

# UNISON Fair Wages Toolkit



A UNISON fair wages  
**campaign pack**

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In public sector organisations and workplaces across the UK groups of workers are employed by contractors on lower pay and conditions than their public sector equivalents. Some of these workers are already UNISON members but many are not.

Fair wages campaigns are about raising the pay and conditions of staff employed by contractors, while, at the same time, recruiting and organising these workers inside UNISON. Fair wages campaigns in the public sector will benefit some of the poorest workers in the whole economy and help improve the quality of public services for the communities who use them.

In recent years UNISON branches across the country have been fighting against the privatisation and outsourcing of services by organising local fair wages campaigns. This has been complemented by UNISON's national Positively Public campaign and by negotiations with the government to end terms and conditions inequality in different parts of the public sector.

The success of national talks with the government does not reduce the need for local fair wages campaigns. These are crucial to the union's strategy to build membership and organisation locally as, in the long-term, the union's strength in national negotiation depends upon the health and strength of its local branches.

This toolkit is designed to help and encourage local branches to organise their own fair wages campaign. The examples used here relate to a successful campaign that took place in east London health and higher education branches. To give you a complete picture, material from many other campaigns has been added into the packs.

For almost a century Britain had a successful Fair Wages Resolution. It required companies who contracted with public authorities to pay the going rate for the trade or industry, based on terms agreed in national collective agreements.

The UK had also signed the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 94 which required that public contracts include clauses ensuring the workers had wages and other conditions "no less favourable than those established for work of the same character".

All that changed in 1983. To pave the way for the contracting out of public services to the private sector the Thatcher government 'denounced' ILP Convention 94 and repealed the Fair Wages Resolution.

This opened the door for contracting out and market testing, resulting in tens of thousands of staff being transferred from local councils and the NHS to private contractors. The process has continued with outsourcing, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), best value and housing transfers.

Under TUPE (the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations) staff have usually been transferred to the new service provider on their existing terms and conditions. More recently pensions protection has been improved and private contractors are now expected to offer a "comparable" pension scheme to transferred staff. However, TUPE only protects staff at the point of transfer. There are many examples of terms and conditions being cut over time and until recently new employees were offered no protection at all –creating a two-tier workforce.

## Fighting back

Over the years, UNISON has campaigned for high quality, publicly provided public services, and to protect the pay and conditions of those workers transferred to private employers. The fight for a new fair wages clause is part of this ongoing campaign.

As a result of UNISON's pressure, the government has recognised the inequities of the two-tier workforce and we have made a number of gains.

- In December 2002 the Scottish executive signed a protocol ensuring that in all future public private partnerships workers would receive "fair pay" and rights over pensions, holiday and sick pay commensurate with colleagues in the public sector. The protocol convinced a number of Scottish councils to keep services in-house.
- In March 2003 the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in local authority service contracts came into force. The code requires contractors to offer new staff "fair and reasonable terms and conditions" which are "no less favourable" than those of transferred employees. New joiners are guaranteed some pension provision – either membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) scheme, or a stakeholder pension scheme with a minimum 6% employer contribution. The Code applies to Local Authority service contracts in England and Police Authority contracts in England and Wales. A similar Best Value Code covering local authorities and national park authorities in Wales came into force in April 2003.
- In March 2005 the government announced that it was extending the Code of Practice to the whole of the public sector. Agreements modelled on the code have been rolled out to a number of sectors, including probation. A different agreement has been reached with the Department of Health and the organisations representing contractors which is aimed to remove two-tier pay and conditions and put private contract staff on the same footing as staff who are directly employed by the NHS.

The agreement covers staff working for private contractors, including those working on 'soft facilities management' contracts, such as catering, cleaning, portering, laundry and switchboard. The agreement is being implemented in two stages. From 1 October 2005 there were increases to basic pay, London Weighting and annual leave for contract staff, with the full introduction of Agenda for Change for contract staff from 1 October 2006.

The government says that both further and higher education are exempt from the roll out on the grounds that their institutions are independent of government. However, the relevant minister has written to the employers in both sectors “to pave the way” for discussions with unions to end the two tier workforce.

### What still needs to be done?

Each new fair wages protocol and policy has reduced the number of workers left vulnerable to the two-tier workforce. But important gaps remain. For example, there is no obligation on local government employers to implement the code of practice until a contract comes up for renewal or re-tender. That leaves workers on existing contracts, especially where PFI deals have locked public authorities into long deals, on rock bottom pay and conditions.

While the code aims to end the two-tier workforce, it does not apply to all forms of contracting that drive down pay and conditions. Examples include some spot purchasing by local authorities, particularly in social care, and staff working for Academy schools and Independent Treatment Centres in the NHS.

Even where the code applies, the pension arrangements are not as good as those available to directly employed public service workers. Cuts in pension schemes represent a major transfer of wealth from wages to profits and have long-term implications for both workers and government spending.

### The Importance of Campaigning

Despite UNISON's success in bringing in national fair wages legislation, there is still a need to campaign locally. First, existing government measures do not cover all private contract workers and agency staff and those working on spot purchase contracts are left unprotected.

Second, even when workers are covered by the legislation, that does not automatically mean the end of the two-tier workforce. Unless they face pressure from a well-organised local campaign, contractors and public authorities are often reluctant to improve the pay and conditions of contract staff.

### Where has it worked?

Around the country local pay negotiators have been drawing attention to the appalling levels of low pay and poor conditions suffered by private contract staff. Local claims for improvements, linked to UNISON campaigns and community support, have brought some real gains.

### London living wage

In London UNISON has carried out a living wage campaign as part of London Citizens, a broad-based coalition of community and faith organisations, schools, trade union branches and student unions. The campaign convinced the Greater London Authority (GLA) to introduce a fair employment clause into its contracting procedures in 2002. Private contractors working for the GLA are now asked if they are willing to pay their staff at least the equivalent of public sector wages. The GLA has applied this policy to contracts for the cleaning and catering services contracts for City Hall and new services in Trafalgar Square.

In May 2004, 2,000 people from London Citizen's organisations in 12 of London's more disadvantaged boroughs, packed Methodist Central Hall to put their own agenda to the four main Mayoral candidates. Top of their list of demands was the establishment of a “living wage for London”. Ken Livingstone promised to establish a unit at City Hall which would calculate the hourly living wage needed to survive in London; announce and promote this figure and review the contracts of the GLA group accordingly. The Living Wage Unit has been set up and the figure for London has been published annually since March 2005.

### Queen Mary

Dean Curtis, Vice-Principal Queen Mary University publicly announced that cleaners working for contractor KGB would be brought back in-house and put on full Higher Education terms and conditions. The announcement was made in front of 1000 people gathered at the Tenth Anniversary Assembly of the East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) in York Hall, Bethnal Green on 16 November.

The announcement marked the successful outcome of TELCO's living wage campaign, which brought together the Geography Department and the AUT union branch at Queen Mary, with support from Queen Mary UNISON and the Student Union to protest at the treatment of campus cleaning staff. Hundreds of contracted cleaners at the university were employed on minimum wage with no sick pay and only the minimum 12 days paid holiday.

The university was convinced to act by the year-long campaign which included rallies, petitions and ultimately a video letter showing the breadth and depth of support for the living wage both on campus and in the surrounding community. In April 2006 the university pledged to become the first living wage campus in the

country, requiring the contractor to move cleaners up to the London living wage -- at that time £6.70 an hour -- along with decent sick pay and 28 days paid holiday. Transfer to full HE pay and conditions will improve their situation further still, providing London allowances, sick leave, holiday and pensions that all HE staff enjoy. For the full story go to: [www.livingwage.org.uk/education.html](http://www.livingwage.org.uk/education.html)

### East London

UNISON members in the four east London NHS trusts, employed by the multinational ISS Mediclean and Medirest (Compass) submitted a joint pay claim in June 2002 seeking parity with NHS staff employed doing similar work. The claim was part of a wider ‘Living Wage’ campaign carried out in partnership with the East London Communities Organisation (TELCO), part of London Citizens, aimed at convincing public authorities to introduce fair wages policies into their contracting procedures. UNISON and community members lobbied trust boards and the North East London Strategic Health Authority in support of the branches who balloted for (and in one case took) strike action. Ultimately the campaign won an increase in current pay levels and a commitment to harmonise pay and conditions of contract staff with the NHS by April 2006.

TELCO, also won an important victory for contracted staff in the private sector, which could have far-reaching implications for all fair wages negotiations. Along with UNISON and banking union UNIFI, TELCO succeeded in persuading Barclays Bank to accept responsibility for minimum pay and conditions for contractor's staff at its new tower HQ in Canary Wharf, east London. The agreement means that staff will receive conditions in line with “socially responsible” minimum standards. As a result of the talks, pay for cleaners at Barclays' Canary Wharf offices rose to £6.00 per hour, along with a pension with 4.5% employer contribution, 15 days paid sick leave and eight paid bank holidays, in addition to 20 days annual leave. Bonuses and training are also included in the deal.

A similar deal, offering a minimum of £6.10, additional holidays, sick pay, training and improved shift patterns was struck with HSBC bank.

Other examples of successful campaigns are included in the pack. Updates will be posted on: [www.unison.org.uk/bargaining](http://www.unison.org.uk/bargaining)

# Guide to the Toolkit

## Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is intended to be most useful to UNISON branch officers, regional officers and regional organisers – people with responsibility for developing membership, branch organisation, campaigns, and negotiation of members' terms and conditions.

## In what settings would it be most useful?

The toolkit is designed for branches that have a segment of workers outsourced to private contractors, where membership in the outsourced workforce is low and where terms and conditions of staff fall below public sector agreements. This scenario is common in NHS trusts where ancillary services have been outsourced, in further and higher education, police authorities and many local authorities.

## How to use the toolkit

The toolkit is designed to be used flexibly. It will provide you with ideas for your own campaign but you do not need to follow every step in the toolkit to be successful. You will find that many of the ideas in here will be helpful for other branch campaigns and initiatives.

When planning your campaign, you need to bear in mind local branch and contract history, key personalities, and workforce characteristics. While the toolkit is designed to give you lots of support, you will have to be creative and responsive to what crops up as your own campaign develops.

Throughout this toolkit we use examples drawn from the real experience of UNISON branches. In particular there are many references to the east London 'Living Wage' campaign, which was a fair wages campaign in which the East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) played a major role as partner. The campaign was run over two and half years and ultimately achieved improvements to pay and conditions for staff, leading to full harmonisation between TUPEd staff and new starters by 2006. The campaign also led to the recruitment of a significant number of new members into the union and many new stewards. The pack includes a variety of materials used in that campaign and can be adapted or copied for your own campaign.

# Steps and stages in the fair wages campaign

The following section takes you through a number of possible steps in preparing and carrying through a fair wages campaign. Not every one will be relevant to your workplace, and they can be carried out in a different order to the one here.

## 01 Identify an appropriate workgroup

### Why?

Your branch may have a number of outsourced services with a variety of contractors. It may be wise to pick on one workgroup or one employer for an initial campaign.

### How to do it?

When selecting a target workgroup for a fair wages campaign, take into consideration factors such as:

- number of workers and number of existing union members
- potential for building branch membership and organisation
- physical location of the workforce
- history of relationship between UNISON and the contractor

### Examples

In the living wage campaign at Homerton Hospital the branch chose to concentrate its efforts on portering, catering and domestic services which were all being run by the private company ISS under one contract with the hospital trust. Security and one or two other functions in the hospital were also outsourced but the branch had very few members in those areas so chose not to include them in its campaign when it was launched in 2000.

**02** Map the workforce**Why?**

To plan your campaign effectively, and to produce accurate information for publicity and negotiations, you need a strong idea of workforce characteristics, pay and conditions, and contract history.

The information to gather includes union membership density, TUPEd staff numbers compared to new starters, numbers of agency workers if applicable, profile of the workforce, key work locations and contract management structure.

Information on contracting history (often several contractors have come and gone) and changes in staffing levels since privatisation are also helpful. Finally, you need to know what staff terms and conditions are, comparing TUPEd staff and new starters.

**How to do it?**

There are several ways to get hold of information to map the workforce. You may be able to get some from the contractor directly, or from the public sector client. Workforce questionnaires are one method of getting this information, but longer interviews with key individuals who have an overview may also be valuable to you. Don't forget that the process of gathering information to map the workforce may also be an opportunity to give workers information about the union and to identify potential campaign leaders within the workforce who are curious, co-operative and responsive to the union's message.

**Example**

The East London Living Wage campaign sought help from academic allies in a local university to develop questionnaires which could be used with individual workers and with branch officers. A team was put together which included UNISON activists, supporters in the local community and some low paid workers themselves to carry out a piece of research into low pay in the health service, local government services and in some private sector companies in the area. These questionnaires are included elsewhere in this toolkit.

Going out to workers to get the questionnaires completed helped to get the word out about the campaign. People gave their names and contact details so that they could be sent information and many of those who completed the questionnaire become very active in the campaign and joined the campaign team and the union.

**03** Find and develop workforce leaders and activists**Why?**

Your campaign won't get off the ground without spokes-people and activists within the workforce. It is really important to put as much time as possible in the early stages of a campaign into short one-to-one meetings (10-15 mins.) with people from the workforce to identify potential activists. These one-to-one meetings can feel time consuming initially but will pay off. If you can find good workplace leaders and are interested in them and their ideas, they will build the motivation of their colleagues, recruit people into the union, and communicate the campaign strategy back to the whole workforce.

**How to do it**

If you are able to organise meetings early on, make sure you follow up people who speak up, have ideas, and seem to have the respect of their colleagues. The best workplace activists are not always the loudest ones. Ask workers which of their colleagues they listen to and respect. Take the time to find out a bit about their lives and interests beyond the workplace – this will give you a far more rounded picture of the people who may become leaders in your campaign.

Look for new people even if there is already a group of stewards in place. Some of your new workforce activists may become stewards but don't hurry to make this happen since some people are natural organisers who you want in your campaign team even if they are less interested in other stewards' skills such as individual member representation, health and safety, etc.

If you cannot organise meetings of workers, do not skip this step. Find people as they leave work, arrive or have breaks, and take the chance to identify who the natural workplace leaders are.

**Example**

The East London Living Wage campaign has also focused on cleaning and support services in London's financial districts, including Canary Wharf and the City. Concentrated groups of Portuguese cleaners were working in a number of City banks. In this case, it was particularly important to find leaders among the workforce because of language issues. After developing relationships with a couple of key leaders and giving them some training and support, organisation amongst the workforce, union recruitment, and the strength of the campaign grew quickly and impressively.

**04** Pull together a diverse and representative campaign team**Why?**

Your campaign needs to be owned by a team who meet regularly to review progress, to make key decisions collectively and to share out the work in moving the campaign forward.

The team should include members from the outsourced staff group (where applicable both TUPEd staff on protected terms and new starters on lower terms). You want a campaign team that broadly reflects the workgroup ie a hospital fair wages campaign which covers portering, catering and cleaning should ideally have somebody from all three sections in the campaign team. The team should reflect the ethnic make up of the branch as much as possible.

It may help to have members of the branch, not directly affected by the issues, in your campaign team who will bring experience of, and enthusiasm for, organising and campaigning. This will build solidarity across the divide created by outsourcing and bring additional skills and ideas to your team.

You may also want to include in your team people from external organisations who are committed to your campaign and have something to contribute to it such as local community activists and leaders.

**How to do it?**

You probably do not need to meet as a whole team more than every month or two, unless there is a particularly intense period of activity. You should not put good people off by having too many meetings.

Just as important, keep your campaign meetings to time – there's usually no need to go on any longer than an hour or hour and a half. You will lose good people if meetings are boring and run over; you will keep them if your meetings have a reputation for finishing on the dot. Hold meetings at times and places that make it possible for lots of people to come.

Change times and locations of meetings if this will allow new faces to make an appearance. Everyone should be welcome to these campaign meetings, whether they are doing a lot or a little on the campaign. Advertise your meetings, not least as a way of advertising the campaign as a whole.

People should leave a campaign meeting with something to do, however small. The start of each meeting should have everyone report on what they have done since the

last meeting, including gathering intelligence, publicising the campaign, recruiting members, etc. Just to bring a new person to the campaign meeting is an important contribution. You want to encourage a culture in which everyone is expected to make some contribution to the collective effort.

Have an agenda but don't get bogged down with bureaucracy and process. Make sure everyone has said something by the end of the meeting, even if only to introduce themselves at the beginning. A sign of a healthy campaign is new faces at your campaign meetings.

**Examples**

The Living Wage campaign at Queen Mary University of London had a campaign team that included UNISON branch officials, outsourced cleaners from the contract company, a TELCO Citizens' organiser, students and academics from the campus. The team bonded together the different segments of the university population, allowed information to flow into many different groups and demonstrated to the university authorities that cleaners have wide support across the campus.

Similarly, at Homerton Hospital a Living Wage campaign team was set up which included NHS staff (nurses, senior doctors and clerical staff), contracted staff who were the focus of the campaign, UNISON officials, a TELCO citizens' organiser, and several members of the local community. People were not able to attend every meeting but the diversity of the team gave the campaign real strength.

**05** Generate an on-going “Power Analysis” for your campaign**Why?**

To win a campaign it helps to have a considered understanding of your power compared to the power of the people and organisations who can give you what you want. A ‘power analysis’ is a tool that enables you to think about this, and to update the picture as it develops. It will help you to think systematically about your strengths and weaknesses, who your allies are and what obstacles and problems stand in the way of achieving victory for your campaign.

How to do it?

Preparing a power analysis can be a great thing to do with people in your campaign team. Write down what and who gives you power and who has power on the opposing side.

Your power depends on:

- the number and density of your union members
- the number and quality of workplace leaders and activists you have
- the support and the power of allies you have outside the workforce
- the publicity you can generate for the issues and for the campaign itself.

These are all things you can work on, to build the power of your campaign.

Now you need to think about the obstacles in your way, and to focus on the individuals who have the power to give you what you want. You should think about their interests, and work out what you need to do for them to agree to what you want.

**06** Organise campaign actions**Why?**

Action is the oxygen of organising. There are many different sorts of action that will help to grow your power. A strike is the most powerful action workers can take but it is not the only one, and almost never the first form of action.

Any action is designed to get a reaction, from the people on your side and from the people who are the targets of your fair wages campaign. You should evaluate the strength of your action based on the reaction you get to it.

**How to do it?**

The actions you organise will depend on where you are in the campaign. You could run a campaign launch event at the beginning, and then organise marches, rallies, and publicity stunts along the way. Actions use up energy as well as creating it, so you need to plan your campaign actions carefully. Each action should move the campaign forward in some way.

**Examples**

In east London, the Living Wage campaign was launched with a large community assembly in Walthamstow Town Hall organised by TELCO. Trade union leaders and members from across east London were invited, as were community leaders from the different faith communities and from many other local groups. The event helped to raise the profile of low pay as a problem not only for workers and their families but the wider community. The launch event was shown on the BBC evening news on television, which helped to alert the employers across the area to what was being planned. By coming together for the launch of the campaign, bonds were created between the unions and the wider community that were very valuable as the campaign progressed.

Later in the campaign there was a big Living Wage march through a central part of east London, again involving the community, getting the campaign on television, and putting the hospital trusts under pressure to agree to the campaign’s demands.

There were many smaller actions throughout the campaign including events where teams of campaign supporters gathered signatures from staff and from the general public for a petition. Staff marched through the grounds of Whipps Cross Hospital to raise awareness and morale, passing under the window of the trust manager’s office!

The campaign’s activists attended meetings of the trust board where the case was put for harmonisation of pay and conditions between TUPEd staff and new starters. Individual workers testified at these meetings about what it’s like living on the national minimum wage.

Finally, there was strike action at Whipps Cross hospital, though the other three hospitals involved in the campaign settled prior to strike action.

At Queen Mary University, written requests by the campaign team for a meeting with the principal to discuss the wages and conditions of contracted staff were declined, using the argument that it was a commercially confidential matter. The TELCO team running the campaign organised a rally to take place on the day of a College Council meeting. Over 120 students, academics, workers, community leaders and the local MP came to demonstrate against the low wages currently paid and to request a meeting on the matter publicly. The rally attracted significant press coverage and the day before it was due to happen, a meeting with the college authorities was offered. In this instance the very threat of public action produced results.

**07** Build community support**Why?**

Low pay is an issue affecting the well-being of the whole community and there is great sympathy for low paid workers employed in public services which your campaign can tap into.

Informing the community and inviting community leaders to articulate the case for better pay and conditions will attract the attention of any public officials who are targets in your campaign. Strong and broad community support will add to your negotiating power considerably.

**How to do it?**

Within your campaign team, people will have connections to various local organisations that can be lobbied for support. The kinds of organisations who have been supportive of fair wages campaigns are faith congregations, local charities and NGOs, pensioners groups, other trade unions locally, Citizens Advice, YMCA, etc. In addition, many UNISON members deal with problems related to low pay in their jobs in social services, voluntary organisations, schools and the youth services in the NHS.

Produce simple posters and leaflets that set out the case for what you want and that can be used to raise awareness and build support. Invite people from the community to support your campaign actions and to attend meetings at which you will put your case.

Develop an e-mail list of local supporters. Keep them informed of any actions or events to attend and progress to report. Be careful not to bombard people with mail too often or you will lose your support very quickly!

**Example**

The Queen Mary University campaign is a good example of the benefits of strong community links. Groups on the campus leading the Living Wage campaign are part of a wider community alliance – TELCO Citizens which is actively supporting the campaign. This includes neighbouring institutions such as the East London Mosque, Guardian Angels Roman Catholic church and UNISON branches in the Royal London Hospital and Mile End Hospitals. In letters to the Principal of Queen Mary University, in press coverage, at public actions and at the negotiating table, the commitment of this entire network and presence of these neighbouring groups added significant weight to the campaign.

**08** Develop strong campaign materials**Why?**

Written and visual materials in support of your claim for higher wages and benefits will add great credibility to your campaign. Your campaign should have bold and lively written materials which build awareness of the campaign in the affected workgroup and beyond, and encourage people to join the union. You might want to use or develop research materials which make the case that poor wages create household deprivation and hardship, and produce social costs for the wider community. A further result of low pay can be a lower quality of service due to high turnover, staff dissatisfaction and stress. In addition to facts and figures, local case studies are extremely powerful. Individuals in the workforce who are supporting children and other family members, and facing high costs, can be profiled (perhaps anonymously) to illustrate the impact of low pay on people's quality of life and well-being.

**How to do it?**

UNISON has many resources on its website for you to use. You will also find materials you can copy and adapt in the appendices to this toolkit. Some people have flair and talent for research and for preparing paper-based materials. Encourage those people to get involved in your campaign. Don't forget that however good these materials are, they will never be enough on their own without motivated activists who are out recruiting, organising actions and doing the face to face work which will move your campaign forward.

You might be able to get help from sympathetic researchers at local colleges and universities. Think carefully about any contacts you might have. You might want your campaign to have its own slogan which can go on written materials, on posters and on stickers and badges if you can afford them. If workers are wearing their campaign badge around the workplace it sends out a very powerful signal of their support.

**Example**

East London's campaign used a wide range of written materials, longer and shorter, to support the campaign. These were sent to individuals whom the campaign wanted to influence, were used among workers to communicate what the campaign was doing and were made available to the community beyond the workplace.

When Queen Mary University Principal Adrian Smith said that the Living Wage was 'morally irresistible' but 'financially impossible', campaigners put together a video letter showing the breadth and depth of support for the Living Wage both on campus and in the surrounding community.

**09** Involve other union branches  
*(in the same area or with the same contractor)***Why?**

While your branch could organise a fair wages campaign on its own, it may be very effective if several local branches are running a similar campaign at the same time. Resources, research and ideas can then be shared, you can encourage each other and problem-solve together, help each other out by providing volunteers, campaign material, media contacts and local supporters from the wider community. You will also be able to run some joint events. Activists in particular workplaces will be less isolated.

**How to do it?**

Your regional organisers and officers will be one good link between different local branches. Branch secretaries and key branch officers from different local branches could meet together and perhaps attend branch committee meetings to put forward the idea of a fair wages campaign. Your campaign team can include supporters from other branches. Workplace campaign teams can meet on an occasional basis together to share progress, ideas etc.

**Examples**

In east London four hospital trusts (Whipps Cross, Homerton, Royal London, and Mile End) organised a living wage campaign simultaneously which was very helpful in putting pressure on the trusts and the Strategic Health Authority. The UNISON region was also more committed to putting its organising resources and effort into the campaign to support the branches because of the scale of the campaign. The campaign attracted additional media coverage because of its size. Tactics were shared and debated, and leadership was not dominated by one or two people but shared across the key branch officials of the various branches involved.

At Queen Mary University, the campus is right next door to Mile End Hospital, which has a UNISON branch with a well developed group of stewards and a strong campaigning orientation. Although the branches are in different sectors – higher education and health – the hospital branch has given support and encouragement to the higher education branch next door.

**10** Recruit new members into the union**Why?**

The power of your campaign will depend on the strength of your membership so recruitment is crucial and time should be put into it systematically. During a campaign is a great time to recruit because potential members are aware of the union and what it is doing for staff. UNISON's membership density is often very low among contractors so this is a key area of potential membership growth for the union nationally and for your branch.

**How to do it?**

The best people to do most of your recruitment are workplace leaders and activists. Some branch members will be particularly talented at recruitment, and feel a lot of pride in getting membership levels up over a given period. It is important to praise and encourage people who try to recruit for the branch and recognise what people are doing.

There are the usual ways to achieve recruitment through stalls and by going from worksite to worksite talking to people for a few minutes, listening to their concerns and explaining the importance of joining the union. You can also talk to them about the fair wages campaign and what you are trying to achieve. Special recruitment drives can be organised on an occasional basis, getting several activists together to go out at the same time across a workplace to meet as many people as possible in a short time, and then to evaluate progress together.

If you are experienced and good at recruiting, go out with someone less confident than you to show them how you do it and then observe them recruiting so that you can give them feedback.

**Example**

As part of the east London Living Wage campaign a major recruitment drive transformed the membership levels and power of the branches. This was very helpful because workers who were unsure about the union or did not know much about trade unions could see what was being done to win higher wages so it was that bit easier to make the case for joining.

**11** Submit a pay claim**Why?**

You may be able to influence the contractor and their public sector clients to review pay and conditions in line with public sector settlements without the need for a special pay claim. If not, submitting a pay claim, particularly in the context of a recruitment drive to grow your membership, will focus the mind of the employer. The aim is to get the union and employer into formal negotiations over pay and conditions.

**How to do it?**

UNISON has a model pay claim for local fair wages campaigns which can be used and adapted for this purpose. Your regional officers will obviously help your branch(es). Make sure that the submission of a pay claim doesn't take the energy out of your campaign on the ground or take the process away from members themselves as it is important that members stay as involved as possible.

The submission of a pay claim can be turned into a campaign action attracting press coverage, boosting recruitment efforts and building the morale of the workforce.

**Example**

A year into the east London Living Wage campaign the campaign team decided to submit a pay claim to increase the tension and put additional pressure on the contractors and on the trusts. Copies of the pay claim, and a summary of what was in it, were widely circulated to members of the union.

**12** Organise a publicity strategy and develop relationships with journalists**Why?**

Publicity will help you to win your campaign. Low paid workers command a lot of support from the general public so you stand every chance of getting very positive publicity for the cause if you play your hand right. Employers and public sector bodies do not like to appear in the press in an unfavourable light. Negative publicity for them will provoke a reaction out of them which is what you want. Good publicity for you will maintain the morale of workers, activists and your supporters. Be aware that the other side can use publicity too and will want to put your campaign and its objectives in a bad light, casting you as unreasonable and militant.

**How to do it?**

A few sympathetic local journalists who stick with the campaign and get on top of the issues are worth their weight in gold. Make an effort to seek individual journalists out, call them and suggest a meeting to give them the background to the issues. Introduce them to workers who will benefit from the campaign. But, be warned. Once you release details of the campaign you lose control of how a journalist will use it. They may not publicise the campaign, or they may not put the story the way you want. You need to think carefully how you handle this with them if that is the case.

Put out press releases for your campaign actions. When you send out your press release follow it up with a phone call if you can.

The UNISON regional office has a staff member with responsibility for publicity. Find out who that is and get their advice on how to write a press release and get their help with getting your campaign in the public eye. You might want to appoint one or two members of your campaign team to focus on press and publicity.

Be willing to write articles about the campaign for any local publications. Have workers in mind to give quotations and to speak to journalists so that you are prepared when they ask to speak to individual people about their circumstances and why the campaign matters to them.

**Example**

By carefully developing a working relationship with a journalist on the local paper it was possible to

encourage some ownership and excellent coverage by the newspaper of the Queen Mary University Living Wage campaign. In the period when the campaign required an increase of tension, the paper covered the story week in, week out and played a crucial role in progressing the issue with the university authorities. It was clear that negative press was what most concerned the Principal of the University.

**13** Make your campaign fun to be involved in**Why?**

Campaigning is hard work and involves many ups and downs before the sweet taste of victory can be enjoyed! To sustain your campaign team and to attract people to it, you want to make participation in the campaign as enjoyable as possible.

**How to do it?**

Be sure to celebrate milestones and achievements along the way, including recruitment of new members and new activists; any articles and media coverage; the anniversary of your campaign, etc.

**Examples**

As part of the London Living Wage campaign, it was agreed that an alternative Living Wage carol concert would be organised outside City Hall, where Mayor Livingstone and his officials are based. This event attracted lots of interest among staff in the building, passers by and the media and it was a good afternoon out for everyone concerned.

A number of Living Wage campaign parties were organised during the campaign, with music, dancing and speeches to celebrate what had been achieved so far. This was great for morale and for encouraging relationships to develop.

# Tools and resources

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Included in this pack are materials including:

- **Press releases for actions**
- **Articles written about campaigns**
- **Stickers**
- **Posters**
- **Model pay claim**
- **Petitions**
- **Legal clauses**
- **Case study material on particular workers**
- **Mapping low pay questionnaires**
- **Lobbying documents**
- **Further information and resources**

New additions to the pack will be posted on [www.unison.org.uk/bargaining](http://www.unison.org.uk/bargaining)



## Positively Public

Positively Public is UNISON's campaign for quality in our public services and for recognition of the essential role of public service workers in achieving this.

UNISON's Positively Public campaign covers many public service issues, from the quality of school meals and hospital cleaning to the promotion of best practice. We have won widespread recognition and support for our evidence-based critiques of policies such as the Private Finance Initiative and have been successful in securing important policy changes.

UNISON welcomes investment in public services and we understand the need for reform that improves services for users which enables them to respond more effectively to their diverse and changing needs.

However, UNISON opposes market driven reform that leads to increased private sector involvement. In service after service we have seen the same model imposed with public organisations broken up into self-standing units and forced to compete with each other and with independent providers.

UNISON supports the many examples of positive change in our public services that engage with users and the workforce. Where this has happened, committed staff have played a lead role in workforce remodelling, rethinking organisational boundaries, and using new technologies.

UNISON works with user groups, policy specialists, and academic experts to see what lessons can be learned and to move the debate about the future of public services forward into new positive territory.

