

Branch/LA health check exercise

This exercise is to help get a general sense of the strength of your branch/LA so that you can plan your priorities for organisation and recruitment. The characteristics are a little arbitrary and you will probably find you have achieved some targets at each level – but you need to consider which most closely resembles your local association so that you can set realistic goals for activity.

Mark each item with '✓' if your branch/LA already does this, '?' if you're not sure and 'X' if it's an item to work on.

Level 1 – starting out

- Has a full complement of branch/LA officers
- Has an accurate local membership database
- Invites members to contribute their ideas and opinions at general meetings
- Receives monthly lists of newly employed staff
- Has information about the union sent out by the college/university with induction materials
- Has a local recruitment letter to send to all staff
- Sends recruitment material and contact information to all new staff each month
- Has a local letter of welcome for new members which tells them how to get involved
- Sends out induction packs to all new members within two weeks

Level 2 – moving on

- Has a committee of 10 or more which meets monthly
- Has a local representative for all departments/areas
- Receives annual lists of all eligible staff
- Calculates overall membership density and membership densities for different staff groups
- Sets membership recruitment targets annually

- Develops a recruitment plan and evaluates it monthly
- Campaigns actively around workplace issues and negotiations
- Has a plan to increase the number of committee members and departmental reps
- Makes presentations at all induction meetings and training events for new staff
- Handles basic individual representation locally
- Provides lists of members and non-members to departmental representatives
- Has a means for departmental representatives to communicate with each other
- Has increased overall membership by 5% since this time last year

Level 3 – reaching targets

- Has a committee which reflects the profile of the institution in terms of job category
- Has a committee which reflects the profile of the institution in terms of race
- Has a committee which reflects the profile of the institution in terms of gender
- Has a committee which reflects the profile of the institution in terms of age
- Has a mentoring system for new committee members and officers and a plan for leadership turnover, transmitting skills and devolving responsibilities
- Has a variety of ways that members can get involved at different levels
- Holds regular departmental meetings to solicit opinions and ideas from members
- Has regular meetings for departmental representatives (at least once a term)
- Participates in training for local representatives including departmental representatives
- Involves all local reps (staff group, departmental, etc) in decision making
- Offers new reps mentoring and shadowing opportunities with more experienced representatives
- Sets goals for membership density by department and staff group each year
- Evaluates membership retention rates in the branch/LA
- Uses individual representation effectively for organising and recruitment
- Sends at least five members a year to external training events who report back to the branch/LA
- Increased membership by 10% since this time last year

Other items?

Have you identified any other activities (not listed above) that contribute to effective organisation and recruitment? Which level would they fit?

Review

Having considered the exercise, note down the priorities for the branch/LA

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____