

**BRANCH
YOUTH
OFFICERS
TOOLKIT**

JOIN, ENGAGE, GET ACTIVE, BE EMPOWERED

EWU YOUTH!
TODAY & TOMORROW

Spring 2014

Why is Youth so important?

The CWU knows that, to make sure it stays relevant, it needs to have a Youth section. More than this though, it knows it needs to have a Youth section that contributes and is allowed to develop and put forward its ideas.

Branches need a range of Officers to make sure they function. The Youth Officers are there to be the voice of the younger members of the CWU and to promote involvement.

Branch Youth Officers might support local reps, they might participate on a regional level, or they might participate on a national level.

Your main role, as the Branch Youth Officer, is to represent members in the Branch who are under 30 years old.

You also have a role to play in organising and recruiting. This includes:

What's a Youth Officer?

- Promoting issues that affect young people.
- Reporting relevant issues to the Branch and to the Regional Youth Committee.
- Escalating issues to senior Branch Officers, if needed.
- Acting as a point of contact between members and the Branch.
- Acting as a point of contact between Head Office and the Branch on youth issues.
- Passing information to youth members.

Time to do your work...

There's no specific agreement on facilities for Branch Youth Officers. This means that any facilities would need to be negotiated separately, built into the overall Branch paid release allocation (where one exists) or financed by the branch.

Because of the nature of trade union activity, you might have to use some of your own time. You'll need support from your Branch, Region and Head Office. It's up to you and your Branch to work out what level of support you need.

The CWU knows that Branch Youth Officers have a wide variety of skills and experience. Because of this, the CWU is committed to providing training and development for our Branch Youth Officers.

CWU Youth has many different events throughout the year. These events have been developed since the section was created in 2000. The events are designed to encourage your development.

Release from your employer

Some of these events are held over weekends to maximise attendance. If you come along to any of the events, this will be funded by your Branch.

Requesting time off

There are, generally, two types of release for trade union duties. They are "employer related" and "trade union activities". If your request is "employer related" then this will almost always be paid release, as long as you give your employer enough notice.

CWU meetings and events are classed as trade union activities. These activities don't attract paid release from your employer. But, you can request unpaid leave. This means that the cost of your pay will be covered by the CWU. You should remember though that unpaid release will affect things like your pension or any bonus payments. You'll need to claim any lost bonus too.

Trade union activities

Requesting unpaid leave:

- Speak to your Branch first.
- Give your employer plenty of notice (two or three weeks is reasonable).
- Always put the request in writing (email's fine).
- Always get a reply in writing.
- If refused, let your Branch know.
- If it's still not sorted, contact youth@cwu.org

Completing reports

As the Branch Youth Officer you'll carry out activities on behalf of your Branch, representing the views of yourself and your youth members. When you complete these activities, you'll need to report back to the right people.

Completing reports is important whichever level you are in the CWU. Most Branches will have their own preferred format for reports. They might be written or verbal at a Branch meeting. It's important that you send a report, even if you can't make the meeting. Your Branch Secretary or Chair will be able to tell you how reports should be submitted for your Branch.

Producing reports has other benefits. It raises your profile, and it also gives you an opportunity to encourage others to become involved by highlighting the activities of the youth section.

Reporting checklist – here's some helpful tips for writing reports...

- Be organised. Set yourself a deadline, otherwise it won't get done.
- Think about the size. One page of A4 is about 400 – 500 words.
- Give it a title. Something relevant.

Think about...

- Why are you writing the report?
- What do you want to include?
- What did you find out?
- Who's the report for?
- What was the outcome?

Be brief, be clear.

- 1 Write to all youth members asking for interest in the role of Branch Youth Officer.
- 2 Avoid use of jargon terms. Not everyone knows what a Branch Committee or AGM is.
- 3 Don't treat the role as a tick in the box exercise. Branch Youth Officers are a key part of the CWU.
- 4 Think about the skills that someone might need for the role.
- 5 Ask the members and reps if they know anyone who may be interested in the role.
- 6 Think about how you can develop someone's confidence to allow them to take on a formal role.
- 7 Meet up with someone who puts themselves forward and discuss the role. Maybe assign a mentor and take them along.
- 8 Agree clear objectives. Review these regularly.
- 9 Encourage the person to get involved in campaigns and with regional or national events.
- 10 Think about succession planning. Young members don't stay young for ever.

10 tips for branches to identify a potential Youth Officer

10 tips for holding a Youth Members' meeting

- 1** Set out objectives for the meeting. What do you want to achieve by holding a meeting?
- 2** When inviting members to the meeting, think about different methods of communication. Not everyone has email.
- 3** Think about the language of your invite.
- 4** Use word of mouth to create interest in the meeting.
- 5** Try to increase youth members at each stage of the process (planning, communication, etc)
- 6** Think about the location. Is it easy to get to? Is it a suitable location?
- 7** Make sure people feel welcome at the meeting. It might be their first meeting in the CWU.
- 8** Have relevant literature for members to take away with them.
- 9** Take attendees details so that you can thank them later and also get feedback about the meeting.
- 10** Share information with other Branches. What have they done before? What could they learn from you?

YOUR DEVELOPMENT

When you become the Branch Youth Officer you become part of the Branch's central committee. It's important that you ask your Branch Secretary about any rules you need to know about.

All about your branch

It's really important that you find out who's who in your Branch. It'll make it easier for you when you need support or advice. It's also worthwhile making a note of everyone's contact details.

You might also want to look at something called the "Branch Model Constitution" (BMC). This is a standardised set of requirements across the CWU. You can get a copy from your Branch.

When you are elected to your new role, it would be worthwhile completing a self assessment of your skills. It might help to speak to a more experienced Branch Youth Officer and see what skills you think are needed for the role.

When you plan your own development you should think about some of the below things...

- What skills do you already have?
- What training is available?
- What are realistic timescales?
- Who do I need to support me?

Education & Training

The CWU runs a wide range of training courses. Some of these are held in the regions, but a lot of them are held at the CWU's own education centre, Alvescot Lodge.

There's a prospectus published every year. You can find it on the education website www.cwueducation.org

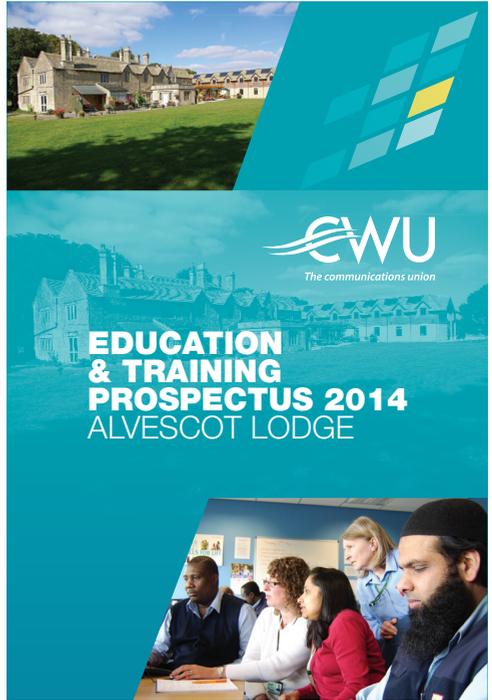
To get you started you should think about doing Union Skills 1, 2 and 3. Then you can move on to the Advanced Skills course. There's no set deadline for completing the courses. It all depends on when the courses fit in, as it might mean time away from home.

Some of the Union Skills courses have paid release from employers.

Some essential skills:

There are lots of skills you need to be a Branch Youth Officer. Here we've listed a few of them. Not everyone will have the same skills from the start, but through building strong relationships and through learning you'll get there.

You'll need to work out which skills you need to develop. To do this, list all of the skills you think you'll need for the role and then mark yourself from 1 – 5. 1 means that you don't know anything about that topic and 5 means you feel confident with it.



Communications	Presentation	Research
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Public speaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading
<input type="checkbox"/> Listening	<input type="checkbox"/> Minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Notices	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Social media	<input type="checkbox"/> Conferences	

Once you've done that, get someone else to go through how you've scored yourself. It needs to be someone who knows you well, but who also has an idea of the role of the Branch Youth Officer. The reason you should get someone else to check it is that we're all really self critical sometimes and you might have missed something that's really obvious.

Working out what skills you need to develop

Getting involved

A great way to develop your skills is to get involved in CWU activities. As the Branch Youth Officer you should attend Branch meetings, Regional Youth meetings, National Youth Education Event and Youth Conference.

Getting involved in these activities, and others across the CWU, will build a network that you can turn to for information in the future. It'll also give you the opportunity to find more out about the CWU, wider Trade Union movement, as well as giving you skills that you can use within the CWU and externally.

When you've worked out which CWU courses you'd like to go on you should speak to your Branch Secretary and explain that you want to go on a course. Your Branch Secretary needs to sign the application form as the Branch will be paying for you to attend.

Applying for courses

Remember, you can find a list of courses at www.cwueducation.org and you can download an application form from the site too.

All of the CWU training courses are accredited. That means that when you complete any of the CWU courses you'll get a certificate from our partner college, which is recognised nationally.

When you set a goal for yourself you should try to use a standardised model. There are lots of different models to use, including **SMART**.

Setting goals for yourself

The SMART model is explained here:

- **Specific** – Is your goal well defined? Don't be vague in what you want to achieve. If you want to have four meetings a year, then state that as your goal.
- **Measurable** – How will you know that you've achieved your goal? What is the end result? So, you might say something like "increase membership by 10%".
- **Achievable** – Don't set yourself a goal which you know you'll never achieve. Instead of saying you'll talk to every youth member, you might put that you'll contact every youth member
- **Relevant** – Does your goal fit into the wider picture. There's no point having a goal if it goes against the wider goals of the organisation.
- **Timely** – Does your goal have a deadline? Is the deadline realistic?

You should review your goals at regular intervals. This is the same whether they're personal goals, or goals that a committee has agreed on. You'll need to review them because things come up which change your plans. Or, the priorities for you or the committee may change.

Reviewing your plan

Just because you don't achieve a goal, it doesn't mean you've failed.

Assigning tasks

To achieve your goals, whether personal or for a committee, you'll need to assign tasks. This might be information gathering, organising or communication, etc. Make sure each person reports back on their progress.

Your Development Plan

It's up to you how you structure your development plan. But, what you should do is make sure there's someone who can help you to measure it. You'll own your own development but it's good to get someone else's view.

Below is a basic idea of how to layout a development plan.

What do I want to achieve?	What do I need to do?	What support do I need?	When will this be done by?	Action taken so far
Speaking at conference	Attend National Youth Education Event Speak to others who've spoken before	Other members	Next Youth Conference	Application form completed for NYEE

ORGANISING

Organising within a trade union is about giving members a greater influence over the direction of the union and encouraging their input in the decision making process.

Rather than being leadership led, the members are the ones who lead things.

Organising and recruitment sit hand in hand within the trade union movement. By empowering members, this will drive interest in the CWU and encourage others to join.

What can you do?

Mapping

Mapping your workplace isn't as difficult as it sounds. In its simplest form it means finding out who in your area is a CWU member and who isn't. This will help you with recruitment. You can ask your Branch to help you with this.

Once you've got a clear idea of who's a member and who's not, you can then plan what you're going to do.

As the Branch Youth Officer, you might want to set up a Youth Section within your Branch. By doing this you're getting people involved and making them part of the decision making process.

What is organising?

Your Branch will have an Organiser. You should speak to them, or your Branch Secretary to find out if there's any work going on at the minute within your Branch.

One of the first steps is mapping your workplace.

Getting others involved

There are Branch, Regional and National Organising Structures within the CWU. You can contact them to discuss your ideas and to get advice. They will also be helpful for you with your development as a Branch Youth Officer.

10 Tips for Youth Officers:

- 1** Meet up with your Branch to discuss what's expected and agree your objectives.
- 2** Make your workload manageable. If you're looking to increase membership, target an area at a time.
- 3** Make sure your youth members are involved, or encouraged to be involved.
- 4** Ask the Branch to put you in touch with the regional organiser.
- 5** Don't be afraid to delegate tasks to others.

Giving others a role
will make them feel more involved.

- 6** Try to set up a young members network in your Branch and use this to create new ideas.
- 7** When you meet up with fellow youth members in your Branch, create action points.
- 8** Review things on a regular basis. What do you want to Start, Stop or Continue doing?
- 9** Celebrate success!
- 10** Get involved regionally or nationally if you can. There's lots of experience out there. Get in touch through email or social media.

HELPFUL STUFF

There's loads of really helpful stuff that you can get to help you in your role as a Branch Youth Officer.

Remember to go to the website www.cwuyouth.org to find out the latest information on what's happening.

The following will give you a bit of information of the structure of the CWU and some contacts for you.

The structure

Simon Sapper's an Assistant Secretary at the CWU Head Office. Simon is the National Officer with responsibility for Youth.

Simon's PA is called Jo Thair. Both Simon and Jo work with the Youth Committee throughout the year.

The Youth Committee is elected yearly. It's made up of 10 members. One member is elected from each region. There are also four NEC members on the Youth Committee.

The Chair of the Youth Committee attends NEC meetings to put forward a youth perspective, but they can't vote. The Chair and Vice-Chair attend the relevant constituency meetings (PEC/TFSE), again they can't vote at these meetings.

If you need to get in touch with one of the Youth Committee members you can find their contact details on the youth website www.cwuyouth.org.

You can also contact:

Simon Sapper: youth@cwu.org

Jo Thair: jthair@cwu.org

We know there's a lot more that we could have included in this toolkit, but we want you to use the website as much as possible as that's where the most up to date information will be. If you're on Facebook or Twitter, join us for regular updates.

You can find news and useful resources on our website www.cwuyouth.org
There you'll find guidance on the relationship between BYO's and other Branch Officers.

There are lots of events taking place throughout the year. The ones below are the ones we think you should go to if you can.



*Events to
lookout for...*

- National Youth Education Event (NYEE). This is usually in October.
- CWU Youth Conference. Usually in January or early February.
- CWU General Conference. Usually between late April and June.

Doing the events in that order really helps to build your knowledge, but you can do them any way you like.

Remember, your Branch or Region might be hosting other events too, so always check.

10 REASONS WHY YOUNG MEMBERS SHOULD GET INVOLVED:

- 1** Young members are the union's future.
- 2** Ensure the union represents young workers.
- 3** Join the debate to create union policy.
- 4** Determine the direction of key campaigns – at work and in the community.
- 5** Create a stronger union by becoming active.
- 6** Get the skills and experience to speak for your colleagues.
- 7** Be part of a movement against austerity and for change.
- 8** Meet other young members and share experiences.
- 9** Be empowered.
Be inspired.
- 10** Make a difference.

***STRENGTH
IN NUMBERS***

www.cwuyouth.org

www.cwuyouth.org

 youth@cwu.org  [cwuyouth](https://www.facebook.com/cwuyouth)  [@cwuyouth](https://twitter.com/cwuyouth)

