Officer Training Weekend Leeds

Saturday – Sunday 17, 18 May 2025



Branch Officer Training Weekend

Date:	Saturday – Sunday 17, 18 May 2025
Venue:	DoubleTree by Hilton Leeds
Apply by:	7 April 2025
Cost to Branches:	£100 non-residential (2 days) £250 residential (2 days with 1 night accommodation on Saturday night.)

This is always a big weekend in our Calendar, bringing together UNISON activists from across the region to learn and develop their skills together, make new contacts and extend networks.

These courses are designed for Branch Officials and committee members who have taken on responsibilities at Branch level. The courses will help develop the knowledge and skills needed for the different Branch roles.

This year we are holding the event at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel in Leeds. It promises to be a fantastic occasion and we are anticipating an increase in applications, so please book your place as early as possible to ensure that you do not miss out!

● Health and Safety Officer

This course covers the strategic role of organising Health and Safety Reps and members around health and safety issues. It is not suitable for Health and Safety Representatives who have not had any training or have only recently been trained. The course will look at the role of safety reps and the Branch, investigating hazards and members' complaints, agreements with the employer, and future planning.

● Labour Link Officer

This course helps new Labour Link Officers to understand their role within the branch, equip them with campaigning techniques, understand why politics are important in the branch and develop skills to encourage interest in political activity in the branch. In order to be able to undertake this role, members would need to pay into the Labour Link Campaign Fund and be individual members of the Labour Party.

● Communications Officer

This course is mainly for those branch activists who are already or wish to become involved in branch publicity, producing leaflets, newsletters and branch magazines. The course will be practical-based drawing on the skills of UNISON's publicity department. It will cover writing copy, headlines and captions plus explore how to use layout to best effect to produce finished newsletters.

● Branch International Officer

This course will examine in detail the role and function of Branch International Officers and how we can make 'international solidarity' a reality, not just a slogan. The course will look at UNISON's international priorities, the effect of globalisation on developing countries, and how branch-based activities can make a difference.

● Branch Secretary

This course is designed to help existing and potential Branch Secretaries to carry out their role effectively. As well as examining the role of the Branch Secretary and the branch itself, the course focuses on the skills branch secretaries need and look at developing a team approach to branch work.

● Chairing Meetings

The course is aimed at anyone who has to chair a formal trade union meeting, whether it be a Branch meeting, Branch Committee, Working Group or Self Organised Group. Find out how to practise the skills needed to run a meeting that is fair to all participants. This is suitable for all activists but especially Branch Chairs.

● Branch Education Co-ordinator

Good education within the Branch is vital for making local organisation work. This course is for Branch Education Officers and will look at how to identify your Branch education needs, how to budget for education, and how to encourage and support representatives in training.

● Equalities Officer

Open to all Branch Equalities Officers and Branch Officers for Self Organised Groups. This course will help you to understand how discrimination affects members, what the

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union can do to tackle discrimination at work and how under-represented members can be encouraged to become involved in union activity.

● Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator

This course will provide Lifelong Learning Coordinators with the knowledge and skills to effectively establish UNISON's learning and skills agenda in their workplace and successfully support the work of others to achieve branch aims around learning and skills.

● Climate Crisis and Green Skills – Environmental Officer/Green Reps

This course is designed to give branch activists the opportunity to get initial training as an Environmental Officer/Green Rep. It should enable you to understand the role that UNISON can play in tackling the challenges around climate crisis and to plan a strategy for your branch to engage around environmental issues on a workplace and wider level.

Branch Officer Equality Officer Training Courses

Black Members Branch Officer Training

The course is appropriate for branch Black Members' Officers and contacts.

Course aims:

- To define the role of a UNISON branch Black Members' Officer or contact
- To establish how to access resources, make useful links and develop strategies for supporting Black members in their branches
- To consider how to campaign and get equality issues on the recruitment and bargaining agenda
- To build a network of Black Members and encourage participation in the union

Disabled Members Branch Officer Training

The training is for disabled members and will focus on:

- Working for disability equality in UNISON
- Role of branch disabled members officer or contact
- Bargaining for workplace reasonable adjustments
- Disability campaigning and organising in your branch
- Support and resources
- It's also a great networking opportunity!

Women's Officer Training

The course is appropriate for branch Women's Officers.

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.

Young Members Officer Training

The course is appropriate for branch Young Members Officers.

Course aims:

- To introduce young members branch officers to their role
- To consider the values of UNISON
- To explore how to influence UNISON structures
- To discuss how to organise young members in your branch
- To plan some work with young members in your branch

LGBT+ Branch Officer & Contact Training

This training is appropriate for all LGBT+ branch officers or contacts who want to find out more about getting active in the branch and LGBT+ organising in UNISON.

Course aims:

- Define the role of a LGBT+ branch officer or contact
- Know how to access resources, make useful links and develop strategies for supporting LGBT+ members
- Identify how to organise and campaign for equality and get equality issues on the bargaining agenda

Courses will be organised throughout the year and will be advertised once dates have been set.

Branch Treasurer OLBA Training

This one-day course will be delivered by UNISON's National Finance Team and will be delivered via Microsoft Teams.

This training is aimed at newly appointed Branch Treasurers and branch employed staff who have access to OLBA in their role. The course introduces UNISON's online branch accounting system (OLBA), how to set a budget and run reports and have an opportunity to work on live case studies.

Course registration will open prior to each course date and will be available online at <https://learning.unison.org.uk/events/> If a course is not showing online, then please check back later.

N.B. Completion of the Branch Treasurer and GDPR e-notes are a course requirement before attending the online workshops.

Course fees: Please note that there will be a charge to the branch of £30 per learner for OLBA training.



Welfare Officer Training

This two-half day session course will be delivered via Microsoft Teams. This course will be delivered by *There for You* tutors and bookings will be made via UNISON Nationally.

The course will help you to:

- Understand the role of the branch welfare officer and how to perform it effectively;
- Learn about UNISON's welfare charity *There for You* and its structure;
- Understand the role of the branch welfare officer and how to perform it effectively;
- Learn about UNISON's welfare charity *There for You* and its structure;
- Understand application forms and criteria, and how to process them;
- Understand the importance of promoting and publicising the work of UNISON's Welfare charity *There for You* in a variety of settings;
- Explore what confidentiality means for branch welfare officers;
- Understand and identify different communication styles;
- Practice active listening and communication skills;
- help members feel at ease and navigate potentially difficult conversations;
- handle problems in an assertive manner and explain any process that needs to be followed;
- understand how to set up a support system for yourself.

Course registration will open prior to each course date and will be available online at <https://learning.unison.org.uk/events/> If a course is not showing online, then please check back later.

N.B. Completion of the Branch Welfare and GDPR e-notes are a course requirement before attending the online workshops.

Course fees: Please note that there will be a charge to the branch of £30 per learner for Welfare Officer training.



How to apply

To apply for Regional courses, please complete an application form and send it to your Branch office for approval. An application form can be downloaded from our website at <https://yorks.unison.org.uk/apply-for-courses>

Alternatively, branches can email t.shearer@unison.co.uk giving the members name, membership number and email address, as long as training has been approved by the branch.

Cancellation Fees

We apply a cancellation fee for all course places where learners cancel their place close to the course running.

This applies for all courses (both face to face and virtual) where a place is cancelled within 2 weeks of the course start date.

This is because there are costs associated with running the courses whether they are online or in person.

Automatic exemptions can be applied in circumstances of

- Family bereavement
- Receiving treatment in hospital
- Where there is a waiting list, and the place is taken up by another learner

Branches can appeal cancellation costs by making an application to the region citing the reason for the cancellation. These appeals will be heard by a subcommittee of the Regional Committee.

For National courses please apply via the online link provided where the course has been advertised. To view this please visit: <https://learning.unison.org.uk/events/>



Contact details

**UNISON Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Centre,
Quayside House, Canal Wharf, Leeds LS11 5PS**

Yorkshire & Humberside website: <https://yorks.unison.org.uk/>

Learning & Organising Services website: <https://learning.unison.org.uk/>

Education Team email: yheducation@unison.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/unisonyh

Instagram: www.instagram.com/unisonyorkshumber/

X/Twitter: <https://twitter.com/unisonyh>

For National Courses you can contact UNISON Learning and Organising Services via email on: learningandorganising@unison.co.uk

