

UNITING COMMUNITIES



Getting involved

What is Community Membership?

Unite's new category of membership brings people outside of the workplace into the union community, linking families and workplaces together to strive for a better, more caring society. Community membership places organising and activism at the centre of local communities: it provides a structure through which people can use their political voices to campaign for change.

Community membership also offers a variety of individual benefits and services, designed to look after the interests of our members and make their lives easier. These benefits range from discounts at major high street retailers, to debt counselling and a free 24-hour legal helpline.



How do you join and what does it cost?

If you are not in paid employment; a student, carer, retired or unemployed, membership costs just 50p a week which can be paid annually or monthly by Direct Debit. Unite is currently looking into other forms of payment for those who do not have bank accounts, such as pay point and cash payments.

You can join online, collect an application form at any one of Unite's local offices or download a form via the website www.unitetheunion.org/community.

If a member finds paid work after joining Unite Community, they will either transfer onto the full Unite membership rate or be advised to join the appropriate union if the work is not in an area covered by Unite.

If you join another union for work, you can still maintain your Unite Community Membership and continue campaigning for a better society within your community group.



How does it work?

Community Membership works through a network of community activists, trained by Unite in community organising to promote membership and activity in their area. These activists are volunteers who will run community groups and organise local residents to campaign on the issues that matter most to them. Unite will offer support, training and resources to these groups to make campaigns a success.

Unite's community membership is a flexible model that will develop as we go forward. Community membership will take a different form in different parts of the country to respond to the different cultures and needs of communities. Unite will be flexible and, above all, creative in the way we develop this great new initiative.

How do I set up a community group?

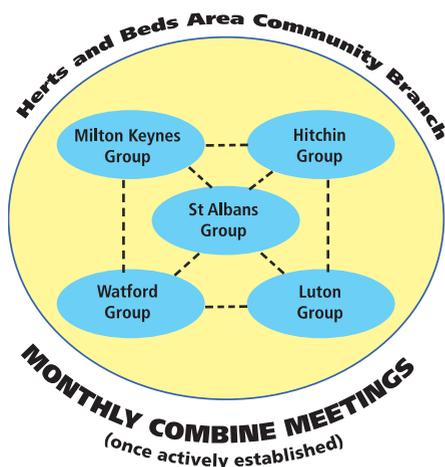
New members will join one of the community branches that have been established in Unite's regions. These branches can cover large areas, and it is envisaged that as more people join, smaller groups will be created to cater for specific communities.

Establishing a local town or area group is straightforward: you just need a number of members in their locality who want to come together and get active.

Groups within larger community branches will meet in their own communities and develop/organise their own campaigns and activities. Each group can send members to the wider branch, which once embedded should meet monthly.

At the branch meetings community activists will exchange views and experiences on campaigns and other activities being organised by the groups, decide to pool their resources to organise wider activities across the area or support a campaign being organised by a specific group.

Developing the experience, confidence and capacity of individual groups is a central role for the branch. The branch can invite speakers on subjects of interest and develop links with Unite's industrial branches in the area, twinning to maximise support and gain additional experiences as well as resources. Branches will organise activist training courses; 2 hour, 1 day or longer, to develop your skills and confidence on a range of topics supporting your activity.



Establishing a community branch

Once a local group has enough members to become a sustainable branch the group can consult with the region about becoming a new standalone community branch. What will make a viable branch is not set in stone and will depend on local situations.

Once established community branches will have access to their own funding and resources to organise effective campaigns.

Community branches will hold regular meetings and engage in a host of activities within the union while building networks of local groups and relationships with a growing number of organisations we have relationships with.

This is a very exciting opportunity to create a new, grassroots-based and community-led way of organising within the union.



www.unitetheunion.org/community

How can Unite's industrial branches get involved in community organising?

There are many ways Unite's existing branches can get involved in community organising. Branches could twin with a new community branch and offer support in local campaigns.

As a Unite workplace activist you could buddy a new community activist or even become a community activist yourself taking Unite's values of decency, solidarity, justice and dignity into the community you live in.

Many of the industrial challenges we face can be better tackled by a wider, more co-ordinated approach involving our community members. These are our next generation of stewards and activists as well as campaigners within their community.

Supporting new community activists

Unite has set up a community support unit which will assist activists who want to push community membership in their locality. We are also recruiting community organisers in our regions who will assist the development of community groups and branches.

If you want to find out more about community membership, please contact us at

community@unitetheunion.org

or visit us at

www.unitetheunion.org/community





www.unitetheunion.org/community

Get involved

We are looking to extend our social and political reach into every corner of our communities, taking trade union values of justice, dignity, respect and solidarity into our wider campaigning activity. We need your help to do this!

You can help your community fight back, organise and find its voice, organising is about building a better society for us all.

Unite: YOUR union supporting YOUR community.

