



Scottish Union Learning **2008-2009 Annual Report**



Leading the way in Challenging Times

stuc







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Introduction

Anne Douglas

Chair

Scottish Union Learning Board



Scottish Union Learning was established to help support unions in offering learning opportunities to their members.

Since it launched over a year and a half ago, trade unions have made significant progress in developing and sustaining learning activity within workplaces across the country.

In the current economic climate, a worker's skills and dedication are more important than ever. Upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning opportunities all lead members to enjoy work more, and employers have the opportunity to engage more with their staff.

Through Union Learning Reps, trade unions are letting more and more workers know about learning opportunities. With their expertise and support, Union Learning Reps have the important role of helping members access learning and supporting them in new achievements, sometimes leading to new qualifications.

Scottish Union Learning is working closely with partners to address the challenges facing the Everyday Skills agenda to meet the needs of union learners.

As an added resource, Scottish Union Learning administers the ESF Scottish Fund for Union Learning, which complements the Scottish Union Learning Fund and provides direct funding for courses. To date, we estimate that over 700 learners have benefitted from this new ESF funding.

The Scottish Government dedicated funding of £4.2m until March 2011 for the continuation of the Scottish Union Learning Fund and development of Scottish Union Learning. Through this funding, trade unions are putting sustainable learning infrastructures into place, ultimately making a difference in the lifelong chances of their members.

However, unions have a lot of work to do in the next few years, especially in expanding the negotiation of collective bargaining of skills and learning in the workplace. With dedicated support from Scottish Union Learning, the union-led learning and skills agenda is making a real difference to individuals and is certainly contributing to the future of the Scottish economy.





Aims and Objectives

Scottish Union Learning is the culmination of the STUC's work in skills and lifelong learning over a period of nine years. The STUC and TUC Education in Scotland have come together to form the new structure, which was launched in May 2008.



Scottish Union Learning aims to produce a step-change in union-led learning by providing a high profile, strategic direction for union learning.

The Scottish Government allocated £4.2m from 2008-2011 to Scottish Union Learning. This includes funding for SULF 7 and TUC Education in Scotland. Funding systems for trade union education differs within the UK's devolved structures. The STUC, in partnership with the TUC, has brokered support for the programme from the Scottish Government, which now enables part-funding of TUC Education courses in Scotland. This funding supports the TUC Education programme of union rep training, which develops and supports union reps in the workplace.

Scottish Union Learning is run by unions for unions. Scottish Union Learning administers the Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF) and the ESF Scottish Fund for Union Learning. Key areas of work also include the integration of Everyday Skills within union lifelong learning activity and supporting and stimulating lifelong learning initiatives specific to the Highlands and Islands. Scottish Union Learning also aims to improve the performance of union reps in the workplace and in their role within the union.

The aims and objectives of Scottish Union Learning are to:

- ❖ develop and promote trade union-led learning and skills development in line with STUC Policy on learning and skills;
- ❖ support unions in identifying and meeting the skills and lifelong learning needs of their members;
- ❖ manage and promote the Scottish Union Learning Fund;
- ❖ support and deliver approved outcomes of ESF projects;
- ❖ establish relationships with partners in the provision of skills and lifelong learning;
- ❖ provide assistance to unions in accessing Everyday Skills opportunities for members;
- ❖ ensure support for unions in taking forward lifelong learning across all of Scotland with specific resources dedicated to the Highlands and Islands;
- ❖ assist unions in identifying the needs of Union Learning Representatives and provide appropriate support;
- ❖ work with the TUC in ensuring the provision of a comprehensive trade union education service suitable to the needs of unions in Scotland;
- ❖ improve the skills and knowledge of all union reps by participation on the TUC Education Programme;
- ❖ continue the development of Scottish Union Learning.





Structure

Scottish Union Learning works within the structure of the STUC to engage with all affiliated trade unions to develop a strategy for union-led learning in Scotland and to support unions to provide services to their members that help give workers access to learning and development opportunities.



The role of the STUC is to co-ordinate, develop and articulate the views and policies of the trade union movement in Scotland and through the creation of real social partnership, to promote trade unionism, equality and social justice, the creation and maintenance of high quality jobs and the public sector delivery of services.

The STUC represents over 644,000 trade unionists from 37 affiliated trade unions and 22 Trade Union Councils.

The launch of Scottish Union Learning fulfilled the STUC General Council's pledge to establish a learning services structure to mirror the TUC's unionlearn.

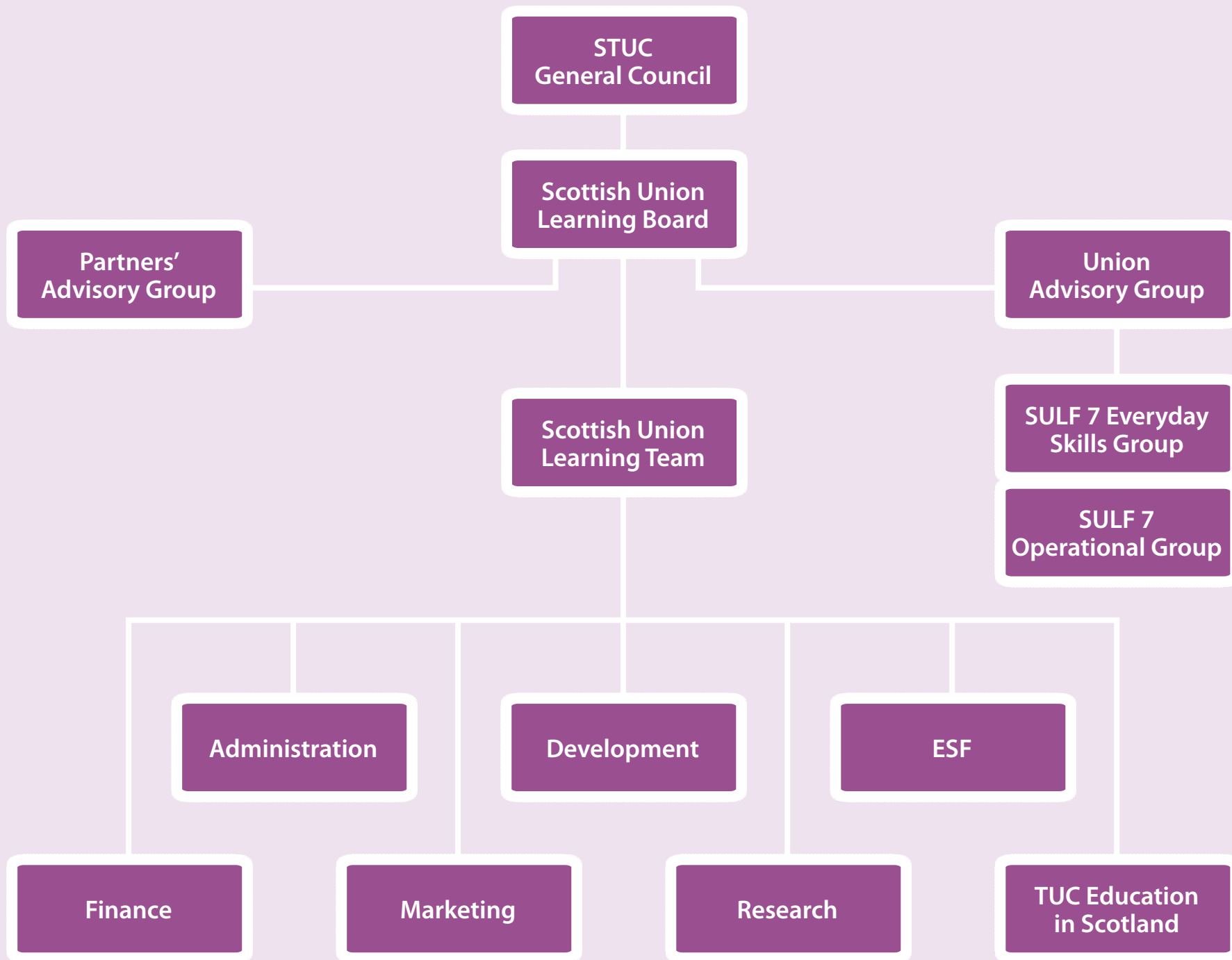
The work of Scottish Union Learning is directed by its Board which is appointed by the STUC General Council from General Council members, representatives of affiliated trade unions, the STUC General Secretary and a TUC nominated member.

The Scottish Union Learning Board oversees the development and implementation of the organisations strategy for advancing union-led learning in Scotland.

The Board is supported by a Partners' Advisory Group which brings together representatives of partner organisations to work with the Board in promoting the value of union learning across Scotland.

The Union Advisory Group provides advice to the Board based on operational experiences of providing learning in the workplace. This assists the Board in developing future strategy for Scottish Union Learning.

There are a number of other groups that meet on a regular basis, including the SULF 7 Operational Group and the SULF 7 Everyday Skills Group, which feed into the Union Advisory Group.





The Board

The Scottish Union Learning Board governs Scottish Union Learning by agreeing and monitoring its business, operational and financial plans.

The Board's remit is to oversee the operation of Scottish Union Learning, with responsibility to:

- ❖ agree its strategic objectives and set and monitor its business and operational plans;
- ❖ set and monitor the Scottish Union Learning annual budget;
- ❖ approve funding applications;
- ❖ oversee the allocation of SULF, ESF and any other funds obtained to support learning by union members;
- ❖ oversee the allocation of funds to support trade union education provided by TUC Education in Scotland.

Chair

Anne Douglas, Prospect

Vice Chair

Kevin Lindsay, ASLEF

Members

Harry Donaldson, GMB

Joy Dunn, PCS

Harry Frew, UCATT

Simon Macaulay, EIS

Drew Smith, Young Workers' Representative

Fiona Smith, UNISON

Agnes Tolmie, Unite

Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary

Liz Rees, TUC Education Manager

Staff

Sylvia O'Grady, Lifelong Learning Manager

Harry Cunningham, TUC Education Officer: Scotland

Ann Garscadden, Admin Officer/Secretary to the Board

Observers

March 2009 - present

Hugh McAloon, Scottish Government

Former Members

May 2008 - April 2009

Jenny Duncan, Young Workers' Representative

Lyndon Peach, Community

Former Observers

May 2008 - February 2009

Rosemary Winter-Scott, Scottish Government





Advisory Groups

Partners' Advisory Group
Union Advisory Group

Both Advisory Groups have a role in advising and informing the Board on issues that influence strategic direction, give practical advice in relation to operational issues and champion union learning.



Partners' Advisory Group

The Partners' Advisory Group meets bi-annually and with a remit to:

- ❖ contribute to discussions about the strategic direction of Scottish Union Learning;
- ❖ advise Scottish Union Learning on ways in which it can develop in order to better achieve its objectives and further its role;
- ❖ champion the value of union learning in the wider world of learning and skills.

Chair

Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary

Membership

Alliance of Sector Skills Councils
Dyslexia Scotland
Dyslexia Scotwest
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
John Wheatley College
Scottish Adult Learning Partnership
Scottish Enterprise
Scottish Government
SCQF
SCVO
Skills Development Scotland
Stow College
SQA
The Open University in Scotland
UHI Millennium Institute
WEA

Union Advisory Group

The Union Advisory Group meets quarterly and its remit is to:

- ❖ provide advice to the Scottish Union Learning Board based on operational experiences of providing learning in the workplace;
- ❖ provide feedback to the Board, as requested, to assist the Board in developing the strategy for Scottish Union Learning;
- ❖ provide the Board with examples of good practice in trade union learning in the workplace to assist in the development of the future strategy for Scottish Union Learning.

Co-Chairs

Sylvia O'Grady, Lifelong Learning Manager
Harry Cunningham, TUC Education Officer
Scotland

Membership

Membership is open by nomination from all STUC affiliated unions.



TUC Education

TUC Education has an unrivalled reach into Scotland's workplaces to provide education and training for workplace representatives. In 2008, TUC Education in Scotland trained nearly 3,000 reps through its partnership with eight colleges across Scotland.



Number of Reps Trained

Overall, UK figures for reps training have produced another record-breaking year with 57,657 union workplace representatives accessing TUC training. Growth remains concentrated in the shorter programmes, an indication of the difficulties reps face in gaining release from the workplace to attend training. The vast majority of affiliated unions participate in the programme, with some unions commissioning tailored programmes to meet their specific needs.

The TUC Education Programme

TUC Education runs a fully accredited programme for union reps with course enrolments rising again for the tenth consecutive year. Accreditation is widely taken up by workplace reps and their achievement is recognised within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Continuing difficulties for trade union representatives in obtaining paid release and the decline of industries and sectors with strong, traditional release arrangements mean that the 10-day union reps programme and the 5-day course for Union Learning Reps continue to show a slight downward trend, despite legal rights to paid release in place to support them.

Short courses are now vital to the programme, supporting TUC Education priorities and the work of affiliates. The wide range of short courses offered varies from 'Coping with the Economic Downturn' through to 'Handling Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures'.

The hard work and dedication of union education officers and their colleagues is vital to the success of the delivery of trade union education, and remains key to maintaining high levels of quality and demand.

TUC Education Online

TUC Education Online is now established as a genuine alternative to its classroom-based equivalent and offers a convenient and effective solution to union reps who seek to develop their skills and knowledge. Over 300 learners accessed TUC Education training online in 2008 in Scotland.

Research carried out by TUC Education into reps' participation on online courses showed that 54% had obtained paid release for learning whilst 46% had not. Whilst this often indicates that reps have exhausted paid release allocated by agreement, it does mean that a significant number will be learning on their own time, having been denied release.

Course Development

A new version of the Stage 1 Union Reps course was launched in January 2009, marking its thirty-fifth anniversary. It remains the definitive programme for trade union reps starting out.

Organising

The Activist Academy programme is a new initiative that links reps training to ongoing project work. Participants are expected to generate practical workplace outcomes such as recruiting or mentoring an activist or apply their skills in an ongoing organising campaign. Stow College in Glasgow is currently delivering the Academy Programme in Scotland.

Equalities and Equality Reps

Equality is a key theme integrated in all areas of the TUC Education Programme and every effort is taken to mainstream equality issues within the programme as well as the more specific courses on race, gender and disabled workers. Over the last three years, TUC Education in Scotland has linked into a range of capacity building projects around the issue of equality reps and in 2008, union officers attended briefings on the new Equality Act and Equality Reps.

2010 will see the development of a Diploma in Equality as a progression for Equality



Reps. This will be offered across our college partners.

Union Learning Representatives

In 2008, TUC Education in Scotland trained 136 Union Learning Reps. 99 reps also successfully completed the additional ULR module, Skills for Life.

Numbers for ULRs trained in 2008 compare well with the previous year; however, numbers participating on additional ULR

modules are down from 2007. This reflects a trend across Scotland and the wider UK that ULRs are finding increasing difficulty in obtaining release for training beyond their statutory rights.

During 2009-2010 a redesign and rewrite of the ULR training programme will be undertaken with a view to establishing a continuing development programme using classroom, online, website and seminar opportunities.





Highlands and Islands

Regional Support

One of the key aims of Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands is to support trade union members and ULRs in the region, with the aim of encouraging and helping workers based in the area to develop their learning and skills.



Getting the union learning message out to workers across an area that covers 50% of the land mass of Scotland is not without its challenges, which is why Scottish Union Learning has dedicated Highlands and Islands staff based in Inverness.

One of the ways Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands supports unions and ULRs in the region has been to develop a cross union model of working which involves **trade unions, working, learning and organising together in the Highlands & Islands**. Using this approach in partnership with trade unions, Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands targets particular areas in the region, developing localised action plans to recruit ULRs and organises awareness events to raise the profile of unions and learning. This approach identifies the demand for learning and it is possible to organise cross-union courses to meet that demand.

Specific areas that were targeted in the last year include Inverness, Orkney, Caithness and Moray. The activity in these areas has resulted in an increase in recruited ULRs and the establishment of a new Local Learning Forum in Moray. More workers than ever before are being offered the opportunity to increase their skills through cross-union courses, such as IT training.

The main priorities for Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands are to:

- ❖ support unions in increasing the number of Highlands and Islands ULRs;
- ❖ increase the number of local cross-union Local Learning Forums in the Highlands and Islands, establish a pan Highlands and Islands ULR network and organise the annual Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR Conference;
- ❖ assist in the development and expansion of a trade union education infrastructure in the Highlands and Islands;
- ❖ support unions, including those with SULF and ESF activity in the area, to increase the number of union members in the Highlands and Islands who access learning and skills opportunities;
- ❖ co-ordinate and develop good practice models of cross-union working to overcome potential barriers, such as remoteness and low density population, which characterise the Highlands and Islands;
- ❖ work in partnership with trade unions, local colleges, learning centres and other key partners to develop union-led learning across the Highlands and Islands;
- ❖ ensure the needs of the Highlands and Islands are incorporated in the development of Scottish Union Learning.





After successfully completing a 'Return to Learn' course with other Home Carers like me, I wanted others to know how beneficial the course had been. The best way to do that was to take on the role of a Learning Rep.

Meg Forrest, UNISON ULR
Highland Council





Supporting ULRs

Scottish Union Learning Events

A Union Learning Representative (ULR) is a union activist who is trained to find out members' learning needs and aspirations and advise them about opportunities. ULRs add value to employers' efforts to engage workers in learning. ULRs liaise directly with fellow workers, employers and providers to identify learning opportunities and make them available to the workforce. Additionally, ULRs support innovative workplace development, such as Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF) projects.

Scottish Union Learning holds conferences and events throughout the year to support Union Learning Representatives and trade unions in lifelong learning and Everyday Skills. Scottish Union Learning also acknowledges the unique geographical, economic and cultural characteristics of the Highlands and Islands and recognises the importance of supporting ULRs in the region. That is why there is specific support available through Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands.

Scottish Union Learning Conference

Building upon the successes of the previous seven annual STUC Learning Conferences, the first Scottish Union Learning Conference was held in November 2008 at the Stirling Management Centre. The theme of the Conference was "Learning and Organising" and it was sponsored by ILA Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Approximately 180 delegates from 17 unions attended the event, making this Conference bigger than any previous STUC Learning Conference. The second Scottish Union Learning Conference took place in November 2009 in Dundee with the theme of "Union Learning: Contributing to Scotland's Economic Future". The Conference was sponsored by Skills Development Scotland and SQA.

Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR Conference

ULRs in the Highlands and Islands have the opportunity to attend the annual Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR Conference. Continuing on from the success of two previous STUC Highlands and Islands ULR Conferences, the first Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR Conference entitled "Learning on your doorstep" took place in June 2008 in Dingwall. Sixty-three union members from across the Highlands and Islands participated in the event. The second Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR Conference took place in Inverness in June 2009. The theme was "Making the case for learning in the current economic climate". ULRs from all areas of the Highlands and Islands attended the Conference, which was sponsored by SQA.



Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Event

Building upon the success of four previous STUC Everyday Skills Events, the first annual Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Event took place in Perth in February 2009. This annual event enables Union Learning Representatives, SULF Project Workers, Trade Union Education Officers and Tutors to explore methods of supporting those with Everyday Skills needs and raise the profile of Everyday Skills issues in the workplace. The main theme of the 2009 event was "The Future of Workplace Literacies" and delegates were invited to participate in sessions on this theme and on issues surrounding numeracy, how to support learners in the workplace, and training for workplace literacies tutors. The second Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Event will take place in February 2010.

Other Events

Scottish Union Learning supports and contributes to a number of events throughout the year. A few examples are:

- ❖ Adult Literacy and Numeracy Research Conference, April 2008
- ❖ Sector Skills Adult Literacies Showcase Events, June 2008
- ❖ STUC Youth Conference, June 2008 and June 2009



- ❖ RMT/Northlink Learning Open Days, August 2008
- ❖ International Literacy Day Conference, September 2008
- ❖ Rail Union Learning Centre Openings at Ayr and Yoker, Oct 2008
- ❖ Open Learning Evening at Orkney College Learning Centre, December 2008
- ❖ Scottish Parliament Trade Union Week, February 2008 and October 2009
- ❖ PCS Learning Conference, February 2009
- ❖ Learning Fair for union members in Inverness, March 2009

- ❖ Open Evening for union members in the Moray area, held in Elgin Library Learning Centre, March 2009
- ❖ Information Literacy Symposium, March 2009
- ❖ Holyrood Magazine's "The Future of Adult Learning in Scotland: A demand-led skills strategy" Conference, March 2009
- ❖ STUC Annual Congress, April 2009
- ❖ Adult Literacies Renfrewshire/Unite/First Bus Learners' Awards Ceremony, May 2009
- ❖ Learning at Work Day, 2008 and 2009
- ❖ Scotland Skills Event, October 2009

Photo by Gerry McCann





The Local Learning Forum provides a valuable opportunity for discussion and the exchange of ideas between ULRs in Tayside. It gives us a chance to discuss problems, offer and borrow good ideas and share solutions.

**Dave Rennie, PCS ULR
HMRC Dundee**





Supporting ULRs

STUC Local Learning Forums

Local Learning Forums give Union Learning Representatives and other union officials who are interested in the union learning agenda an environment where they can meet and discuss the issues they face in the workplace.



Local Learning Forums meet on a quarterly basis and provide local ULRs with opportunities to share best practice, keep up-to-date with local and national union-led learning activities, meet local learning providers and organise cross-union learning opportunities for their local members. Scottish Union Learning hopes this will lead to the sharing of good practice and ultimately to cross-union work in the local area.

Lowlands and Uplands Scotland

Local Learning Forums in Lowlands and Uplands Scotland meet in Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Tayside and Fife. The Forums are chaired on a rotating basis by a local representative. The meetings include a range of political and trade union speakers and cover topics relevant to the learning agenda. Two past themes were “The Future of Union Learning” and “Learning and the Economic Downturn”. The Forums also aim to build links with local Trades Union Councils. The Forums in Tayside and Fife are establishing websites which will include up-to-date information and resources for the local areas.

Highlands and Islands Scotland

In the Highlands and Islands area, Local Learning Forums meet in Inverness, Caithness, Orkney and Shetland. Video Conferencing has been introduced to help overcome some of the problems caused due to the geographical make up of the area. Once a year, the four Forums meet together via a multi-link video conference, which allows ULRs the opportunity to raise and discuss learning issues prevalent in the Highlands and Islands.





Scottish Union Learning Fund

The emphasis of the Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF) is to build the capacity of trade unions to promote the development of people through workplace learning by encouraging and supporting learners.



SULF was established in 2000 by the former Scottish Executive to help promote activity by trade unions in support of its lifelong learning programme. The seventh round of funding, which runs from April 2008 until March 2011, brings the total fund since inception to £8.75m. To date, the Scottish Union Learning Fund has supported a total of 63 projects.

This investment is recognition of the leading role trade unions can play in raising the demand for workplace learning, through partnership working with employers and other stakeholders, to motivate individuals to participate in lifelong learning. SULF ensures effective and sustainable activity by trade unions and their partners.

SULF 7

The first year of the current round ended on 31 March 2009. A total of 16 projects are currently underway.

The SULF 7 Projects are:

ASLEF: Proud to Educate - Scotland
BFAWU: Foundation to Learning
Community: Strategy for Growth - Embedding the Learning Agenda
CWU: Learning for Life
EIS: Partnership Through Professional Development*
FBU: Recruitment to Retirement & Beyond: Addressing the 'Skills for Scotland' Needs of All Staff
GMB: GMB Manufacturing Sector Project*
NUJ: Digital Convergence Project
PCS: License to Skill
POA: Learning Initiative
RMT: All Aboard for Learning
TSSA: Travel Trade Learning with TSSA**
UCATT: Building Learning - Qualifying the Workforce
Unite: Unite in Learning - Building on Good Practice
UNISON: Learning (Highlands)
UNISON: Learning (LUPS)
Usdaw: Integrating & Embedding Lifelong Learning within Usdaw

**TSSA was unable to proceed in the first year; this funding was re-allocated

*EIS - this project commenced at the start of Year 1, Quarter 3

*GMB - this project commenced at the start of Year 1, Quarter 4

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SULF has helped UCATT to train and register 144 construction workers through the Construction Skills Certificate Scheme that helps to raise health and safety standards across the industry.

Davey McGurk
UCATT SULF Project Manager

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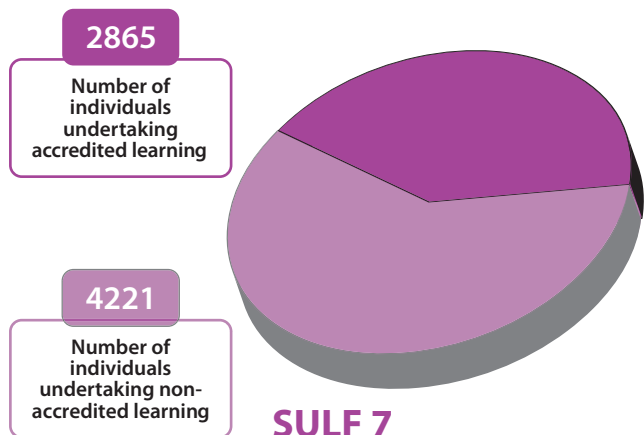




Scottish Union Learning Fund

Facts and Figures

The figures for the first year of SULF 7 reflect a significant increase in activity from previous rounds.



SULF 7

Year 1 - Overall Figures
Reported April 2008 - March 2009

The onset of the economic downturn provided challenges for affiliates who reported increased difficulty in securing release from employers for ULR training.

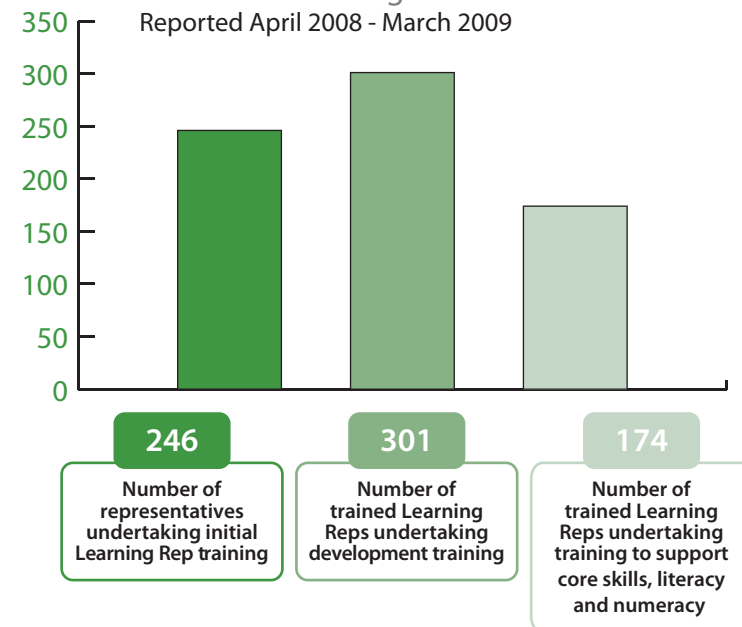
Despite this, over 200 ULRs received initial training in the first year of SULF 7. A number of ULR courses have been running throughout 2009 and more are planned for early 2010. It is anticipated that the overall level of ULR training will increase in the coming year.

In the first year of SULF 7, there were 1379 individuals who accessed learning opportunities for core skills, literacy and numeracy. Across all unions, 787 Individual Learning Accounts were taken up and 27 new learning agreements were signed with employers.

The overall numbers for learning proved remarkably robust despite the uncertainty caused by the economy, changes to ILA criteria and uncertainty of funding arrangements for workplace literacy provision. With new funding available through the ESF Scottish Fund for Union Learning and the addition of new trade union projects through SULF, it is anticipated that learning numbers will continue on an upward projectory.

SULF 7

Year 1 - Overall Figures
Reported April 2008 - March 2009



Experience indicates that union learners who initially access informal learning gain increased confidence to help them make the step to participate in accredited learning. The focus of unions for the coming year will be to increase the number of learners who access accredited learning.

Due to a change in SULF criteria which allocated 12.5% of the total fund for specific activity in the Highlands and Islands, the last year has seen more union-led learning activity in the Highlands and Islands than ever before. Out of the 16 unions which were successful in securing SULF funding, 11 of these have Highlands and Islands activity as part of their projects.



Case Study

Snacking on Learning
with the GMB and Unite

Union: GMB & Unite

Duration: Various

Location: Tolcross, Glasgow

Attendees: 120+

Funding: SULF



The Tolcross McVities factory employs over 800 people and is one of the major employers in that area of Glasgow. The company funded the transformation of an unused office into an on-site learning centre, equipped with new computers and furniture. Members of the GMB and Unite have been trained as ULRs and the GMB is using SULF to support and build on the learning activity taking place within the site.

Lead GMB ULR, Alan Simpson, said, "We have run a few courses and a lot of members are coming back to continue learning. This

wouldn't have been possible without support from the GMB through SULF."

Working closely with John Wheatley College, which has a new campus only a short distance from the plant, various courses are delivered using the new learning centre facilities. Keith Frostick, McVities Training Manager, said, "We are lucky to have this partnership working with our on-site trade unions GMB and Unite, along with John Wheatley. We are seeing a real benefit to the individuals and the business because we have a shared focus on learning."





Case Study

Prison Officers Show Learning Initiative

Union: POA Scotland

Duration: 10 Weeks

Location: Dumfries

Attendees: 30+

Funding: SULF



Prison Officers are expected to support and care for individuals who have complex social, educational, emotional and mental health needs, some of whose lives can be complicated by addiction and alcohol problems. The Prison Officers Association (Scotland) believes it is vital that members have the opportunity to access learning throughout their working lives. To meet these challenges, the POA applied for SULF funding for the first time in 2008.

Tam Muirhead was amongst the first ULRs trained by the POA Scotland and largely due to his enthusiasm and drive, the concept of lifelong learning is spreading quickly amongst the staff at HM Prison in Dumfries. Through its SULF Project, the POA has established good local links at the North West Resource Centre in Dumfries. So far, Tam has encouraged more than thirty staff to take part in three successful 'Conversational Spanish' courses, held in Autumn 2009.



European Social Fund

Scottish Fund for Union Learning

A European Social Fund Project, administered by Scottish Union Learning, began in April 2008 to provide innovative training solutions to address the needs identified for individuals.



Following successful applications submitted to the European Social Fund in 2007, Scottish Union Learning has secured funding for 3 years in Lowlands and Uplands Scotland to help develop and embed an infrastructure to support lifelong learning in the workplace throughout Scotland. A smaller project will run for a period of 2 years in the Highlands and Islands, where the core objective is to widen access to lifelong learning for workers across the Highlands and Islands through the development and embedding of an infrastructure of Union Learning Reps. The funding adds leverage to the work already being done by Scottish Union Learning and also supports the Scottish Government's wider skills strategy.

Lowlands and Uplands Scotland

The ESF Scottish Fund for Union Learning, which is administered by Scottish Union Learning, was launched in November 2008 to provide innovative training solutions to address the needs identified for individuals. Where no alternative funding exists and training needs for individual workers have been identified, affiliated trade unions can apply to the fund.

The process begins when affiliates submit applications to the Scottish Fund for Union Learning for specific training courses. Applications are then considered by the ESF Advisory Panel, which is made up of members from the Scottish Union Learning Board. Courses that are approved by the ESF Advisory Panel are then put out to tender to a qualified list of suppliers who bid to deliver some or all of the courses. There is now a rolling process where trade unions can submit applications for ESF funding as and when they are ready and these applications are submitted to the ESF Advisory Panel for approval on a monthly basis.

At the time of printing in November 2009, applications have been received and approved for over 47 courses targeting nearly 1200 learners. Some of these courses will run more than once to accommodate learners' needs. Learners now have access to a wide range of courses in workplaces across Lowlands and Uplands Scotland. Courses include a variety of computing courses at various levels, Beginners' Spanish, song writing master classes and a short British Sign Language Course.



Highlands and Islands Scotland

As part of the project in the Highlands and Islands, ESF funding has enabled the development of a migrant worker project and a Highlands and Islands Scottish Fund for Union Learning.

Migrant Worker Project

The European Social Fund has funded a project worker to work with migrant workers in the Highlands and Islands. UNISON, the public sector union, is hosting this post for Scottish Union Learning and one of the aims of the project worker is to identify the training and learning needs of migrant workers and address these needs through increasing access to support already available, as well as arranging bespoke training/learning solutions. Migrant worker ULRs and Health and Safety Reps will be also be recruited, putting in place a workplace structure to support migrant workers. A trade union model of good practice for successful social integration of migrant workers in the workplace will also be developed as part of the project.



As in the Lowlands and Uplands Scotland project, ESF funding is also supporting a Scottish Fund for Union Learning which will enhance access to learning for union members across the Highlands and Islands. Affiliated trade unions who identify a demand for learning for their members can apply to the Highlands and Islands fund for specific courses and their applications will be considered by the ESF Advisory Panel.

Approval has already been granted to:

- ❖ UNISON which has been able to offer home carers in the Caithness area the opportunity to undertake a 45-hour "Starting Points Course" provided by the WEA;
- ❖ Usdaw which is providing supermarket workers with a basic IT course, also provided by the WEA.





Case Study

A Strategy for Growth in
Community the Union

Union: Community

Duration: 10 Weeks

Location: Springburn

Attendees: 10

Funding: ESF



Community the Union accessed the ESF Scottish Fund for Union Learning to run a 10-week programme in Introductory IT at RSBi Blindraft in Springburn, Glasgow. The funding provided both an IT lecturer and a BSL Interpreter, and ten hearing impaired employees completed the course. Running a course with such specific requirements would not have been possible without access to this unique funding.

The employees learned to create movies and storybooks from still images, how to use email and surf the internet effectively. The course has given the learners a taste of learning, and more than half are now interested in further learning opportunities.

Audrey McJimpsey, Community Union Learning Rep and Learning Centre Manager at RSBi, said, "It's amazing to see what a difference extra skills can make to an individual's working life."



Case Study

Rocking the Learning Agenda
in the Musicians' Union

Union: Musicians' Union

Duration: 2-3 Days

Location: Busby & Ardgour

Attendees: 37

Funding: ESF



The Musicians' Union was successful in applying to the ESF Scottish Fund for Union Learning to deliver master classes in song writing and web design to freelance musicians. The courses were very successful and ran over a 2-3 day period with input from British musicians from a variety of musical genres including Nick Turner, Findlay Napier, Carol Laula and Kim Edgar. The courses took place in Busby, East Renfrewshire and Ardgour, Fort William between February and June 2009.

Learners were given instruction on a variety of topics, including song structure, dealing with commissions, performance and teaching fees, contracts and royalty collection.

After the course, one learner commented, "This has been an excellent course. It has given me access to a number of songwriters from different genres and has given me pointers to take me to my next stage of development as a songwriter."

**Musicians'
Union**
mu





“

Where Scottish Union Learning is involved not only are learning opportunities available, there is also an extremely pro-active approach taken by trade unions in supporting their members to take up these opportunities.

Audrey McAlindon
Adult Literacies Renfrewshire

”





Improving Everyday Skills

General Information

Scottish Union Learning is actively involved in Everyday Skills activity. The term 'Everyday Skills' defines the language, literacy, numeracy and basic IT skills required both in the workplace and at home.



Some examples of Everyday Skills include understanding written and verbal job instructions, reading and understanding health and safety information, writing letters and reports, completing time-sheets and rotas, working out a family budget, understanding mortgage interest rates, and helping children with their homework. In addition, Scottish Union Learning can arrange support for learners who may have dyslexia and/or other learning differences and disabilities.

Scottish Union Learning actively encourages Everyday Skills activity through SULF Projects, Learning Conferences and Local Learning Forums. Scottish Union Learning also organises an annual Everyday Skills Event.

During the last year there have been many challenges facing Everyday Skills, particularly funding issues; however, Scottish Union Learning has been working with the Scottish Government and other partners and providers to source suitable provision for union learners and to offer the following services:

- ❖ assist in raising awareness of the needs and means of support for those who wish to improve their Everyday Skills;
- ❖ promote training through attendance at an Everyday Skills awareness raising course for ULRs;
- ❖ provide assistance in establishing the learning/delivery needs of union members;
- ❖ assist unions in developing relationships with delivery partners/providers (for example, Local Authority Literacies Partnerships, Workers' Educational Association, further education colleges, etc.) and to arrange appropriate Everyday Skills provision for learners;
- ❖ work with unions and providers to arrange ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision for migrant workers;
- ❖ help to support learners with learning differences and/or disabilities through the relevant organisations;
- ❖ develop local responses to geographical difficulties (for example, outreach, on-line, and blended learning);
- ❖ offer support to ULRs undertaking specialist training to enhance their skills (for example, to support adult literacy learners in the workplace or become tutor assistants);
- ❖ provide information and learning opportunities from national initiatives such as the Big Plus, BBC RaW, Sandstone Vista and Quick Reads.





Improving Everyday Skills

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the term used most often to describe English language learning for those whose first language is not English, and it encompasses the knowledge and skills required by learners in order to take part fully in employment, education and community life.



ESOL is also included in the Everyday Skills support which can be facilitated through Scottish Union Learning. In Scotland, demographics have changed considerably during the last nine years due to the number of asylum seekers and refugees through the National Asylum Support Service since 2000; the increase in the number of migrant workers from EU accession states since 2004, particularly Poland; and the former Scottish Executive's 'Fresh Talent Initiative', launched in 2004. These initiatives subsequently led to an increase in the demand for ESOL provision and Scottish Union Learning has been working with affiliated unions to equip migrant workers with the English language skills they require for work and family life.

ESOL provision is delivered throughout Scotland by Further Education Colleges, Local Authority Community Learning and Development and Adult Literacies Partnerships, the Workers' Educational Association and the voluntary sector. Scottish Union Learning can help unions access ESOL provision to suit the needs of their learners.

The STUC is represented on the Scottish Government's National ESOL Panel and can keep unions up-to-date with national and local developments. Scottish Union Learning supported the first Scottish ESOL Conference, organised by the Scottish Government, which was held in Stirling in November 2009.





Case Study

Making a Real Difference with
Adult Literacies Partnerships

Union: Unite

Duration: Ongoing

Location: Larkfield, Glasgow

Attendees: 100+

Statistics show that more than one out of every five Scots will face barriers through their lives, due to not having the reading, writing or maths skills that they need to get on in modern society.



Increasingly, people need strong literacy and numeracy to be able to get jobs, keep jobs and progress in their workplaces. The challenge for Adult Literacies Renfrewshire has been to create an environment within the workplace where the stigma usually associated with needing literacies support is replaced by a lifelong learning culture.

Usually, employees are wary about learning literacies in their own workplace – worried that other people will judge

them. This has not been the case at First Bus in Glasgow. Management, the union and workers have made a huge commitment to learning, and understand its importance.

More than 100 people have signed up and turned up for literacies support, provided by tutors from Adult Literacies Renfrewshire. So far, 1 in 5 employees have been helped by this project, which reflects the Scottish Government's figures for adults needing help with everyday skills.





Working with Partners

Scottish Union Learning can only meet its objectives by working with partner organisations. That is why it has established a number of programmes of work with many leading organisations. In addition to the examples in this section, Scottish Union Learning works with many additional partners including various departments of the Scottish Government, Workers' Educational Association, Learning Connections, TUC Education Colleges, further and higher education colleges, universities and other providers.

Skills Development Scotland

Scottish Union Learning has a successful relationship with Skills Development Scotland and has developed a close working relationship on operational issues with ILA Scotland and learndirect scotland. ULRs can use a learndirect scotland course search through the Scottish Union Learning homepage. This service ensures that ULRs can easily find the information they need without having to build their own information bases.



Skills Development Scotland sponsored the 2008 and 2009 Scottish Union Learning Conferences. In light of the current economic situation, PACE was invited to address the Union Advisory Group. PACE also sponsored a news supplement in the Highlands and Islands that was commissioned by Scottish Union Learning. As well as promoting the importance of skills and training, the supplement also contained practical information for workers who may be facing redundancy.

Future plans are underway to look at how Scottish Union Learning and Skills Development Scotland can link more closely on other areas of work such as Modern Apprenticeships and Skills Utilisation.

Sector Skills Councils

Scottish Union Learning works both through the Alliance and, in some cases, directly with all the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) operating in Scotland. The Alliance was invited to make a presentation to the Union Advisory Group and there was also a joint meeting between the Alliance and the Scottish Union Learning Trade Union Sector Skills Group. Scottish Union Learning will be working on a programme of joint work with the Alliance to produce an information pack covering:



- the role of SSCs;
- lists of qualifications and learning programmes recommended by SSCs as in their Sector Qualification Strategies;
- contact details for all SSC Scottish Contacts;
- case studies of successful joint working between SSCs and unions;
- a list of Scottish Employer Groups and their members;
- a map of all the other groups related to SSCs operating in Scotland.

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills has responsibility for the funding and re-licensing of the Sector Skills Councils and Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary, has served as a UKCES Commissioner since December 2007.



SCQF

There are reciprocal links between Scottish Union Learning and the SCQF partnership. Scottish Union Learning is represented on the SCQF Forum and SCQF is a member of the Partners' Advisory Group. Joint work has largely focussed around raising awareness of the Framework with SULF Project Workers, ULRs and union members. Much of this work has involved the dissemination of materials at a variety of union events and at Scottish Union Learning Conferences.



Scottish Union Learning also participated in the work of the steering group specifically set up to reference the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The EQF is a framework for lifelong learning and is intended to help the recognition of the wide range of learning that takes place across all member states in the European Community.

By demonstrating the relationship between the Scottish Framework against the European, we will help to promote lifelong learning and equal opportunities and benefit learners by making it easier for their qualifications to be understood no matter where in Europe they seek to learn or work.

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

Scottish Union Learning has been working with SQA in supporting union learners for a number of years. Since the launch of Scottish Union Learning in May 2008, the relationship has become more structured with the development of the Scottish Union Learning Partners' Advisory Group, on which SQA is represented. Work between Scottish Union Learning and SQA includes the development and promotion of the Professional Development Awards for Workplace Literacies. SQA also sponsored the 2008 and 2009 Scottish Union Learning Conferences and the 2009 Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR Conference.



John Wheatley College

John Wheatley College secured funding for workplace learning in 2007. The college approached the STUC to explore ways of working with unions to make this funding available to trade unions. A number of unions have since sourced workplace learning and courses, delivered by John Wheatley College for free, in and around Glasgow. Scottish Union Learning continues to meet on a bi-annual basis with John Wheatley to progress this work.



The Open University in Scotland

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with The Open University in Scotland in May 2007. As a result of this MoU, Scottish Union Learning meets bi-annually with The Open University to address the needs of learners, especially part-time learners. The issue of funding at higher education level is of great concern to both organisations and is an area in which Scottish Union Learning hopes to develop a common approach. Joint leaflets were produced in 2008. One leaflet was targeted predominantly towards potential union learners who may wish to enrol within The Open University and the other was targeted specifically at Union Learning Representatives. Together, Scottish Union Learning and The Open University hope to develop a series of courses for trade unions to offer in workplaces across Scotland.



The Open University

Adult Literacies Partnerships

Since 2002, successive Scottish governments have funded all local authorities in Scotland to deliver literacies learning services to adults in community, workplace and further education settings. Scottish Union Learning utilises a partnership approach that makes it possible to develop and implement a shared vision.





STUC Union Rep Awards

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.



Photo by Louis Flood

The nomination process for the awards invites 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.

The STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning was established in 2006 to commemorate Helen's lifetime achievements in lifelong learning and to recognise other outstanding trade unionists who continue to demonstrate their

commitment to union values and lead the learning movement forward in Scotland. Scottish Union Learning administers this award annually.

The recipient of the 2009 STUC Helen Dowie Award was James Lillis of Unite. The award was sponsored by learndirect scotland. Past recipients of the Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning include Audrey McJimpsey of Community, Rachael Bonner of PCS and Helen Douglas of Unite.





A Closer Look

Recipient of the 2009 STUC
Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong
Learning

James Lillis is no ordinary bus driver. He is also an award-winning Union Learning Representative for Unite.

In this role, James makes learning opportunities accessible to all employees at First Glasgow, including a large number of Eastern European migrant workers within the bus depot. James said, "When new employees come to Scotland and hear the Glasgow accent, it can be a problem. Drivers have to learn to understand what is meant when a customer says, for example, "Gie us an aw day tae the toon." ("Give us an all day ticket to the town.") As Union Learning Reps, we sit down and help them translate and understand Glaswegian so they can do their job. It's a brilliant thing to help others grow in confidence as they strengthen their Everyday Skills."



James runs the workplace learning centre where he promotes participation in lifelong learning through short story competitions and setting up various literacy and numeracy initiatives. Many learners then go onto literacy courses to enhance their communication skills, and due to James' commitment, over 100 members have taken up learning within the workplace.

In recognition of all of his outstanding efforts in trade union learning, James was chosen to be the 2009 recipient of the STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning. James said, "I am very proud and honoured to be this year's recipient of the Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning. As a Union Learning Representative, it is very rewarding and satisfying to see learners fulfil their potential and further their education."





Resources and Communications

The Scottish Union Learning brand has become widely recognised over the past year, within Scotland and beyond. Scottish Union Learning has been covered in the learning media, on websites and in specialist and some national outlets as well as trade union and partner publications and websites.

www.scottishunionlearning.com

The Scottish Union Learning website has received over 4000 hits in the past year and is a targeted source of resources, publications, events and news for trade union-led learning in Scotland. A learndirect scotland course search was integrated into the Scottish Union Learning website in November 2008, which is tailored to the needs of trade unions and ULRs. The Scottish Union Learning Online Forum was also developed as a resource for ULRs and SULF Project Workers to discuss lifelong learning and everyday skills. There are over 100 registered users so far within the Forum, which has had over 1000 hits in the past year.

Scottish Union Learning News

The Scottish Union Learning quarterly magazine was re-launched last year as 'Live & Learn - Scottish Union Learning News'. It is aimed at assisting ULRs and is distributed free of charge. Demand for this publication has nearly doubled in the past year. Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands distributes a bi-monthly e-newsletter that is designed to keep local union members and SULF Project Workers up-to-date with local learning activities. This is sent to ULRs in the Highlands and Islands, local union members with an interest in learning, SULF Project Workers and partners in the Highlands and Islands.



Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR Resource Pack

Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands provides a ULR Resource Pack as a practical support tool for ULRs in the region. The Resource Pack is filled with practical information for ULRs in the Highlands and Islands and is distributed free of charge.



Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands News Supplement

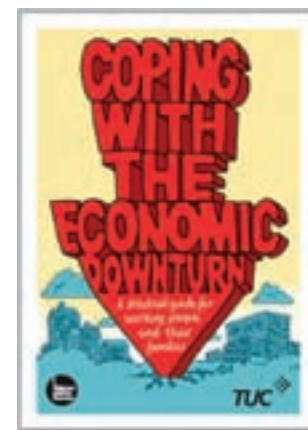
Scottish Union Learning commissioned a 16-page supplement entitled "Trade Unions Working, Learning, Organising Together in the Highlands and Islands" in March/April 2009. This supplement showcased the role unions are playing in increasing access and opportunities in learning and training for workers in the Highlands and Islands. As well as promoting the importance of skills and training, particularly in the current economic climate, the supplement also contained practical information for workers who may be facing redundancy. The supplement was distributed via 12 weekly newspapers across the Highlands.



TUC Education Publications

'Targeting Climate Change' is a new TUC Education workbook, designed to be used across the curriculum and to train Green Reps. It covers a range of environmental topics and is designed as an active tool to support the energy and enthusiasm union reps are expressing about this important agenda.

As more and more workers experience the effects of the economic downturn, 'Coping with the Economic Downturn', a new workbook for union reps, has been produced by the TUC to help workplace reps develop effective tools to defend and protect their members.





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