



Fire Brigades Union

Regional Courses

2010



This guide "Regional Courses – Notes for Regional Education & Learning Organisers" has been produced to provide information and practical assistance for those Officials who are involved in developing their Region's trade union education programme. It will be of practical use especially for producing a written Regional programme brochure, for example on an annual basis, and will help raise awareness of the practical benefits to our officials from participating in the Union's education programme.

The guide is not intended to be prescriptive in any way, Regions will determine their education priorities through discussion but it does give a range of examples of the sort of courses that Regions may find useful to include in their plans for the future depending on current priorities. The guide contains suggested course titles and course aims to help with producing suitable marketing materials for course recruitment.

Head Office has produced programmes and materials for all the courses suggested. These materials can be used with TUC tutors who will also arrange for TUC Education/National Open College accreditation for FBU learners. Head Office can also provide advice, guidance and support with contacting the TUC Education Service and suitable TUC tutors if requested.

The guide should be used along with a further publication for Officials involved with the Union's education programmes – the handbook "Planning and Organising Trade Union Education – A Guide for Regional Education & Learning Organisers".

Trevor Cave
Director of Education

Notes for Regional Education & Learning Organisers

Regional Education for FBU Officials

FBU Officials and active members can, with the help and guidance of their Brigade Education Officers and Regional Education & Learning Organisers, apply for a range of short courses offered within their Region. Many of these courses are supported by tutors from the TUC Education Service who are familiar with the FBU and the UKFRS and working together on the course with Regional Officials. In addition, as appropriate, some courses may be organised and delivered with the direct assistance of Head Office or Regional Officials, especially those familiar with Discussion Leader's & Education Methods.

Courses supported by TUC tutors are accredited within the TUC Education programme.

Some courses will be offered on a residential basis over two or three days and others will be run on a day, non-residential basis.

Courses offered from time to time within Regional Education programmes may for example include the following:

- **Introductory Branch Officials**
- **Handling Members' Problems**
- **Introductory Health, Safety & Welfare at Work**
- **Handling Discipline & Grievance**
- **Introductory Fairness at Work**
- **Tackling Bullying and Harassment**
- **Understanding Equality Impact Assessments**
- **Handling Internal (ADAE) Investigations**
- **Dealing with Accidents, Injuries & Claims**
- **Engaging with Politics & Campaigning – Introduction**
- **Conference Skills/Public Speaking**
- **Using the Media**
- **Handling Medical Appeals**

(Please note that this list is not exhaustive but indicative and additional courses may be offered from time to time to suit local needs and priorities.)

Introductory Branch Officials

This introductory course has been designed by FBU Education to help Branch Officials improve their skills, update their knowledge and gain confidence as Reps to organise effectively in their workplace, help members and represent them.

The course will help Officials to:

- **Understand their role and responsibilities as Branch Officials**
- **Contribute to running effective FBU Branches**
- **Find and use relevant information and resources**
- **Use union policies and procedures**
- **Improve their practical skills including note-taking; interviewing members; running meetings and reporting back;**
- **Develop a systematic approach to help with handling member's problems and casework**
- **Make use of our agreements and take up issues and problems with management**

Handling Members' Problems

This course has been designed to help Branch Officials improve their skills, update their knowledge and gain confidence as Reps to organise effectively in their workplace, help members and represent them.

The course will help Officials to:

- **Understand their role and responsibilities as Branch Officials**
- **Find and use relevant information and resources**
- **Use union policies and procedures**
- **Improve their practical skills including note-taking; interviewing members**
- **Develop a systematic approach to help with handling member's problems and casework**
- **Make use of our agreements and take up issues and problems with management**

Introductory Health, Safety & Welfare at Work

This course has been designed for newly elected and less experienced FBU Branch Health and Safety Reps who have not yet attended another course.

A key purpose of the course is to provide an opportunity for FBU Health & Safety Reps to meet together to look at how they can use their rights and develop the skills necessary to improve health & safety standards for their members. Further opportunities for relevant trade union education are available on the TUC programme of courses for union safety representatives.

The course will help participants to:

- **Find out more about Health & Safety legislation and their rights and duties as union health & safety reps**
- **Be clearer about their employer's responsibilities in respect of health and safety at work**
- **Develop relevant skills for union health & safety representatives**
- **Be more confident in their role as a union health & safety representatives**
- **Discuss how to handle problems raised at work and build union organisation for health & safety in the workplace**

Handling Discipline & Grievance

This course, is designed for FBU officials who may have union responsibilities and functions covered by section 6 of the NJC agreement on Discipline, Grievance & Disputes etc. They may also have responsibility for accompanying and representing FBU members at disciplinary hearings or representing members who have requested assistance with a grievance.

The course will therefore concentrate on addressing the question of handling member's disciplinary problems and grievances within the context of the current NJC Agreement. There will also be a need to take into account relevant employment law, including the ACAS Code of Practice 1 "Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures" and related guidance. There will also be an opportunity to review skills for preparing and presenting cases.

The course will help Officials to:

- **Look at the NJC Agreement, related local agreements and discuss trade union issues**
- **Understand how to make best use of the NJC Agreement, as well as related local agreements, when handling both discipline and grievance cases as well as disputes**
- **Find out about changes in employment law and discuss trade union issues**
- **Consider the relevance of the ACAS Code and guidance**
- **Review relevant trade union skills**

Introductory Fairness at Work

This introductory course has been designed to help FBU Branch Officials deal with Fairness at Work issues in the workplace.

This programme is particularly intended to increase awareness and knowledge of the issue of workplace bullying & harassment.

The programme will help participants gain the confidence to challenge unacceptable behaviour, and set clear standards of behaviour, in order to create a positive working environment.

The course will help participants to:

- **Understand their role and responsibilities as FBU Officials when dealing with Fairness at Work issues**
- **Find and use relevant information and resources**
- **Use union policies and procedures including those detailed in the FBU publication "All Different. All Equal."**
- **Develop a systematic approach to help deal with Fairness at Work issues, handling member's problems and casework**
- **Have a greater awareness and understanding of what constitutes bullying & harassment, the effects on the individual and the organisation, and health, safety & welfare implications**

Tackling Bullying and Harassment

This introductory course has been designed to help FBU Branch Officials deal with Fairness at Work issues in the workplace and is particularly intended to increase awareness and knowledge of the issue of workplace bullying & harassment.

The programme will help participants gain the confidence to challenge unacceptable behaviour, and set clear standards of behaviour, in order to create a positive working environment.

The course will help Officials to:

- **Understand their role and responsibilities as FBU Officials when dealing with Fairness at Work issues**
- **Find and use relevant information and resources**
- **Use union policies and procedures including those detailed in the FBU publication "All Different. All Equal."**
- **Develop a systematic approach to help deal with Fairness at Work issues, handling member's problems and casework**
- **Have a greater awareness and understanding of what constitutes bullying & harassment, the effects on the individual and the organisation, and health, safety & welfare implications**

Understanding Equality Impact Assessments

This course has been designed to help FBU Officials improve their skills, update their knowledge and gain confidence when taking part in local consultations and negotiations and will be of assistance when dealing with employer's proposals and procedures for equality impact assessments. The course will help them in planning and preparing to negotiate and consult with management and also organising effectively in the workplace, helping and involving members.

The course will help FBU Officials to:

- **Understand relevant legislation and the duties placed on employers to undertake Equality Impact Assessments**
- **Discuss FBU objectives when dealing with equality issues including Equality Impact Assessments and identify issues and concerns**
- **Consider a trade union approach to Equality Impact Assessments and be clear on the role of FBU representatives**
- **Develop trade union strategies for engaging effectively in national & local procedures**

Handling Internal (ADAE) Investigations

This course has been designed to assist Officials of the FBU who may be involved in specific tasks implementing the union's Fairness at Work policy.

The course will help Officials to:

- **Understand the union's Fairness at Work policy**
- **Discuss how the policy may be implemented effectively**
- **Develop essential skills including note-taking; interviewing and listening; preparing and running investigations; writing and presenting reports**
- **Identify an "arguable defence" and other relevant legal points**

Dealing with Accidents, Injuries & Claims

This course has been designed to help officials, including FBU Safety Representatives improve their skills and update their knowledge when handling accidents, injuries and claims on behalf of their members.

The course will help Officials to:

- **Work out a systematic approach to planning and preparing to take up issues including dealing with accidents, injuries and claims**
- **Discuss good practice when participating in accident site and injury investigations**
- **Develop practical skills as FBU Safety Reps**
- **Understand what advice and guidance members may need when considering making claims for compensation**
- **Find and use relevant information and resources**

Engaging with Politics & Campaigning – Introduction

This course has been designed to help FBU Officials and Activists discuss the relevance of politics to trade unions and the FBU and understand how unions, especially the FBU, may be involved in politics at national, regional and local level.

The course will include opportunities for participants to update their knowledge of relevant contemporary issues, both industrial and political, and develop best practice in pursuit of trade union objectives.

The course will help participants to:

- **Understand how the FBU is involved in politics at national, regional and local level and discuss the relevance of politics to trade unions and the FBU**
- **Think about what trade unions and the FBU want from governments, both national and local**
- **Think about what sort of society we want and how we may achieve it**
- **Understand the importance of trade union activities at both local, national and international levels and the ways in which these can interlink**
- **Discuss key current issues for the FBU within the UK Fire Service and identify priorities for the union and its members**
- **Think about the relevance of political ideas in pursuit of trade union objectives such as fair and equal treatment and promoting trade union ideas and attitudes in the workplace**

Developing Effective Communication Skills – Conference Skills/Public Speaking etc

This course has been designed to help FBU Officials and Activists, with little or no previous experience of public speaking, feel better prepared and more confident about both speaking in public and using formal procedures.

The course will help participants to:

- **Communicate more effectively in union meetings and in formal public meetings such as local area forums, meetings with Fire Authority Members etc**
- **Work out a systematic approach to planning and preparing to make an effective contribution during union and public meetings**
- **Practice and become more confident when speaking in public**
- **Find out about how to make use of formal procedures when running and participating in meetings**
- **Improve practical skills including planning and preparing for effective participation in local procedures**
- **Develop a systematic approach, both individually and collectively, to help with handling members' problems and issues**

Using the Media

This introductory course is designed for FBU Officials especially those who may act as the Union spokesperson and who may have to deal with the media in a range of different circumstances including both contact on a day to day basis or on particular occasions when the union needs to get over its message, for example during public campaigning or during a dispute when other bodies, such as the employer or politicians, are likely to be presenting different perspectives.

The course will help FBU Officials to:

- **Think about what is "news" and what factors make stories newsworthy**
- **Find out how journalists work and when to contact them**
- **Consider how to develop your media strategy including opportunities for the Union to use the media**
- **Discuss guidance and undertake practical work including writing a news release**
- **Begin to develop the skills needed to respond to a phone interview and appear on radio or TV**

Handling Medical Appeals & Pensions Update

This course is designed for FBU Officials who may have responsibility for representing members at Medical Appeal Boards and who wish to develop their confidence and skills in preparation and representation.

It will also be of use to those Officials who have responsibility for providing pensions' advice to members.

The course will therefore concentrate on sharing knowledge and discussing best practice when handling member's Pensions issues and Medical Appeals within the context of the current arrangements.

The course will help FBU Officials to:

- **Find out about recent developments with pension schemes in the UKFRS and discuss issues for members**
- **Understand the framework for Medical Appeals in the UKFRS**
- **Find out how to prepare for Medical Appeals & develop both representation and advocacy skills**
- **Consider issues in relation to the conduct of an appeal and develop a "best practice" checklist**

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The course will help FBU Officials to:

- **Understand the framework for Medical Appeals in the UKFRS**
- **Find out how to prepare for Medical Appeals & develop both representation and advocacy skills**
- **Consider issues in relation to the conduct of an appeal and develop a "best practice" checklist**