

Zero Tolerance to Workplace Violence and Aggression Campaign

Violence in the workplace is on the rise. There is also a rise of sexualised behaviour from children towards our female Education Support Staff including bites to inner thighs, breasts and one member having the groin of their trousers ripped right off. Humping on legs and grabbing our members inappropriately. A female member of staff from a special school was bitten badly on the nipple and had to go to hospital for treatment. Some of our members have shared their stories with the branch and have given authorisation for these to be shown to the wider membership.

These stories can be a difficult read, but must be highlighted as staff should be able to go to their place of work and feel safe, not abused. Violence in the workplace must not be tolerated.



Katrina's Report to Branch Committee January 2026

These photos are from members working in Special Schools. One member was punched in the face by a dysregulated learner [child] because they didn't like what management told them. Other photos show terrible bruising caused by our members being kicked, punched and bitten by children under 18years. Further photos show deep scratches to the face, bite marks and bruising caused by multiple kicks to legs and shoulder. Another member had to go to hospital for a tetanus due to the severity of a bite they sustained by a violent child with ASN, followed by 6 months of monthly Hepatitis B injections.

This violent behaviour is not only in Special Schools, but also a daily occurrence across Early Years, Mainstream Primary, and High Schools. It's not only the physical injuries that affect our Education Support Staff, but an increase in mental health issues, anxiety, and depression caused by the continuous violence and unsafe working conditions. An increase in absences either due to injuries or work-related stress. UNISON has demanded that the Employer puts preventative measures in place to

protect our members from physical harm in their workplace.

With the members' permission, UNISON shared the photographic evidence of injuries sustained by them with the Convenor of the Education Committee Councillor Dalgleish and at Partnership at Work. We discussed the fact that there are no Preventative Measures in place to keep our members safe from harm in their workplace. Also, the continued lack of reporting these incidents by management and the lack of a welfare debrief after a violent incident in which a member has been injured.

The Chief Executive Paul Lawrence tasked Jackie Reid [Head of Education] to look at putting preventative measures in place to keep our members safe at work. Revisiting this matter again in March 2026 at Partnership at Work for a more positive outcome. [No pressure Jackie]

Councillor Dalgleish is contacting the Cabinet Secretary for Education Jenny Gilruth to organise a meeting to discuss what actions the government can take to guarantee safe working conditions for Education Support Staff.



Further pictures provided of deep scratches and bruises. One Member had to go to hospital to get tetanus and had to get another 6 hepatitis b injection once a month for 6 months at their GP.



Education Support Staff in Edinburgh showing their support for UNISON's Zero Tolerance to Workplace Violence Campaign. Braidburn Special School, Kaimes Special School, St Crispins Special School, Echline Primary School & South Queensferry.



Members in all areas are encouraged to report ALL incidents as soon as possible (click on links below for more details)

[MyHS Reporting Poster](#)

[MyHS Violence at Work](#)

[Debriefing after a violent incident](#)

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2026

Katrina Baird attended the Women's Leadership Development Programme last year, and said she would highly recommend all our women Stewards/Activists to do this programme.

This programme is aimed at women members who are not currently involved within the senior structure of our union. The aim of the programme is to develop your leadership skills as well as focussing on how you can influence change across UNISON and the trade union movement. This course is not designed for experienced branch activists or branch officers.

Key Details

- In person for 3 two day sessions.
- Sessions will be held between February & April 2026.
- More information in our Activist Education Programme.

Topics We Will Cover

- Women and leadership - your goals
- Smashing the leadership ceiling
- Your brand and your influence in union
- Networking, navigating, and supporting
- Success and journey so far

Contact your branch Education Officer or branch Secretary for more details:
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