WORKING TOGETHER GUIDELINES

Labour Unions is committed to the fullest possible participation of delegates to our training courses. This means that no one should feel put off from participating because of the actions, attitudes or language of other course members. The following guidelines have been drawn up to help course members meet our commitment to full participation in a practical and constructive way. You will see that underlying this guide is a commitment to the principle that everyone has equal rights to benefit from, to contribute to and enjoy the course.

We assume that course members will agree with these principles and hope the guidelines will assist in putting them into practice.

Working Together

A key feature of trade union education is the value it places upon the knowledge, experience and skills that each member brings with them to the course - both in terms of their trade union or political work and their everyday lives. It is important that everyone feels equal and able to make a contribution if they so wish. So:

- Listen to what others have to say, and avoid being dismissive of their contribution.
- Wait until a speaker has finished and do not interrupt their train of thought.
- Aim to have reasoned discussion, not arguments.
- Any criticism should be constructive and help members to develop confidence, skills and knowledge.
- Make your own contribution as clear and concise as possible and do not dominate the discussion.
- Ensure that everyone who wishes to speak is given encouragement and the opportunity to do so.
- It is equally important that participants on the course can speak openly about problems they or their members have experienced in the full knowledge that personal or sensitive information is restricted to the classroom. Confidentiality must be respected.
- Serious or repeated breaches of these guidelines may result in you being asked to leave the course.

Language

Language is important and our policy is not to use language which offends or hurts people. This type of language should always be avoided as it causes distress. Often it is a reflection of stereotyped thinking. Do not be surprised if you are challenged if you make broad sweeping generalisations about any group of people, e.g. that women working part-time only go out to work for pin money.

Language which contains discriminatory references and which is abusive or threatening in any way should not be used and nor should jokes or comments which perpetuate discrimination.

Jargon

Jargon is a barrier to good communication. Sometimes, the more we become involved in trade union or Labour Party activities, the more likely we are to use jargon. Take care to explain any jargon or initials you use which others may not be familiar with so that everyone understands what you are talking about.

Harassment

To ensure the full participation of all course members, there must be no harassment of any kind. Harassment can be physical, verbal or digital. Harassment is defined by law in the Equality Act 2010 as "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual". Harassment should always be challenged, and you can report any concerns to the designated safeguarding leads for the course.

Outside Course Hours - Tea / Coffee / Lunch Breaks

What has been outlined as guidance for behaviour during course hours is equally applicable to the scheduled breaks during the course.

Outside Course Hours (Residential Courses)

The social side of courses - discussions in the bar for example - should be both enjoyable and valuable. It is important that this is true for everyone. This means on the one hand, making sure that everyone feels able to join in if they want to - just as in the class - and on the other hand, not putting pressure on individuals to fall in with a group if they do not want to, e.g. drinking alcohol, going out or staying up late. If you stay up late yourself, be careful not to disturb others - everyone needs to be able to participate fully at the first session in the morning.

Time Keeping

The course has a tight timetable and members are responsible for their own time keeping. When participating in the course, you will often have a limited amount of time. Make sure you use it well and return to the main group in time for the report back.

Mobile Telephones

If at all possible please switch your mobile phones off during the training sessions. If, for whatever reason, you must have your phone on please have it on silent or vibrate.

Social Media

Please think before you tweet. Respect other course members' privacy - please don't post photos or 'tag' others without checking first.

Smoking

In line with UK legislation, smoking is not allowed during our training courses. Participants who smoke will be able to do so in outside areas as designated by the venue during scheduled breaks.

Conclusion

These guidelines are intended for you to use during the course to counter problems as they arise, and to ensure that no-one feels excluded from the course as a result of language, actions or attitudes of other course members. They also seek to promote our commitment to anti-discrimination and equal opportunities in a positive way as far as the conduct of our courses is concerned. If you are concerned about harassment or other behaviour that is not in line with these guidelines, or if you have a concern about a safeguarding or welfare issue, please raise it with one of the event organisers or Tutors.

Helen Pearce and Robbie Scott are the designated Safeguarding Leads for the course. Helen can be contacted on 07811 371 861 and Robbie Scott on 07958 160 132.