

Organising a Learning Event

When Union Learning Representatives get the opportunity to talk to their fellow union members about learning, workers are interested in finding out about the learning opportunities that may be available to them. However, with the many demands and pressures on workers during the working day, it can be difficult for ULRs to find the opportunity to speak to workers about learning. Organising a learning event in the workplace can be an effective way of letting workers know about available learning opportunities. If you haven't yet organised an event in your workplace, and are thinking about it, you may find the following useful.

Before organising any event, please contact your own union as they will be able to offer you support.

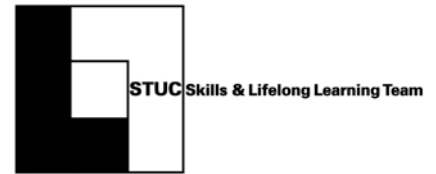
To start, ask yourself: "Why do I want to hold an event?"

It might be you want to...

- Let workers (and management) know about the learning services provided by your union and what you can do to help your members in your role as ULR.
- Find out what learning opportunities in which your members might be interested.
- Raise awareness about Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs).
- Let workers know about the courses available at the local learning centre, college, etc.
- Sign up workers for a particular course/s you have organised.
- Provide workers with taster courses to give them a 'taste' of the learning opportunities available.

You may want to hold a learning event because of all of these reasons or maybe because of something else. Whatever your reason, be clear why you want to organise the event and what you and your members will gain from it.

Notes: _____



Having decided the reason why you want to hold an event, you now need to decide: **“What type of event do I want to hold?”**

The type of event will be dependent on a number of factors such as the size of your workplace, the space available, the reason/s for the event, the availability of organisations you want to invite, etc. Whatever type of event you choose to organise, remember: learning can be fun!

An example of a successful learning event was organised jointly by Unison, Amicus, TGWU and RCN in a hospital in Inverness on Learning at Work Day in May 2007. The event provided workers with information about ILAs and learning services offered by the individual unions, plus the opportunity to participate in workshops which ran at different times during the day. The workshop themes included “learning to laugh,” “understanding body language,” “assertiveness” and “Windmills” (life coaching training). Workers who visited the event were also offered a neck and back massage as well as free promotional items, such as pens, pencils and much more!

Other types of events might include:

- Organising taster/learning bytes sessions.

A taster session can consist of what you feel would be interesting or perhaps even relevant to your workers. Contact learning providers to ask what taster/learning bytes sessions they can offer. Taster/learning bytes sessions can be held in a variety of ways, such as a one-day event, or held every lunchtime for a week, or even on a particular day each month for a number of months to cover different themes such as computing, digital photography, healthy living, creative writing, cooking, etc.

- A learning speed networking session.

Invite a number of learning providers to come along and talk about the courses they provide. You will need a number of tables and chairs. Workers will sit at the tables and the learning providers will talk about the courses they provide for a short set period of time until they (or the workers – whatever you choose!) are told to move to the next table. This process repeats itself until all participants have gone round all the tables. You can provide workers with forms to complete indicating which providers they would like more information from and at the end of the session they will have the opportunity to speak to the providers for more information about particular courses. The STUC Highlands & Islands Skills & Lifelong Learning Team has developed an easy-to-use PowerPoint presentation for a speed networking session; please contact the Team for further information.

- Learning Road Show.

Invite a number of local learning providers and organisations, like ILA Scotland, to take part in a learning road show in your workplace. A Learning Road Show provides workers with the opportunity to find out about the different learning opportunities available locally.



Ask yourself, **“Who will be involved in the event?”**

There are a number of people you will need to contact to ensure the smooth running of your event including:

- Employer.

You will require your employer’s permission to hold the event in the workplace and to invite external organisations into the workplace. If your event is held during working hours, you may also want to negotiate with your employer some time off for workers to participate in the event (it could be as little as an extra 15 minutes during their tea break or lunch break) or to allow workers to finish their shift early to come along to the event.

External organisations such as:

- ILA Scotland.
- Local learning providers. Local colleges and learning centres are always happy to come along and provide information about the courses they provide.
- Individuals/organisations to run workshop/taster/learning bytes. Some examples that spring to mind could be someone to do neck and back massages (this is a great way of attracting workers to an event); someone to demonstrate some aspect of using a computer such as designing posters, making address labels, designing personal business cards/birthday cards, etc; basic signing in BSL (British Sign Language); or teaching the basics in using a digital camera. Contact the STUC Skills & Lifelong Learning Team for information about local individuals/organisations who could bring something different to your event!
- Other unions. If there is more than one union organising in your workplace, you might wish to consider approaching the other union/s to get involved in the event.

Notes: _____

