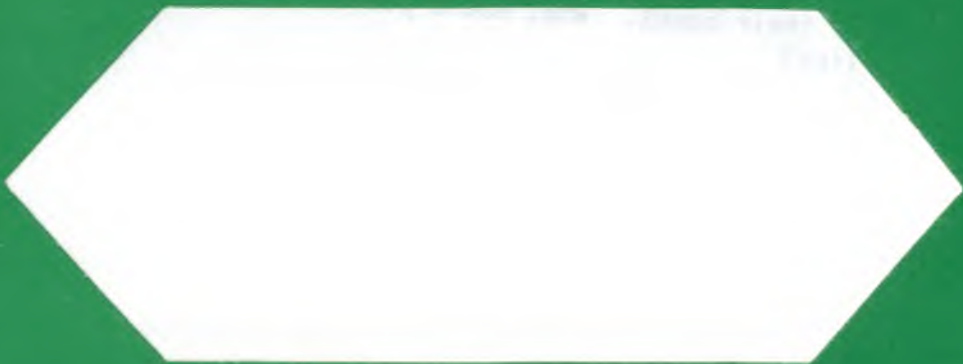


THE GREAT BRITAIN
TRADE UNION
LIBRARY

TUC



**education
service**

IMPROVING UNION ORGANISATION

ACTIVITY

Aims

These problems will help you think about how to improve union organisation, and what action to take to achieve this.

Task

Study the problems in your groups, and prepare a report for a union meeting.

- 1 In the transport department the bonus payments are cut without warning. In response the union bans all overtime but a card check shows that only $\frac{2}{3}$ of the drivers belong to the union. How would you set about obtaining 100% membership and keeping it in future?
- 2 The branch annual meeting has had to be abandoned due to lack of a quorum. All the members are employed in one large hospital. What would you suggest be done to improve attendance at future meetings?
- 3 At a meeting of the members in the section you represent the discussion reveals that the majority have no real understanding of their union's policies. How can this lack of knowledge be remedied?
- 4 As part of a National pay campaign the ancillary staff at your hospital are taking industrial action. You represent the membership in the laundry and you are called in because of their complaint that the members of another union in the boiler house have shut off the steam. As a result your members have lost their bonus. What would you do to prevent this kind of conflict?

TIME-OFF

ACTIVITY

Aims

This activity will help you to think about how to deal with time-off problems.

Task

Study these problems and the resource material you have been given, and prepare a report from your group.

- 1 An official of the union branch wants to attend a union course on industrial relations. The management refuse to allow him either paid or unpaid time off to attend on the grounds that there is a management-run course similar in structure in a month's time which he could go to, and anyway he went to a union course two years ago. How would you reply?
- 2 You, as a shop steward, require one day's absence from work to attend a specially called regional conference to discuss the introduction of new machinery and a common negotiating strategy for the union in relation to regarding. The management allow you to go but refuse to pay you for the day. What do you do?

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Aims

This exercise will help you to examine procedure agreements with trade union safeguards in mind.

Task

Look at the proposed ABC discipline procedure, the checklist of union safeguards, and prepare a report in your group on these two questions.

- 1 Does the proposed procedure give adequate safeguards?
- 2 What improvements would you suggest to improve it?

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS FOR A REVISED DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1 Purpose

The general purpose of this document is to set down the best of present practice, and see that it is applied uniformly throughout the Site.

At the date of issue, the procedure is a matter of management policy. However, we now wish to get the formal agreement of the Trade Unions to the procedure, and copies have been sent to them for their comment.

2 Responsibility

It is management's job to see that disciplinary action is explained step by step to any employee concerned, and also to the employee's Representative should one be involved. The explanation should include reference to any options which the employee may have; and at every stage Managers have ample opportunity to state their side of any problem.

3 General Principles

3.1 The procedure defined in these instructions is based on the following principles:—

- (i) Employees have the right to expect fair and consistent treatment.
- (ii) Every employee has the right to be represented by his/her Trade Union Representatives; if not a member of a Trade Union by a fellow employee in the same grade.
- (iii) Every employee has the right of formal appeal through the Grievance or Disputes Procedures.
- (iv) In the initial stages, "warnings" will not be considered as mere preliminaries to eventual dismissal. Managers will aim to seek a genuine and permanent improvement in e.g. the conduct or performance which is thought to be in need of improvement.

4 Definitions

The areas to be covered by disciplinary action may be divided into three broad categories and will include the following:—

4.1 Gross Industrial Misconduct

- (i) Wilful refusal to undertake accepted duties or to obey reasonable instructions, after due warning.
- (ii) Aggressive behaviour or assault, on Company's premises.
- (iii) Wilful damage, dishonesty (including cross clocking), malicious practices or other serious offences against the law.

4.2 Industrial Misconduct

- (i) Poor attendance and timekeeping.
- (ii) Dangerous or unsafe working practices.

4.3 Inadequate Performance

- (i) Poor quality workmanship, failure to meet performance targets, negligence or lack of proper application to duties.

5 Disciplinary Measures and Procedures

5.1 Formal disciplinary action will take one of the following forms:—

- (i) Verbal warnings or reprimands when witnesses are present and requiring that items complained of be rectified.
- (ii) Written final warning, specifying (iii) or (iv) below as possible consequences of failure to effect the desired changes.
- (iii) Suspension without pay.
- (iv) Dismissal.

5.2 Disciplinary action at (ii), (iii) and (iv) may only be taken by the next higher level of authority, which will normally be the Head of Department, and in cases under (iii) and (iv) with the approval of the Personnel Manager or his deputy.

Please Turn Over

- 5.3 An employee guilty of an offence of gross industrial misconduct will be liable to instant dismissal or suspension without pay.
- 5.4 An employee guilty of an offence of industrial misconduct will normally be disciplined by way of verbal warning or reprimand, and these should always be recorded on their record card. If, however, an employee is persistently involved in such misconduct he/she will be liable to dismissal or suspension without pay, but only after a written warning has been given to the employee by the Head of Department.

After such a warning, reasonable time will be allowed for the employee to show an improvement in conduct.

6 Provisions for Representation and Appeal

- 6.1 In every case where formal disciplinary action is taken, the employee(s) concerned may request the presence of their Trade Union Representative.
- 6.2 In the case of gross industrial misconduct, where dismissal or suspension is contemplated, the next higher level of authority should refer the matter to the Personnel Manager or his Deputy before such action is implemented.
- 6.3 Where, in the case of industrial misconduct, the appropriate person under paragraph 3.2 serves a written warning on an employee, copies of the letter should be given to the Personnel Department and Recruitment Office for inclusion in the employee's docket. A copy may also be given to the Trade Union Representative with the agreement of the employee concerned.
- 6.4 Employees who are subject to disciplinary action may appeal against the action within the grievance procedure for dealing with disputes.
- 6.5 Management action, except in severe cases of gross industrial misconduct, will not normally be implemented until the stages of the appeals procedure have been exhausted. Management, however, reserve the right to suspend an employee on basic rates of pay during this period.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

TRADE UNION SAFEGUARDS

- * Where misconduct is alleged, the worker must be given a warning and an opportunity to improve
- * the immediate supervisor should not have authority to dismiss
- * at all stages worker has the right to be represented by a TU rep
- * all workers have a right to appeal
- * TU reps must not be disciplined without reference to union FTO

WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITY

Aims

This exercise will help you think about how to involve your women members.

Task

Study this list of suggestions for improving the involvement of women in the union. Discuss in your groups which suggestions you would support and why.

- 1 Womens' seats on the EC (or policy making body)
- 2 Creche facilities (for meetings, etc)
- 3 Workplace meetings in employers' time
- 5 Women's advisory committees
- 6 Specific womens' full-time officials
- 7 Any other proposals?

STRUCTURE OF THE UNION COURSE

EXERCISE ON UNION HISTORY

Please find below four questions on the history of COHSE. Your function is to find the answers and give an explanation for the reasons why the four situations came about.

- 1 Which trade unions amalgamated to form COHSE and why?
- 2 When was the NAWU formed and why?
- 3 Who brought about the formation of the NHS and why?
- 4 Who was the first General Secretary of COHSE and how was he/she elected?

FACT FINDING EXERCISE ON UNION STRUCTURE

In your small groups answer the following questions:

- 1 What is the supreme body of the organisation?
- 2 Who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation?
- 3 How are the President / Vice President elected, when and where?
- 4 How do you see the structure of the union?
- 5 What is the criteria for electing a member of one National Executive Committee, when and where?

BASIC ORGANISATION

ACTIVITY

RECRUITMENT

Aims

To help you develop the skills needed to recruit new employees

Task

You have to speak to a meeting of new employees who are not members of any union. Try to deal with these points as well as you can:

- 1 *'Why should I join a trade union?'*
- 2 *'Why should I join yours?'*
- 3 *'I can't afford to join a trade union.'*

IMPROVING UNION ORGANISATION

ACTIVITY

Aims

You should, using these problems, think clearly about ways of improving your own internal organisation.

Task

By group study assess the implications of each situation as members of the Branch Executive Committee might.

Introduction

A small hospital is to be closed and the majority of your union's membership from there will be transferred to a bigger, larger hospital nearby.

The larger hospital has several unions represented and competition for union membership is fierce.

- 1 The unit being closed is a small, close knit and friendly community as is the union branch that will in effect become defunct.

How do we integrate the official and stewards, from this Unit into the larger branch, retaining the membership's confidence in the union?

What recommendations should be placed before the Branch on this theme for the transitional period?

- 2 The pay office is notorious for failure to ensure that 'check-off' continues when staff transfer.

Whose responsibility is this and how do we overcome it?

- 3 Your current domestic staff members are in receipt of bonus payments. Those transferring-in are not, and this could affect these payments.

What steps should be taken to anticipate difficulties.

- 4 Due to the complete abuse of the Bridlington Agreement to all unions at the hospital, there is likely to be some attempts to attract these transfers into other organisations. How do you ensure that the interests of your members, your branch and your union are protected?

PROBLEMS AT WORK

ACTIVITY

Aims

These problems will help you to handle problems at the workplace and use the procedures effectively.

Task

Study these problems in your group and select someone to report on each of them.

PROBLEM 1

Management have arbitrarily suspended a member and sent him/her home. The rest of the members have walked off the job.

What do you do?

What improvements in your procedure could you suggest?

PROBLEM 2

Management have laid off the main workforce without pay because of the non-arrival of essential components.

What do you do?

What improvements in the agreement could overcome this problem?

PROBLEM 3

Management are well advanced in their plans to introduce a word processor into an office with a typing pool. The members are complaining to you that their workload will increase but their pay is unaffected. Secondly, three vacancies are not to be replaced because of the computerised equipment. Thirdly, the departmental manager who is non-union has also been trained to use the equipment. Your committee member for the area tells you that local management are dragging their feet over discussions.

What can you do?

What improvements in the procedure could you suggest to overcome similar problems in the future?