

# Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation

## TULO HANDBOOK

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a practical guide to building the link between the Labour Party and affiliated trade unions at a local level

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## FACTSHEET 8



# Campaigning for Labour with trade unions

**This Factsheet looks in detail at the many ways that you can work with trade unions to campaign for Labour candidates in elections.**

Many of the activities outlined here should be put into action well before an election – leaving it until the last minute will make it very difficult to gain resources or volunteers for the campaign. The importance of building up a strong relationship with trade unions over time cannot be underestimated – it is important to start building up for elections early – Factsheets 1 to 7 of this guide are designed to create partnerships between the Party and the unions over the long-term.

Whilst it is still important to work to engage trade unionists in campaigning for Labour at election time even if you have not been able to do the work needed to build long-term relationships with local trade unions, you are far less likely to see results. There is also the risk that only starting to engage with unions close to elections will increase cynicism about politics.

The main objective of the CLP TULO Officer in the months leading up to elections is to secure volunteers and resources from the affiliated trade unions, in order to complement the other campaigning work of the CLP.

If you are in a key seat or area, it is likely that the Regional TULO Committee will also appoint a TULO Co-ordinator to act as a bridge between the CLP and the unions in the region (see Factsheet 2 for more information about the roles of CLP TULO Officers and TULO Co-ordinators, and how they overlap). Both CLP TULO Officers and TULO Co-ordinators should sit on the CLP's campaign committee, in order to ensure that the work they are doing fits in to the Party's overall campaigning strategy.

There are many and varied activities that can be undertaken in order to engage trade union members in the campaign. This

Factsheet provides a list of possible options, but it is certainly not a finite one. Be creative, and talk ideas over with colleagues in the CLP and unions in order to develop a strategy that works for you.

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## 1. Contacts database

If you are to be successful in involving trade unionists in the campaign, it is essential that you have a comprehensive database of local union contacts. If you have worked through the first Factsheets of this guide, then you should already have a database in place – in that case, it is simply a case of ensuring that details are up to date well in advance of an election.

If, however, you are coming to this handbook very close to an election, and have had sufficient time to work through the long-term activities, it is crucial that you follow through the instructions set out in Factsheet 3 in order to build a union contact database from scratch. If you do not have the means to contact trade unionists effectively, then you will find it near impossible to involve them in your campaign.

## 2. Involving union members in the campaign

One of the most effective things you can do in the run up to an election is to gain extra volunteers from the campaign from amongst trade union members. It is important

to have sensible expectations of what you can achieve – unions do not have armies of leafleters just waiting to be sent out campaigning – but even gaining a few extra regular campaigners can make a real difference in an election.

The earlier you start these activities the better. If you leave it until the last couple of weeks before an election, then you will no doubt struggle to get many people involved. It is a good idea to start a long time before an election, and then organise campaigning more frequently as it gets closer and you build up a relationship with your volunteers.

How you go about engaging union members in the CLP's campaigning will depend on your relationship with local unions, but these steps should help you put together a strategy:

- Produce a campaign diary flyer, targeted at trade unionists (you could use the sample on the next page as a basis). Ensure that you put on essential information, such as times and meeting points for campaigning, but be careful not to include politically sensitive information about the campaign strategy, as the information will be widely available. Advertise different kinds of events on the flyer – voter ID, leafleting, envelope stuffing – to appeal to as many people as possible.
- Ask your contacts in trade unions to assist you in circulating the flyer. You will probably want to send it round various networks in order to ensure as many people as possible see it. You will probably need to send an updated campaign diary every fortnight, or more frequently nearer the election.
- Ask full-time officers to email it to their contacts.
- Ask branch secretaries to email it to members of their branch, and to hand out copies at their branch meetings.
- Ask shop stewards to ensure the flyer is available in their workplace, and to display a poster-sized version on the union noticeboard.
- Follow-up is essential – advertising campaigning by distributing a campaign diary is an important first step, but realistically you are unlikely to get people who have not campaigned before to come along on their own to a voter ID or leafleting session. Spend some time doing a ringround of everyone on your contact database to ask them to come along campaigning – try and get them to agree to a specific event and, if possible, let them know that you are going to be there.
- If you have enthusiastic volunteers from the unions, ask them to put together a campaign team together with two or three colleagues – people are much more likely to go campaigning if they know someone else who will be there.
- Make sure that you make campaigning fun – giving people a cup of tea when they come back to the campaign HQ, and going to the pub afterwards, can make a difference when it comes to asking people to come back and campaign again.
- Always ask your volunteers if they will be able to come again, and keep a record of who has attended in order to invite them again and thank them after the election.

# CALLING ALL TRADE UNIONISTS...!

**Protect the right to pension schemes for all,  
parental leave and paid bank holidays**

## JOIN THE CAMPAIGN!

<b>Sat 19<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Street stall, outside Argos in Anytown Shopping centre, 11am-1pm</b>
<b>Sun 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Mass leafleting and Voter ID, Meet at 31 Anystreet at 11am</b>
<b>Tues 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Telephone Voter ID 7pm-9pm at Anytown GMB officers, 68 Grange Road</b>
<b>Weds 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Trade Union Campaign Night and Social 7pm-9pm, meet at 31 Anystreet, social at the Dog and Duck from 9pm</b>
<b>Sat 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Street stall, outside Argos in Anytown Shopping centre, 11am-1pm</b>
<b>Sun 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Mass leafleting and Voter ID, Meet at 31 Anystreet at 11am</b>
<b>Tues 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Telephone Voter ID 7pm-9pm at Anytown GMB officers, 68 Grange Road</b>
<b>Weds 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Special Trade Union Event! Eve of poll leafleting, anytime from 6pm at 31 Anystreet</b>
<b>Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> May</b>	<b>POLLING DAY Help needed all day, from 7am to 10pm!</b>

**Full training will be given for all activities, but none of them are difficult and all of them are fun – why not get involved? The alternative to Labour is a return to the Tories – services cut, schools and hospitals crumbling, 3 million unemployed and 1400 home repossessions a week!**

For more information, call the campaign hotline on

**01134 123 456**

Don't forget to include an imprint!



### 3. Organising a regular TULO campaign night

In addition to working to involve union members in the regular campaigning activities of the CLP, it is also a good idea to co-ordinate specific campaigning events targeted at trade union members. How often you do this will depend on local circumstances, but it might be good to organise a monthly event to begin with, becoming weekly in the months directly before the election.

It is a good idea to combine a regular campaigning session with a social event – 2 hours leafleting or stuffing envelopes followed by a social in a pub will not only appeal to more people, but will also enable you to build stronger relationships with volunteers in order to entice them back in future.

Use the steps outlined in the section above when planning how to advertise your campaigning events. In particular, make sure you spend some time calling people who have campaigned before to ask them to come to the next event – if you can get a core of volunteers who attend regularly, then you will be able to have a real impact on the campaign.

### 4. Seeking donations to the campaign

The second key part of a CLP TULO Officer's role in the months leading up to an election is seeking the donation of money or resources from unions to the campaign. As with gaining volunteers, this will be much easier if the CLP has already built solid relationships with local unions – however, it is still important to ask for donations even if those relationships have not been built, as some resources may still be forthcoming.

Follow these steps when seeking donations from union regions or branches:

- Speak to union full-time officers or branch officers with whom you have a relationship, to ask about the likelihood of getting a donation, and how to proceed in formally requesting it.
- Write to each union branch and region, thinking carefully about how to approach each letter individually. For example, if you are writing to a union branch that your MP has visited, it might be better for the letter to come from them.
- Be realistic about how much money you ask for – most union branches do not have large cash reserves – a donation of £100 from a branch would be a considerable success. Unions' regional offices are likely to have more money, but will probably want to focus it on the areas that the Labour Party region has designated priorities, or on candidates with whom they have a particular relationship.
- Make a strong case for how the money will be spent – provide evidence of a need for the cash, and an idea of how much you need. For example, ask for £100 to fund the printing of a leaflet in a marginal ward.
- Follow up all letters with a telephone call, to ask if the money has been approved. If it is approved, you may also need to make another phone call to ensure the cheque arrives at the time you need it.
- Write to thank all union branches or regions who donate to the campaign – the letter could come from the CLP TULO Officer or the candidate, whoever is most appropriate.
- Ask council candidates to get in touch with their unions to ask for a small donation to the campaign – many unions have some funds available to donate to their members standing for council, and the money soon adds up if donated across a council area.

It is also a good idea to get in touch with your Regional TULO Committee to ask for a donation to the campaign (you can find the contact details in the TULO Directory), although most will only focus resources on more marginal areas. However, the maxim 'if you don't ask, you don't get' is particularly applicable here!

### 5. Asking unions to donate resources

Unions can donate resources other than money, and seeking access to alternative union resources is an important part of the CLP TULO Officer's role. There are many other ways that a union can contribute, some of which are outlined here.

It is important to work with the CLP campaign co-ordinator to find out what sort of help would be the most useful to the campaign. Whilst volunteers are always welcome, other kinds of assistance will need to be discussed with the election agent to see if they are appropriate to the campaign and if they can fit inside the election expenses.

As with financial donations, unions are likely to want to focus their resources on the most marginal areas, but they may be more likely to offer you access to certain resources rather than money.

How you go about asking for some of these resources will depend on your relationships with local full-time officers. In terms of more straightforward asks, such as franking a mailing, then writing to a full-time officer and following it up with a phone call might be the best approach. For more complicated requests, such as asking for an officer to be seconded to the campaign, it is probably best to ask only if you have built up a strong relationship with a particular union or officer.

These suggestions may help you when thinking about what support to ask for:

- Ask a union to frank a mailing for the CLP – for example, a direct mail to voters, or a letter to party members asking them to help in the campaign.
- Ask a union to write to its members in a constituency to ask them to vote Labour.
- Ask a union if the CLP can use some of its office space for telephone voter ID in the evenings, or calling on polling day. Some unions have even donated some office space full-time to be used as campaign headquarters.
- If you have a particularly good relationship with a full-time officer of a union, you might want to consider asking for them to be seconded to the campaign in the last few weeks before the election.
- Secondments will, however, have to be included in election expenses, so it might be that full-time officers take annual leave for the final days or weeks of an election campaign to enable them to devote time to the campaign.
- If you are able to secure a union officer full-time for the campaign, think carefully about what would be an appropriate role for them to play.
- A union may be apply to provide two or three volunteer drivers with cars on polling day, or on an ad hoc basis (for example, if a Minister visits the constituency).

### 6. Campaigning in workplaces

It is a good idea to work with union officers to distribute campaign materials in local workplaces – whether it's posters or postal vote forms, workplaces are a good way of accessing potential Labour voters.

## Posters and leaflets

Many unions will produce their own posters giving reasons for voting Labour, and full-time officers may well distribute these to shop stewards. If that is not the case, post standard or localised Vote Labour posters to full-time officers or shop stewards who you think are likely to display them in workplaces.

Similarly, ensure that copies of relevant local campaign materials are distributed to union officers and shop stewards who are likely to display them.

## Voter registration and postal votes

If you are beginning your campaigning sufficiently before an election, it is a good idea to consider running a voter registration campaign in local workplaces. At certain times in the electoral cycle, national unions might have specific voter registration campaign materials available. If they are not available, registration forms can be obtained from your local Electoral Registration Officer, or downloaded from the Electoral Commission's website.

Similarly, it is a very good idea to run a postal vote campaign in local workplaces. You should be able to get model forms from your regional Labour Party Office.

If you are running either a postal vote campaign or an electoral registration campaign, you will need to think carefully about the logistics, and ensuring that shop stewards and full-time officers are properly briefed. In particular, you will need to consider how you are going to process the forms. Remember that people who work in one constituency will not necessarily live there – therefore, forms might well need to be returned to the Electoral Registration Officers in several different local authorities.

Bearing that in mind, it is a good idea to ask for all forms to be sent to one

central address (the Labour Party office or campaign centre). Whoever is collating them would then need to find out the address of the ERO in the relevant local authority (this can be done by inputting postcodes at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)), and then send the form on. This needs to be thought through in advance, as it is crucial that voter registration or postal vote forms are sent on straight away when they are sent to the CLP. In the run-up to some elections, the Labour Party operates a national freepost address to collate and send on postal vote application forms – if this is happening it is worth utilising the national set-up, rather than trying to replicate it at a local level.

## 7. Organising workplace visits


In the run-up to elections, visits to workplaces by candidates are excellent ways of engaging with working people whilst increasing the profile of the Labour campaign. As with all activities, the further in advance of an election that you can begin a programme of workplace visits, the more effective they will be.

Use Factsheet 5 of this handbook to plan workplace visits – but be sure to co-ordinate with the organiser or campaign manager in order to select the times and venues that are most appropriate to the campaign as a whole.

## 8. Legal requirements

Whether you are seeking financial donations or donations in kind from trade unions, it is essential that you work closely with the election agent to ensure that donations fit within limits, and are fully reported. This is a legal requirement, so ensure you keep accurate and comprehensive records at all times. Also ensure that you include an appropriate imprint on all materials that you produce. If in doubt, speak to the election agent or to the Labour Party's regional office.

# Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation



Trade  
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Organisation

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