

Active listening exercises

For LRU branches or working groups (15-20 mins)

Why

- It's important to learn from each other and to do that we need to listen. The importance of listening to each other can get forgotten in everyday busyness.
- A habit of listening will enable us to understand what is happening in the union and help to improve it. We can all play a part in this ongoing learning process.
- Feedback from the exercises can be reported to the Coordinating Group of the union or to other parts of the union if important issues come up

How

- Divide into pairs and take it in turns to talk for two minutes each in answer to a question. When one person is talking, the other engages in active listening, which means *not talking/answering* but simply paying careful and caring attention. If you feel yourself positively or negatively judging, just notice this but don't speak.
- The questions can be varied but here are some to try:
 - How does it feel for you coming to this meeting?*
 - What do you want or need from LRU?*
 - How is it for you being part of LRU?*
- We can also ask self-care or collective care questions like:
 - When have you felt heard and how was that important to you?*
 - How do you keep healthy boundaries in working with the union?*
 - Can you say 'no' when asked to do something you don't have time for?*
- Once *both* people have taken turns at speaking there's an option to move into conversation for a few minutes and respond to each other if you like
- Feedback isn't always necessary but you can ask for verbal or flipchart feedback in the larger group. If you want to anonymise answers, write them on post-its and gather them in a hat before putting them up. Allow 5-10mins at least.

