

# Live & Learn



Scottish Union Learning News

Winter 2011

Volume 6

Number 2



## 2011 Learner of the Year Award

USDAW's Susan Manson scoops Award from Scottish Union Learning

## Union Learning: A Better Way

ULRs from across the country gather at Scottish Union Learning Conference



**Dan Henderson, RMT Project Worker, gives a presentation on union learning at the Highlands and Islands Partners' Meeting.**

# Highlands and Islands in the Spotlight for the Board

**The focus was firmly on the Highlands and Islands in September when the Board of Scottish Union Learning convened in Inverness for the first time since its launch in 2008.** The Board extended an invitation to ULRs from the Inverness and Moray Learning Forums to join them in the historic surroundings of Inverness's Town House, where the members heard first-hand about the challenges and rewards of workplace learning in the Highlands and Islands.

Pam Urquhart, Development Officer, said, "The Board members were impressed with the enthusiasm shown by the ULRs and by their commitment to working together across different unions and workplaces to make learning happen."

Inverness was also the setting for a meeting between Scottish Union Learning and a wide range of partner organisations in the Highlands and Islands, including Inverness College UHI, Skills Development Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications

Authority, the Deaf Communication Project and WEA Scotland. The event focused on strengthening existing links between partners and unions.

Project Workers Dan Henderson and Philippa Clark, from the RMT and UNISON respectively, and Marta Chaba, from the Migrant Worker Project, each gave presentations that highlighted the need for innovation and flexibility in the design and delivery of courses to meet the challenges of providing workplace learning in this vast, remote and sparsely populated area. Sylvia O'Grady, Lifelong Learning Manager, said, "Partners in the Highlands and Islands are uniquely placed to champion the value of union learning in the wider world of learning and skills. Through the Highlands and Islands Learning Fund, which is supported by the European Social Fund, we've funded more than 600 learning places for workers in the Highlands and Islands. We know these union-driven learning opportunities are helping to change people's lives."

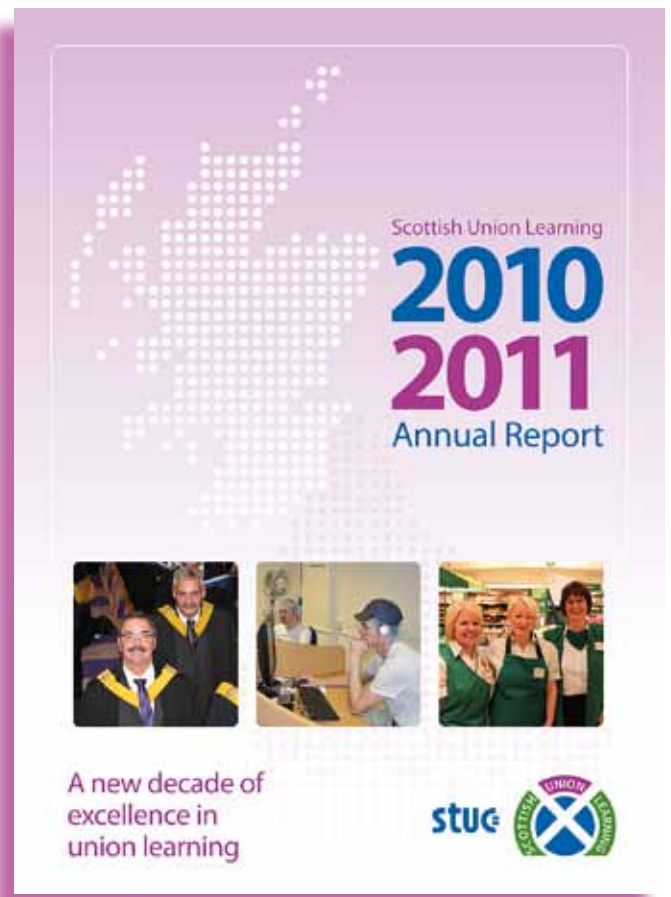


# A New Decade of Union Learning

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Scottish Union Learning Annual Report was published in December 2011. The Annual Report contains useful information about trade union learning activity in Scotland.**

The theme of this year's annual report is "A New Decade of Excellence in Union Learning." It contains details of ESF funding, a list of Development Fund projects, union learning case studies, ULR quotes, partner information and a synopsis of the work of TUC Education in Scotland.

The 2010-2011 Scottish Union Learning Annual Report can be accessed online at [www.scottishunionlearning.com/news/107/scottish-union-learning-annual-report-2010-2011](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com/news/107/scottish-union-learning-annual-report-2010-2011).



Are you featured in the Scottish Union Learning Annual Report? Tweet about it: #unionlearning

## 2012 STUC Union Rep Awards: Helen Dowie Award

**The STUC Union Rep Awards consist of three awards: the STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning, the STUC One Workplace Equality Award and the STUC Health & Safety Award. The nomination process for the awards asks unions to identify lay activists who have excelled in the promotion of the workplace learning agenda, equalities or health and safety within their union, workplace or community.**

Nominations will be accepted for an individual or a group of people from STUC affiliated trade unions, and must be approved by the Scottish Secretary or equivalent regional officer.

To be a candidate for nomination, the person(s) must demonstrate a commitment to the trade union movement and excel in the promotion of lifelong learning in the workplace on behalf of the union. Additionally, the nominee must be a member of a STUC affiliated trade union and be a lay union activist.

**Would you like to nominate someone for the STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning? The deadline for nominations is Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012.** To download a nomination form, visit [www.scottishunionlearning.com/support/helen-dowie-award](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com/support/helen-dowie-award).

# A Snapshot of Union Learning

**To date in Lowlands and Uplands Scotland, there have been 140 successful applications to the Learning Fund from a total of 20 trade unions. It is hoped with good attendance at all 179 courses that learning opportunities will be provided for upwards of 1,500 workers.** The types of courses requested are diverse, reflecting the different sectors and areas in which union members are employed. Recently, a number of short courses for freelancers in creative industries such as film, TV and journalism have been delivered, due to short-term employment and threats of redundancy. In general, courses cover a wide geographical area, from a British Sign Language course for USDAW in Elgin to an IT course in Dumfries for the POA.

## **Bienvenidos to Spanish Drivers**

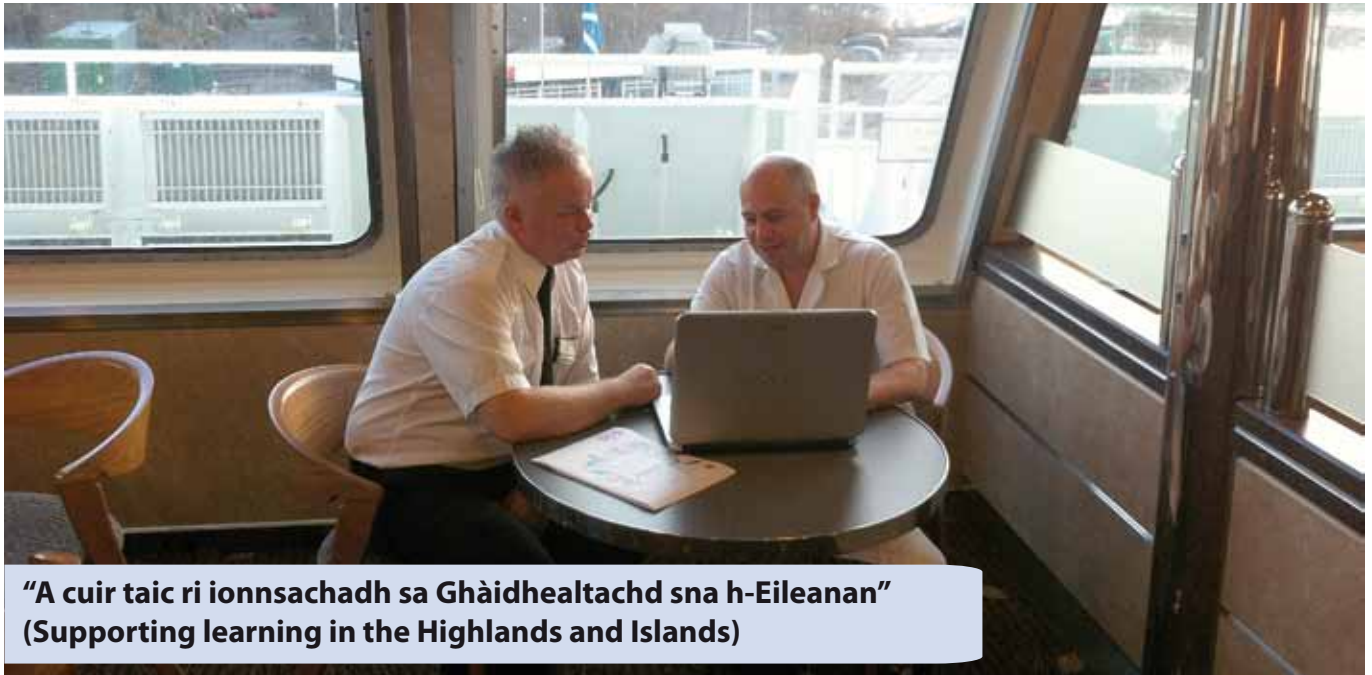
USDAW learners at the Tesco Distribution Depot in Livingston undertook a basic Spanish course, supported by the Learning Fund. Karen Petrie, one of ULRs at the Tesco Distribution Depot in Livingston, felt that the course helped her professionally. She originally started the course to improve her holiday Spanish, but the skills she developed have also helped her communicate with drivers whose first language is Spanish. Karen said, "While I couldn't have a full conversation with Spanish drivers, the key phrases I do know help me to welcome them to the Depot, and to direct them to the correct docking bay. It helps to make them feel more welcome and helps break down some initial language barriers."



Unite ULRs receive their certificates from Adam Smith College in Fife.

## **Professional Development Awards for Union Learning Reps**

More than 20 ULRs from three different unions recently completed the SQA Professional Development Award in Developing Literacies Learning Programmes for the Workplace. The course, delivered by Adam Smith College and funded by Education Scotland, provided ULRs with the skills required to develop, plan and deliver literacies learning in workplace contexts. The course was supported by Development Fund projects within Unite, PCS and UCATT. The ULRs received certificates at a Graduation Ceremony in October. David Cairns, ULR/Branch Secretary for Unite at First Bus Parkhead Depot, said, "We have achieved a highly sought after qualification, which could not have happened without the support of our unions. It has given me a great personal boost knowing that I have gained this qualification. I hope it will inspire others into the learning agenda to improve their Everyday Skills."



**“A cuir taic ri ionnsachadh sa Ghàidhealtachd sna h-Eileanan”  
(Supporting learning in the Highlands and Islands)**

# Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands



**Scottish Union Learning expects to provide 300 workers in the Highlands and Islands with fully-funded learning opportunities in 2012.**

A range of cross-union courses in the Highlands and Islands will roll out early in 2012. For learners in Inverness:

- ✘ **PC Passport – Internet and Online Communications** (12 weeks)  
10<sup>th</sup> January to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012
- ✘ **PC Passport – IT Software – Word Processing and Presenting Information** (12 weeks)  
11<sup>th</sup> January to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012
- ✘ **CMI Introduction to Management** (12 weeks)  
10<sup>th</sup> January to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012

For learners in the Western Isles:

- ✘ **British Sign Language 101**  
(three 7-hour days)  
28<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012

For more information, contact your union.

## Getting Onboard for Learning

The RMT “Onboard for Learning” project aims to provide learning opportunities for the 1,200 workers employed on multiple ferry routes operated by Caledonian MacBrayne across the west coast of Scotland. Maths and English qualifications are required for CalMac workers who want to progress their careers within the company’s officer structure. In response to this demand, the project is piloting delivery of maths at SCQF Level 4 to learners located in Campbelltown, Oban, Tiree, Mallaig, Lewis and Skye. ECDL Essentials, which also provides a first step to a recognised qualification, is being delivered on three other routes to improve IT literacy levels, particularly amongst older workers who may be digitally excluded. Dan Henderson, Project Worker, said, “By developing a strong ULR network and flexible models for the delivery of courses, we aim to establish a solid foundation for the future, supporting more learners and providing even more choice.”



Representatives from 19 unions attended the Scottish Union Learning Conference in Glasgow.

## Conference Success for **Union Learning: A Better Way**

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Scottish Union Learning Conference was held in Glasgow on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011, sponsored by SQA. The theme of the Conference this year was "Union Learning: A Better Way". The Conference was attended by around 180 delegates from 19 different unions.**

The event was preceded by the Scottish Launch of the TUC's Tackling Racism publication. The 2011 version is the fifth edition of Tackling Racism and is designed to enable union reps to challenge racism and promote greater levels of equality in the workplace. The workbook contains a great deal of factual information regarding racism and unfairness at work along with up-to-date information on UK

Equality Law. It also contains tools and checklists to enable union reps to assist their employers in developing fairer, more equal workplace policies and at the same time, equip reps with the tools to better represent their members on equality issues. Finally, the workbook highlights the problem of global inequality and international labour issues and sets out some practical tips about how reps can get involved.



Anne Douglas, Chair of the Scottish Union Learning Board, chaired the Conference. Delegates were addressed by Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for Learning and Skills, and Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary. During the speech, Alasdair Allan MSP said, "We know that many unions have a high percentage of low paid workers and workplace learning is an effective means of assisting these people into better, higher paid jobs. With over 2,000 Union Learning Representatives, you are well placed to support and deliver training to those workers and to the many others who are considered furthest from learning...Your role in helping to foster the skills and talent of the Scottish people cannot be understated."

Delegates explored topics that affect thousands of workers in the workplace in themed sessions designed specifically for ULRs. These included skills utilisation and good jobs, economic justice and the learning experience and learning paths and progression. The day also included a speech from Stephen Mullen, author of "It Wisnae Us!", a social history of Glasgow and slavery told through the urban environment. Rachel Fraser, Policy and Public Affairs Manager for BBC Learning, also gave a presentation on Digital Champions. BBC Learning is at the heart of the BBC's overall aim to inform, educate and entertain. BBC Learning provides a variety of broadcast, online and radio resources for adults, children, parents and teachers.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Learner of the Year Award from Scottish Union Learning was presented by Grahame Smith to Susan Manson, a union learner from USDAW. The Scottish Union Learning Modern Apprenticeship Toolkit was also launched. Overall, it was a successful Conference and feedback from ULRs was very positive.



Harry Cunningham, Anne Douglas and Sonny Singh launch the Tackling Racism publication.



Minister Alasdair Allan MSP greets the Conference sponsor, the Scottish Qualifications Authority.



ULRs participate in a workshop on social justice during the Conference.



The 2011 STUC Helen Dowie Award recipients from the CWU deliver a workshop with SQA.



Susan Manson (centre) collects the Learner of the Year Award from Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary.

## First Learner of the Year Named in Scotland

**Susan Manson, a cleaner at the Morrisons store in Airdrie, has been named as the 1<sup>st</sup> Learner of the Year by Scottish Union Learning. The Learner of the Year Award was introduced by Scottish Union Learning in 2011 to recognise the range of learning journeys currently undertaken by lay learners in the workplace, supported by trade unions. Susan was nominated by her union, USDAW, because her story is a powerful example of how union learning is supporting those who never thought learning was for them.**

At a recent union-supported “Check Out Learning” campaign day, Susan signed up for a Basic IT course. Susan said, “I always wanted to know more about computers,

but I didn’t have the confidence to go to a college by myself. My USDAW Union Learning Reps organised this course in store, which was supported by the Learning Fund through Scottish Union Learning.”

Susan started the course but soon felt out of her depth. She also felt like she was struggling to keep up with the other learners, a feeling she remembered all too well from school. A ULR in the store spoke with Susan and helped her to gain the confidence to speak with the tutor regarding her dyslexia, something she had kept secret for many years.

Ann Seagriff, USDAW Union Learning Rep, said, “We were happy to support Susan to overcome her struggles to be



successful in this course. It involved a lot of encouragement, and sometimes a wee bit of a push, and we're so proud that she's got there in the end."

The course tutor helped Susan to access software which helped her overcome the problems dyslexia caused on the course. Susan later bought her own laptop, and the software which helped her so much during the course is now an integral part of her life.

Susan said, "For years, I had to rely on my husband or my son to read something for me. Now I just scan my mail into the computer and can deal with it myself. It's so much nicer not to have to rely on anyone else – what I've learned with the support of my union has completely changed my life." She continued, "It was quite a shock to hear that I was going to be named as the Learner of the Year. I'm so pleased and just hope that other learners out there are encouraged to take a chance like I did – it's worth it!"

Betty Spence, another USDAW Union Learning Rep at Morrisons, said, "Seeing the difference in Susan, and how much



Learner Susan Manson with her in-store USDAW ULRs, Ann Seagriff and Betty Spence.



Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary, presented the inaugural award to Susan Manson.

more confident she is now, is what makes being a Union Learning Rep worth the effort. We are so pleased Susan has been named Learner of the Year."

Anne Douglas, Chair, Scottish Union Learning Board, said, "I am delighted to present Susan with the first Learner of the Year Award on behalf of the Scottish Union Learning Board. Congratulations are due to Susan, as well as to the many thousands of workers who undertake learning journeys throughout Scotland each year with the support of trade unions."

Jill Little Woodhouse, USDAW Lifelong Learning Project Worker, said, "I am delighted that Susan has been recognised by Scottish Union Learning as its very first Learner of the Year. Susan's learning journey is a powerful example of the massive benefits that Union Learning can bring into Scottish workplaces, and the massive personal changes that engaging with learning can bring about. With Susan representing the learners who have been supported across all the different Union Learning projects, USDAW is very proud of her and we hope to be able to support and celebrate the experiences of many more learners like her in the years to come."

# Help with Redundancy

Contributed by Skills Development Scotland

Being made redundant can be an intimidating time but it can also be an opportunity to re-train, gain new skills and explore work opportunities in different industries. The Scottish Government initiative PACE (Partnership Action for Continuing Employment) is available to help those facing redundancy by providing impartial advice and guidance.

PACE is led by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), and supported by a wide range of public sector partners including The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), Jobcentre Plus, Scotland's Colleges and HM Revenue and Customs. All support, provided by public sector organisations, is free and available to employees for as long as they feel it is needed.

Among those supported by PACE was John Lesslie, who faced the prospect of redundancy after 36 years' service. John did not allow himself to be daunted by the prospect of finding a new job. He considered his redundancy as an opportunity for a career change and a fresh start, and arranged to meet with his local SDS PACE adviser in Dundee.

His adviser carried out a thorough interview to gauge the most suitable options and path for his client to progress. He provided career and skills advice and encouraged John to apply to the Healthcare Academy training programme.

"I hadn't had an interview since 1974 so I



was really nervous," John explained. "My PACE adviser was a great help in talking me through interview techniques and was available to chat at the other end of the phone whenever I needed him."

Last year, 272 companies benefited from PACE and many employees went on to further employment, training or education. Businesses restructuring or facing insolvency can arrange for PACE advisers to visit their premises and deliver sessions about finding work, setting up your own business, changing career and taking up learning. At the sessions individuals are supplied with information packs on all the agencies which can support them as well as contact details to arrange further consultations.



Anyone facing or affected by redundancy should call the PACE redundancy support helpline free on 0808 100 1855 or

visit [www.redundancyscotland.com](http://www.redundancyscotland.com).



# News in Brief from Scottish Union Learning

## Green News

**The Scottish Union Learning News is going green! Previously distributed on a quarterly basis, the newsletter will now be printed and posted twice per year. To ensure you can keep up with the latest news, Scottish Union Learning is launching an online version of the newsletter.** Union Learning Reps and others interested in the union-led learning agenda can keep up-to-date by visiting [ulr.scottishunionlearning.com](http://ulr.scottishunionlearning.com) on a regular basis. You can even add comments and interact with others by using this new online news portal.

## 2012 Calendar

**Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands has produced a 2012 Calendar.** The Calendar features some of the learners who have benefited from courses funded by the Learning Fund in the Highlands and Islands and the ULRs who helped organise learning in their workplaces across the region. Photos of learners were supplied by workers who volunteered their services, having completed digital photography courses also funded through the Learning Fund.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy, peaceful and prosperous 2012.



[www.facebook.com/  
scottishunionlearning](http://www.facebook.com/scottishunionlearning)

## Transnational Partnership



**Scottish Union Learning hosted a delegation in November 2011 from the Swedish trade union, IF Metall.** IF Metall is currently delivering a European funded project which aims to improve the educational attainment of their members. Their project is delivered in partnership with 27 companies in Sweden and workers are given time off to attend training courses. They were in Scotland to exchange views, methods and best practices on workplace learning and the itinerary included a visit to the Rolls Royce factory in Inchinnan, hosted by Unite, to meet with ULRs on site and learn about their workplace learning model. The delegation also attended the 2011 Scottish Union Learning Conference.

## Local Learning Forums

**Dates of future Local Learning Forums can be found on the back cover of this publication.** Agendas for all forums will be advised nearer the time of the meetings. Please note: you must seek approval from your own union to attend Local Learning Forums.



[www.twitter.com/unionlearning](http://www.twitter.com/unionlearning)

# URTU Delivery

**Delivery Driver Iain Martin is used to delivering bread, but in his new role as the URTU Scottish Learning Co-ordinator, he will now be delivering education for URTU members throughout Scotland.**

Iain admitted, "When I was young, I did not appreciate school and so I left it at 15 to work in a bakery." Years later, he reevaluated his life and the value of education. The catalyst was his involvement in URTU. Inspired by the thought of making a difference to his workmates, he became a Branch Secretary, Shop Steward and ULR.

In his role as Learning Co-ordinator, Iain will promote, persuade, and cajole URTU members to rejoin the learning road. This is no return to school, as union-led education is based on delivering learning at a time and place convenient to the worker.

Iain said, "By listening to our members, we have identified strong interest and are in the process of organising a series of learning courses that range from IT to locksmithing and basic building skills to dyslexia awareness, in conjunction with other unions on site."

Learning does not end at the school gates. Union learning aims to give workers a second chance and the URTU project aims to support members in accessing learning in the workplace. Learning opportunities strengthen the value of the union card and demonstrate the benefits of membership.



Photo by Mark Jackson

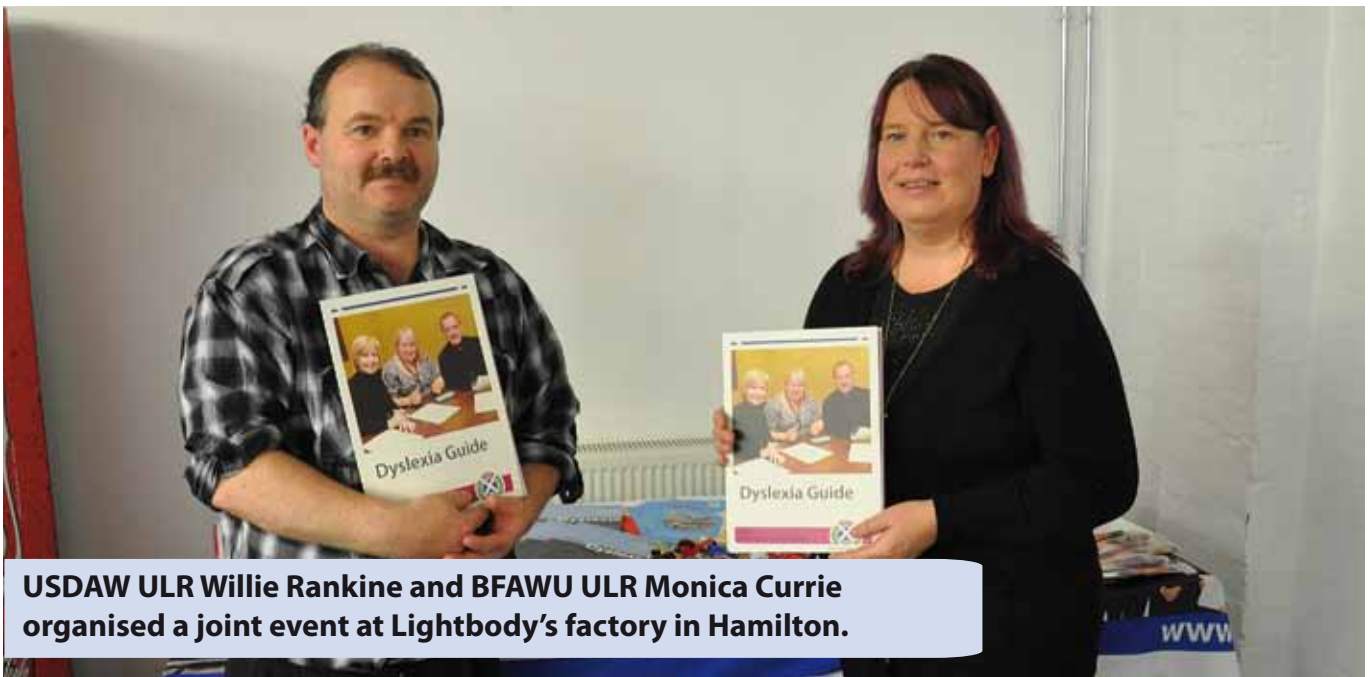
## EIS Online

**Before the summer break, a successful pilot of an online ULR introductory course attracted participation from a large number of EIS members.**

The course was designed specifically for EIS members who wished to find out more about becoming an EIS Learning Representative. It was developed in partnership with TUC Education in Scotland.

The course was delivered by Gus Grubb and Mark Pollitt, TUC tutors at Stow College, and lasted for six weeks. Issues covered included union involvement, barriers to learning and equality. This course was of great benefit in helping participants prepare for the EIS Learning Representative course, which is provided through the University of the West of Scotland.

The feedback from the participants was extremely positive, both in terms of content and support received from tutors. The next intake for this course will be in early February 2012 and any EIS member who wishes to participate should register as soon as possible. To register, contact Lyn McClintock, EIS Learning Rep Co-ordinator, at [lmclintock@eis.org.uk](mailto:lmclintock@eis.org.uk).



**USDAW ULR Willie Rankine and BFAWU ULR Monica Currie organised a joint event at Lightbody's factory in Hamilton.**

## Unions Engage in **Dyslexia Awareness Week**

**Scottish Union Learning worked with unions and local dyslexia organisations to deliver a series of events throughout Dyslexia Awareness Week.**

Unite organised a dyslexia awareness session for First Bus in Aberdeen. The session was delivered by Adam Smith College in the new Union Learning Centre at the First Bus HQ and was attended by Unite ULRs, First Bus Trainers and a Company Director. The session dispelled some of the myths surrounding dyslexia, and participants discussed the implications of the Equality Act for workplace practices.

RMT Learning organised two awareness sessions for staff at Caledonian MacBrayne in Gourock. Both sessions were delivered by the Project Worker and ULR, and included information about dyslexia and the issues that can arise in the workplace. Participants included employees from all of the Head Office departments.

UCATT, in conjunction with Dyslexia Scotland, hosted a Dyslexia Awareness Day at the new Southwest Hospital site in Glasgow. This event was organised by the workplace ULR, and a volunteer from Dyslexia Scotland was available to discuss issues surrounding dyslexia with workers throughout the day.

The FBU organised a Dyslexia Workshop at Strathclyde Fire & Rescue HQ in Hamilton in partnership with Dyslexia Scotland and Dynamic Dyslexia. The workshop was attended by 26 uniform and support staff from Strathclyde, Central Scotland and the Highlands and Islands.

A joint Dyslexia Awareness Day was also organised at Lightbody's factory in Hamilton by ULRs from Usdaw and the BFAWU. Over 50 members of staff took part in a quiz about dyslexia, and were given information packs and copies of the Scottish Union Learning Dyslexia Guide.

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## Everyday Skills Event: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Event will take place on Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012 at the STUC in Glasgow.**

During this event, delegates can attend workshops, interact with speakers and build contacts with other ULRs. To arrange attendance and release for this event, please contact your own trade union.



For further information, visit [www.scottishunionlearning.com/events](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com/events). Up-to-date information on conferences and events is also available by following us on [www.twitter.com/unionlearning](http://www.twitter.com/unionlearning) or [www.facebook.com/scottishunionlearning](http://www.facebook.com/scottishunionlearning).



# Reading Up on Learning

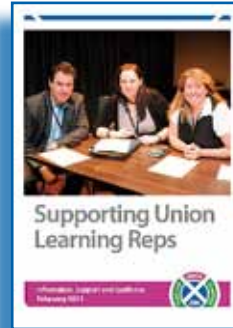
Many new publications are available online, which may help Union Learning Reps in the workplace.



## Modern Apprenticeship Toolkit

Scottish Union Learning has published the Modern Apprenticeship Toolkit, which is filled with valuable information and case studies. It

will soon be available for download at [www.scottishunionlearning.com/apprenticeships](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com/apprenticeships).



## Supporting Union Learning Reps

Scottish Union Learning has published "Supporting Union Learning Reps". This publication describes the role of the ULR and the

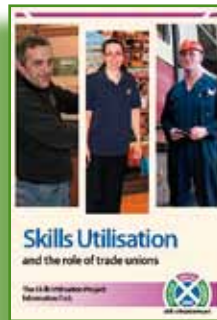
support available from Scottish Union Learning. It is available to download from [www.scottishunionlearning.com](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com)



## Your Rights as a Modern Apprentice

Scottish Union Learning has published "Your Rights as a Modern Apprentice" which describes many aspects of apprenticeships. It is available to download from

[www.scottishunionlearning.com/apprenticeships](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com/apprenticeships).



## Skills Utilisation and the Role of Trade Unions

Scottish Union Learning has published its Skills Utilisation report in conjunction with the University of Strathclyde,

which is available to download from [www.scottishunionlearning.com](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com).

## Scottish Union Learning Online Forum

Have you heard? The Scottish Union Learning Online Forum has recently been updated. It is a great resource for Union Learning Reps throughout Scotland. You can swap stories, ask questions and give advice through this online learning network. To sign up, visit [www.forum.scottishunionlearning.com](http://www.forum.scottishunionlearning.com).



## Dyslexia Guide

The STUC Dyslexia Group developed a new guidance pack for ULRs that contains general information about dyslexia: how to recognise the signs, issues around assessment, the law, how dyslexia affects people in the workplace and how ULRs can support and signpost those who may have dyslexia. The guide is available to download from

[www.scottishunionlearning.com](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com).

# What's up in 2012?

## Learning Matters

### January

- 2-3 STUC Offices Closed  
26 Songs for Social Justice Event,  
Glasgow Barrowlands  
27 Closing Date for STUC Union  
Rep Award Nominations

### February

- 20-23 Trade Union Week  
23 Scottish Union Learning  
Everyday Skills Event

### March

- 7 Local Learning Forum,  
Dumfries  
12 Multi-Link Local Learning  
Forum, Highlands and Islands  
14 Local Learning Forum, Fife  
15 Local Learning Forum, Tayside

### April

- 23-25 STUC Annual Congress

### May

- 17 Learning at Work Day

### June

- 6 Local Learning Forum,  
Dumfries  
13 Local Learning Forum, Fife  
14 Local Learning Forum, Tayside  
15 Scottish Union Learning  
Highlands and Islands ULR  
Conference  
16 STUC Highlands and Islands  
Conference

\* Please contact your own trade union to make arrangements to attend these events. Organisation of attendance and release is by your own trade union and is not the responsibility of Scottish Union Learning.



## Scottish Union Learning

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