

Cyber resilience case studies

Impact report 2025

Introduction

For over seven years, Scottish Union Learning and Digital Skills Education have worked together to deliver cyber security and resilience training to workplaces across Scotland. These opportunities have been made possible through funding from the Scottish Government's Cyber Resilience Unit, in partnership with the UK government.

We wanted to know: **what kind of difference has this training made? Have workers shared what they've learned with colleagues? Have the courses changed their habits in the long run? And has it helped to make their workplaces more secure?**

Thousands of people have taken part in these courses over the years, so we had a fantastic group to learn from. To dig a bit deeper, we reached out to **500 learners** who had completed a course in the last 18 months and asked them to fill out a survey about their experience.

We were thrilled to receive **110 responses** from learners representing workplaces from the **public, private, and third sectors**, and from all corners of Scotland.

In this report, we're excited to share what they told us. You'll hear directly from learners about how this training has made them more confident and prepared to tackle cyber threats, and why offering high-quality training like this matters more than ever.

Craig Steele,
Digital Skills Education



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Statistical Overview



What we wanted to find out



Who has taken part in cyber security skills courses offered by Scottish Union Learning?



Have they shared the knowledge and skills with colleagues?



How has the training changed their own practices and those within their workplace?

Fantastic feedback



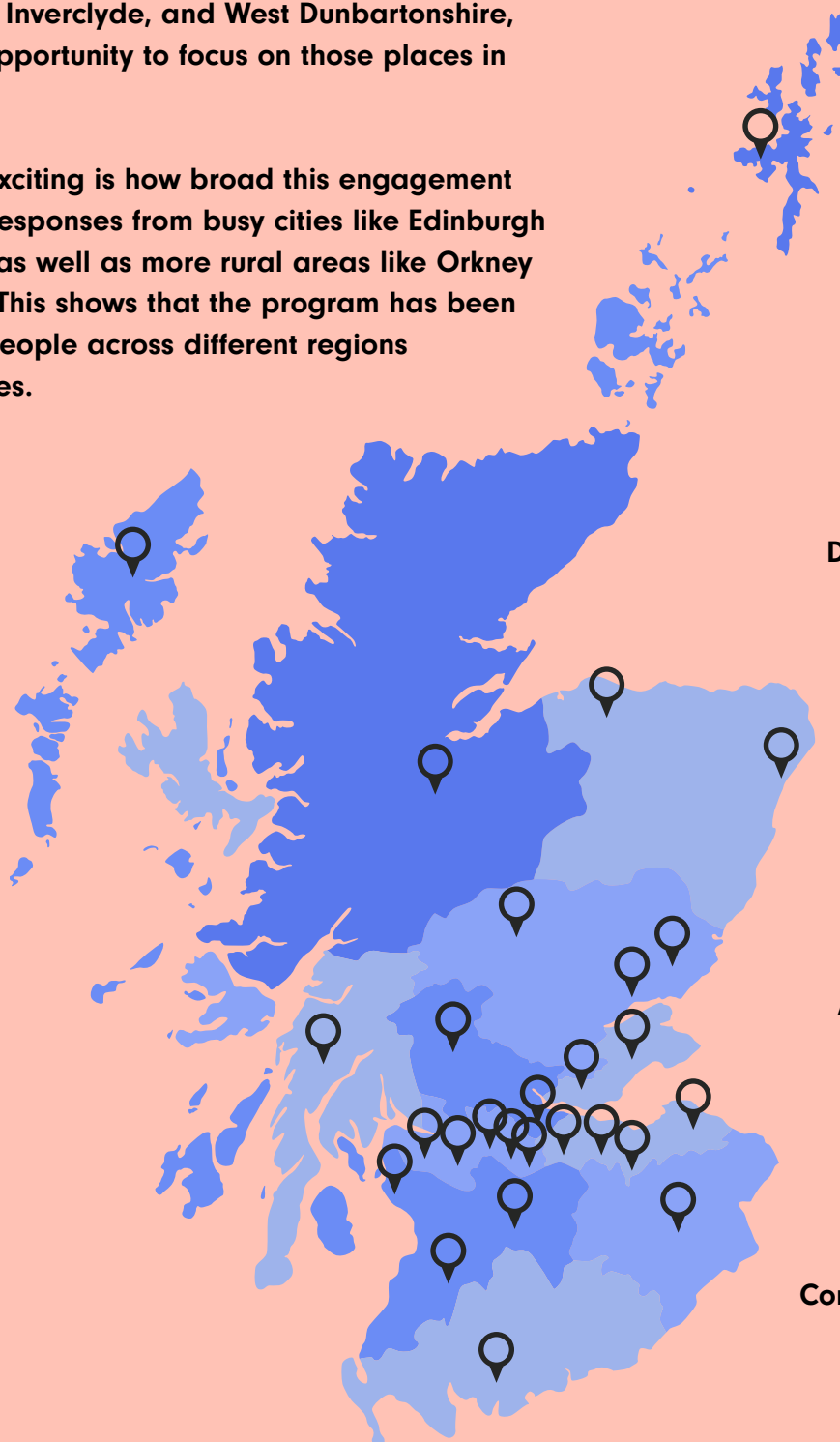
Overall, participants rated the course **4.85/5** when asked '**How happy are you with the cyber security training we've offered you?**'

Geographic reach

We conducted a survey of 110 learners from Scotland.

We've connected with participants from 29 out of Scotland's 32 local authorities — that's nearly the whole country! The three areas we've not reached yet are Aberdeen City, Inverclyde, and West Dunbartonshire, so there's an opportunity to focus on those places in the future.

What's really exciting is how broad this engagement is. We've had responses from busy cities like Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as more rural areas like Orkney and Shetland. This shows that the program has been accessible to people across different regions and communities.



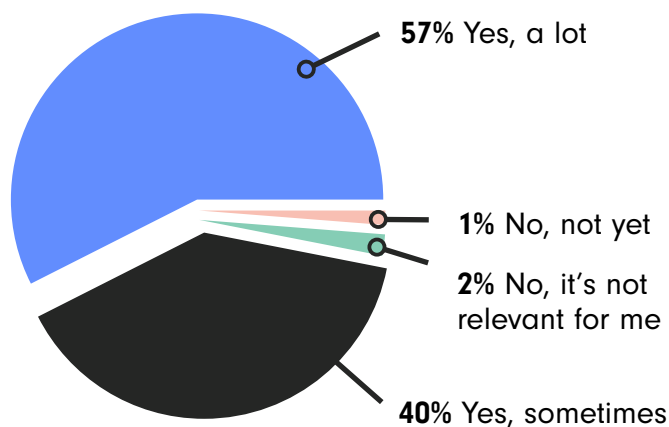
West Lothian,
Midlothian,
Scottish Borders,
Edinburgh
Glasgow,
Angus,
East Renfrewshire,
North Ayrshire
Renfrewshire,
Dumfries and Galloway,
East Dunbartonshire,
Fife,
North Lanarkshire,
Highland,
East Lothian,
Falkirk,
Stirling,
South Lanarkshire,
South Ayrshire,
Clackmannanshire
Aberdeenshire Council,
Shetland,
Dundee,
Argyll and Bute
Perth and Kinross,
East Ayrshire,
Moray,
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar



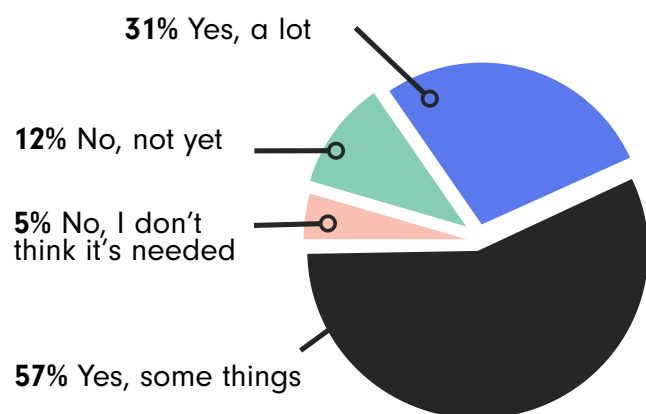
Have you used what you learned in your job?






The overwhelming majority of participants said they've used what they learned in their job.

This is the key goal of workplace learning – it's all about gaining skills that you can actually put into practice. This feedback shows that the training is not just theoretical, it's having a real, practical impact in people's day-to-day work.



Have you shared what you learned with co-workers?



Top Responses		
	Talking with coworkers	77
	In team meetings	36
	By writing guides or instructions	11
	In training sessions	9
	Sharing with friends	1

Most popular practices

"I am more aware of scam emails and phishing"

"I use strong passwords for my accounts"

"I report suspicious messages"

"I keep my software updated"

"I use a PIN, Fingerprint or FaceID to keep my phone locked"

What we learned



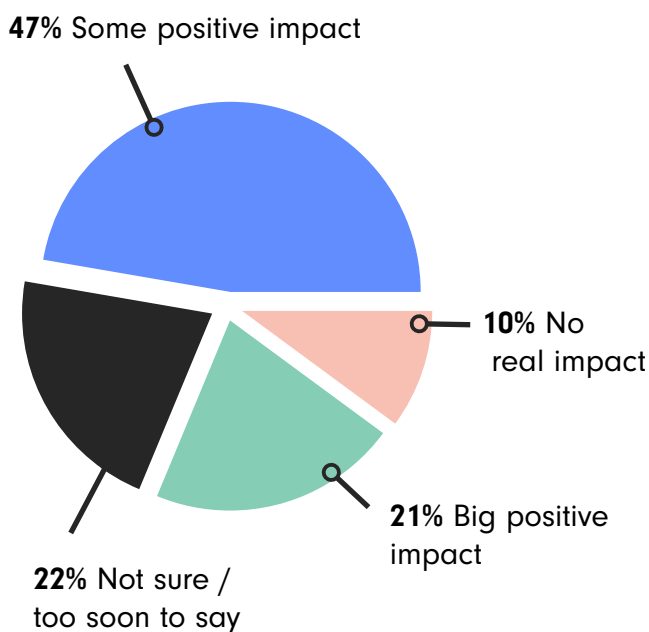
Trade union members are more likely to share what they've learned compared to non-union members



Trade union members are more likely to apply what they've learned in their job compared to non-union members

Some feedback shows that trade unions are taking the lead in making sure good cyber security practices are being used in workplaces. They're not just encouraging people to take training — they're helping to put what's learned into action.

How has the training affected your workplace's cyber security practices?



People are using what they've learned to improve cyber security at work, avoid phishing attacks, report incidents, and feel more confident about dealing with threats. These are real benefits — not just for the workers who took part, but for their employers too.

By working with trade unions we are improving cyber security across whole workplaces and industries.

Case Studies



Sarah Martin

Families First, Third Sector Charity



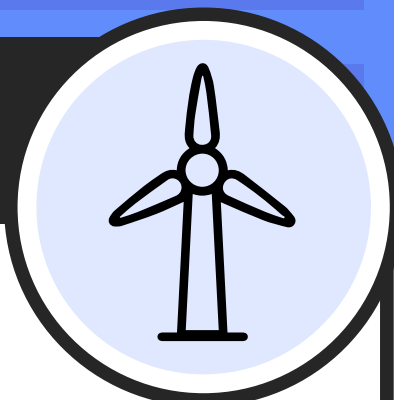
Sarah Martin is an office manager for Families First, a third-sector charity based in Fife.

As a result of the free training Families First now recommends that all staff attend regular cyber security refreshers, and there has been a **noticeable improvement in security practices** across the board. Sarah attributes much of this positive change to the accessibility and relevance of the training she received.

“ All staff regularly attend cyber security refresher courses. We have implemented a cyber incident response plan. We have gone through the process of being accredited with Cyber Essentials. We have a staff member who takes the lead in cyber security.

Jane Evans

Bureau Veritas UK, Environmental Consultancy



Jane works in environmental consultancy at Bureau Veritas UK and lives in Renfrewshire and is a member of the Unite trade union.

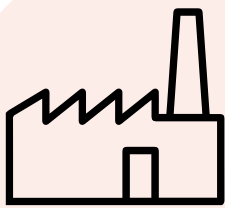
She shared that prior to the training, the company provided some basic GDPR training, but the cyber security measures have now been strengthened.

While it may be too early to fully gauge the long-term impact of the training, Jane has already observed changes in the way she and her colleagues approach cyber security, particularly through **more cautious email handling** and **phishing detection**.

“ I think whatever your job, you need cyber security training to keep yourself and your workplace safe. It's essential to know the signs of threats like phishing and to make sure your passwords are strong.

Access to free cyber security training has been invaluable. It's not just helped me personally but also led to significant improvements in how we handle security at work. We've even brought in more training for our whole team as a result.

-Steven McGurk



Steven McGurk

RSBi, Manufacturing (Supported Business)

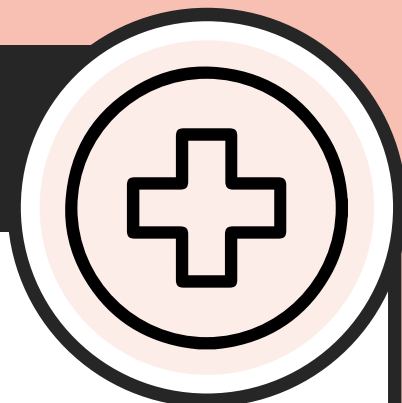
Steven works for RSBi, a supported business within the manufacturing industry in Glasgow. As a member of the Community trade union, Steven took part in the cyber security training to improve both his personal skills and the overall security practices at his workplace.

Steven took an active role in disseminating what he learned through both informal conversations and formal training sessions within his company. His leadership has improved the overall **cyber security awareness** of the staff.

The **cyber security training has had a big positive impact** on the practices at RSBi. In fact, after Steven's involvement in the training, the organisation requested further courses from Digital Skills Education to provide more cyber security training for the wider team.

Richard Hughson

NHS Lothian, Healthcare



Richard works in healthcare at NHS Lothian. As a member of the Unison trade union, Richard attended the cyber security training to enhance his awareness of online threats, particularly in the healthcare sector, where protecting sensitive information is crucial.

While the overall impact is still developing, Richard noted that there has been some positive impact on NHS Lothian's cyber security practices. The information he shared with his colleagues, particularly around reporting scam calls and phishing emails, has been well received by his colleagues and contributed to **safer online practices** within his team.

“ **The courses were excellent. Very important information delivered in a way that was easy to understand. It's helped me and my colleagues be more aware of scams and phishing threats, and we've improved our reporting process.**



Sylwia Smertycha

PFA Scotland, Trade Union

Sylwia Smertycha works at PFA Scotland, a trade union based in Glasgow. She has a strong understanding of the importance of cyber security in her role, where she manages sensitive information.

The training has had a big positive impact on PFA Scotland's approach to cyber security. One of Sylwia's key practices since completing the training has been **reporting every phishing or scam email she receives**. She has also taken on a leadership role within her organisation, writing monthly GDPR emails to her team, incorporating cyber security practices learned from the course.

“ As a union worker, I work with a lot of sensitive data, so cyber security training is a must. The free courses helped me identify risks I wasn't fully aware of and gave me the tools to protect myself and the people I work for.

Nicole Francis

East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure, Libraries



Nicole works in public services, specifically within libraries at East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure. As a member of the Unison trade union, Nicole took part in cyber security training to strengthen her understanding of online threats faced by the public sector.

Since the training, she has made changes to her own cyber security practices, such as **regularly updating passwords**. She has also been sharing the training with her coworkers through discussions, training sessions, and emails. By educating others it has led to a broader understanding of cyber security issues within her team.

“ The importance of having access to free cyber security training cannot be overstated. It empowers public sector workers like myself to safeguard the sensitive information we deal with daily, ensuring the security of our work and our users.



Lesley Sharkey

C-Change Scotland, Social Care

Lesley Sharkey works in the social care sector at C-Change Scotland, a not-for-profit organisation based in Renfrewshire.

Lesley has put the knowledge from the training into practice by making her team more **aware of the risks of phishing emails and scams**. She has facilitated discussions in team meetings and developed written materials to ensure that everyone in her team is better equipped to handle potential cyber threats.

I work in the third sector for a not-for-profit organisation, and having access to free cyber security training is incredibly important. It gives us the tools to protect our service users' sensitive data and ensures we can continue to operate safely in an increasingly digital world.

-Lesley Sharkey

Barry Low

Department for Work and Pensions, Government



Barry works for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in Dundee. As someone responsible for handling sensitive government data, Barry saw the value of free cyber security training. In his role as a digital champion within his office, Barry has implemented many of the practices he learned.

The training has had a big positive impact on the cyber security practices within DWP. Barry noted that the training provided his colleagues with the tools and awareness they needed to better **protect sensitive government data** and avoid common cyber threats.

“ The basic course was great and easy to understand. It has helped me and my team at the DWP be more aware of the risks we face every day and to be better prepared to protect our data.



Susan Dow

YouthLink Scotland, Voluntary Sector

Susan works in the voluntary sector at YouthLink Scotland, based in West Lothian. As a member of Unison, Susan participated in the cyber security training to ensure her team could handle sensitive data securely and protect against online threats, which is particularly important in the voluntary sector.

After taking part in the training, Susan was able to identify a phishing email that could have posed a serious threat to her organisation. She feels the training has had a big positive impact because all staff members participated in the course, meaning the entire team is better prepared to deal with cyber security risks.

“ **As a voluntary sector organisation, access to free cyber security training is essential for ensuring that we can protect the sensitive information we handle and continue serving our community safely.** ”

Karen Petrie

Tesco, Distribution



Karen works in distribution at Tesco, based in West Lothian. As a member of Usdaw, she took part in cyber security training to protect both at work and on her personal devices.

Karen has been sharing her knowledge with coworkers, frequently talking about cyber security risks. She feels this helps **strengthen the security culture** within her team. Tesco regularly tests employees with fake phishing emails, which helps reinforce what she learned in the training.

“ Having access to free cyber security has improved my knowledge and helped me stay more secure, both at work and at home. It’s a critical skill that everyone needs nowadays.