

Scottish Union Learning

# 2015

## Annual Report



Union Learning:  
Developing Scotland's  
Workforce



# Learners' Quotes

“The course has improved my skill set and will improve my employability prospects.”

“I’ve learned a lot of interesting things that will help me in my work.”

“I found the classroom environment very friendly and felt able to speak and give my opinion. It was overall a very enjoyable experience that I would like to do again.”

“A great introduction. I can’t wait to put what we covered today into practice.”

“Excellent course, would really like more of this.”

“I really loved this course. I can see all the benefits to it. Really appreciate the tutors’ support, they were great!”

“I believe that the work I have completed throughout my studies has contributed to my recent professional opportunities and successes.”

# Introduction

Harry Frew, Chair  
Scottish Union Learning Board



Louis Flood

This has been another important and challenging year for trade unions, but also a year with a number of positive developments in Scotland, including the establishment of the Fair Work

Convention. The Convention was set up in line with the recommendations of the Working Together Review and the expected outcome is that a Fair Work Framework for Scotland will be established.

With the support of the Scottish Government's Fair Work Directorate, as well as continuing the Development Fund and Learning Fund and our work in improving Digital skills, Scottish Union Learning has established the Leadership

Development Fund and the Equality Rep Development project. These initiatives, which have been funded as a direct result of the recommendations contained in the Working Together Review, will allow us to develop leadership capacity within the trade union movement in Scotland and work towards increasing the role of Equality Reps in the private and third sectors.

The opportunities available to union members in updating skills, gaining qualifications and learning in the workplace are recognised as providing added value to being a member of a trade union in Scotland. Working in partnership with the Scottish Government, we aim to further develop the learning opportunities offered by trade unions in Scotland, a move which will benefit both workers and employers.

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# Structure

Scottish Union Learning was established by the STUC General Council to deliver trade union learning in workplaces across Scotland in line with STUC policy on learning and skills. This is taken forward in partnership with unions.

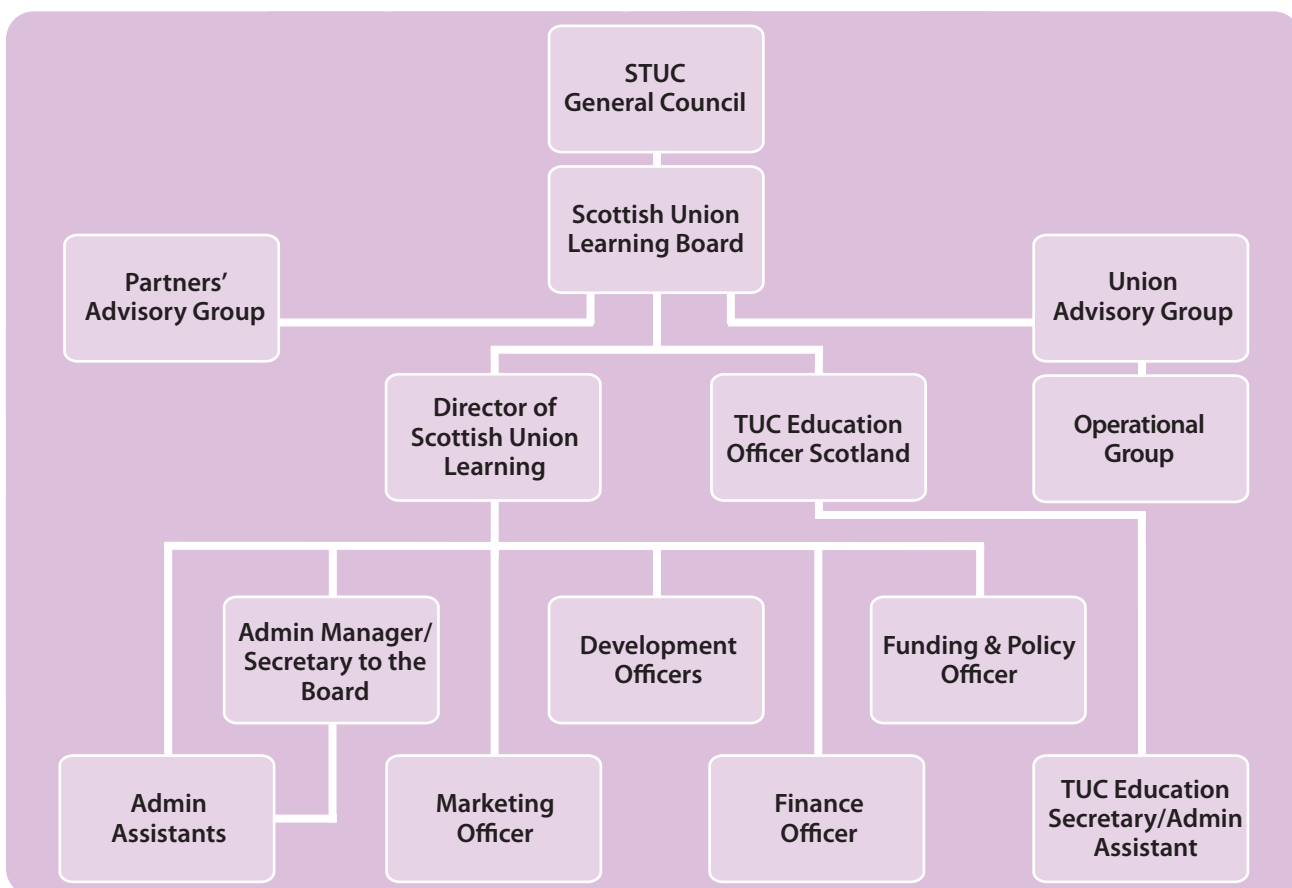
The Scottish Union Learning Board was established to direct and oversee the work of Scottish Union Learning. The Board includes members of the General Council, representatives of affiliated trade unions, the STUC General Secretary and a TUC nominated member.

The Board is supported by a Union Advisory Group and a Partners' Advisory Group which provide advice and information on strategic and operational matters.

The work of Scottish Union Learning is delivered by the Scottish Union Learning Team. Members of the Team are located in the STUC/Scottish Union Learning offices in Glasgow and in Inverness.

## Statement of Purpose

Scottish Union Learning supports trade unions in accessing skills and lifelong learning opportunities for their members that contribute to collective prosperity, fairness and equality, for workers across Scotland.



# The Board

The Scottish Union Learning Board, appointed by the STUC General Council, oversees and directs the work of Scottish Union Learning.

The Scottish Union Learning Board approves the Business Plan which outlines the strategic objectives of Scottish Union Learning for the year, and agrees and monitors the annual work plan. The Board has responsibility for all Scottish Union Learning funding. As well as agreeing the annual budget, the Board oversees the allocation of funding from the Development Fund and Learning Fund, and monitors the use of any additional funding secured to support the work of Scottish Union Learning.

**Chair:** Harry Frew, UCATT

**Vice Chair:** John Brown, CWU

**Members:** Jackson Cullinane, Unite; Harry Donaldson, GMB; Karen Foster, PCS; Samantha Ritchie, Young Workers' Rep; Lyn McClintock, EIS; Robert Mooney, Disabled Workers' Rep; Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary; Liz Rees, TUC Education Manager; Peter Hunter, UNISON; Brian Linn, Aegis the Union (from Dec 2015); (Anne Douglas, Prospect and John Keggie, UNISON, retired during the year)

**Staff in Attendance:** Wendy Burton, Director (from June 2015)  
Harry Cunningham, TUC Education Officer  
Ann Garscadden, Secretary to the Board  
(Sylvia O'Grady, Lifelong Learning Manager, retired May 2015)

**Observer:** Laura Dougan, Scottish Government

## The aims and objectives of Scottish Union Learning are to:

- ✦ 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 learning needs of their members and in organising workplace learning opportunities across Scotland with specific resources dedicated to the Highlands and Islands;
- ✦ assist unions in identifying the needs of Union Learning Representatives and provide appropriate support;
- ✦ provide assistance to unions in accessing Everyday Skills opportunities for their members;
- ✦ work with unions to increase digital participation in workplaces across Scotland;
- ✦ promote learning or action which increases equality awareness and tackles inequality and under-representation at work;
- ✦ encourage and support employer engagement in delivering learning and upgrading skills;
- ✦ establish relationships with partner organisations in the provision of learning and skills;
- ✦ continue to develop resources for unions, ULRs, and learners; and
- ✦ work with the TUC in ensuring the provision of a comprehensive trade union education service suitable to the needs of unions in Scotland.

# Advisory Groups

Union Advisory Group  
Partners' Advisory Group

The Union Advisory Group and the Partners' Advisory Group provide advice and information to the Board on strategic and operational matters.

## Union Advisory Group

The Union Advisory Group supports the Board by:

- ✦ providing operational information that will inform the Board in making strategic decisions;
- ✦ identifying strategic or operational issues for the Board to consider;
- ✦ advising the Board of changes in the strategic direction of individual unions;
- ✦ providing the Board with examples of good practice in trade union learning.

### Co-Chairs

Wendy Burton, Director  
Harry Cunningham, TUC Education Officer:  
Scotland

### Membership

Membership is open by nomination from all STUC affiliated organisations.

## Partners' Advisory Group

The Partners' Advisory Group supports the Board by:

- ✦ contributing to discussions about the strategic direction of Scottish Union Learning;
- ✦ advising Scottish Union Learning on ways in which it could develop in order to better achieve its objectives and further its role;
- ✦ sharing information on the strategic direction of partner organisations;
- ✦ championing the value of union learning in the wider world of learning and skills.

### Chair

Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary

### Membership

BBC Scotland  
Dyslexia Scotland  
Education Scotland  
Equate Scotland  
Fife College  
Glasgow Kelvin College  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Newbattle Abbey College  
Scottish Adult Learning Partnership  
Scottish Book Trust  
Scottish Enterprise  
Scottish Government  
Skills Development Scotland  
SCQF Partnership  
SCVO  
SQA  
The Open University  
WEA Scotland  
Zero Waste Scotland

The Board reviews membership of this Group on an on-going basis.



# The Development Fund

The Development Fund complements existing trade union learning strategies. It supports developmental work that increases the capacity of unions to deliver courses funded by both the Learning Fund and external learning funding sources that unions are able to access. It also supports unions with a range of other activities, including Union Learning Rep training, employer engagement, workforce development, and developing new and innovative approaches to delivery.

During the year, funding was allocated to 18 Development Fund projects. Of these, 15 are based in the Lowlands and Uplands area and three are in the Highlands and Islands. These projects have been developing and facilitating learning in a wide range of sectors, including transport, retail, journalism, financial services, engineering and hospitality. Unions are also using the Development Fund to expand their activities into new sectors and workplaces.

## Lowlands and Uplands Projects

- ✕ Aegis: Developing Skills in Financial Services
- ✕ ASLEF: ASLEF Education
- ✕ BECTU: BECTU Vision
- ✕ BFAWU: Creating Pathways to Progress
- ✕ Community: Engaging with Employers on Workforce Development
- ✕ NUJ: Dynamic Media for Digital Times
- ✕ PCS: License to Skill
- ✕ POA: Local Action, National Strategy
- ✕ RCM: Developing the Maternity Workforce in LUPS
- ✕ RMT: Developing Skills in Rail Infrastructure, Rail Passenger and Ferry Passenger
- ✕ TSSA: Better Skills in Scotland

- ✕ UCATT: Addressing Skills Shortages in the Construction Sector
- ✕ UNISON: Upskilling in Health & Social Care & Developing Young People
- ✕ Unite: Learn with Unite
- ✕ Usdaw: Byte Sized Learning - Workplace Digital and Everyday Skills Development

## Highlands and Islands Projects

- ✕ NUJ: Building for the Future: Sustainable Strategies for the Media Industry
- ✕ RMT: All Aboard for Learning
- ✕ UNISON: Upskilling Healthcare Workers and Enhancing the Infrastructure for Trade Union Led Learning in the Highlands and Islands

“I really loved this course. I can see all the benefits to it. Really appreciate the tutors’ support, they were great!”

“Tutor engaged everyone right from the beginning of the day through to the end. I enjoyed the course and will recommend it to others.”

# Case Study

The Development Fund



Union: BFAWU

Location: LUPS

Funding: The Development Fund

The BFAWU organised a pilot project for young workers employed within the hospitality sector; a sector characterised by high levels of zero hour contracts, low pay and limited training and development opportunities. It is also a sector in which young workers are often isolated from their fellow employees. For this reason, the ethos of the project was to use learning as a means to develop the skills of young people, while simultaneously providing a space in which young workers could meet and network. This included designing bespoke forms of learning delivery to take account of the flexible and irregular shifts young workers faced.

The BFAWU employed a young Project Worker, who had experienced the issues of job insecurity, irregular pay and lack of

training. The Project Worker immediately set about establishing a network of young workers within the hospitality sector, who then planned a series of courses and events to create a collective experience for these workers in this network. This included courses on using social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Hootsuite and Instagram, and also song writing, film-making and creative writing.

The project also worked with The Open University to promote its Fee Waiver offer, whereby the majority of learning is free to workers earning under £25,000 a year. This would apply to almost all young workers in the sector, and a series of promotional workshops will highlight the opportunities of studying with The Open University.

By the end of March 2016, it is anticipated that over 100 young workers will have been supported by the project. In many cases, this is the first time these workers will have had contact with the trade union movement. The BFAWU believes the pilot can establish a model of how the union movement can use learning to engage with young workers in the future.





# The Learning Fund

During the last year, there has been a change to the way the Learning Fund is financed. Until the end of June 2015, the Learning Fund was funded by both Scottish Government and the European Social Fund (ESF), under the Scottish European Structural Fund programme. From July 2015, Scottish Government has solely financed the Learning Fund.

The Learning Fund is an innovative source of funding that enables learning to be taken into the workplace, and delivered at a time and place that meets the needs of learners. The approaches of individual unions reflect the diversity in the needs of workers, resulting in a wide range of learning provision, including Digital Skills, Employability Skills, ESOL, and vocational training. Learning also is offered at times to suit those who are working shift patterns, or who are affected by other barriers to learning, such as caring responsibilities. There is widespread demand for learning in the workplace, and for unions to facilitate delivery of this learning, to ensure that learning opportunities are accessible to all workers who want to develop their skills and progress within the workforce.

During the funding period April 2015 to March 2016, the Learning Fund aims to support up to 4000 learners to develop new skills or improve their existing skills in a diverse range of learning opportunities. In the previous funding programme, during the period October 2014 to September 2015, 305 course applications from unions were approved. Of these, 57 are for accredited learning leading to a part or a full qualification. Some learners will attend more than one course and

## Learning Fund Applications Oct 2014 to Sept 2015

Course Type	Number of Courses
Everyday Skills (including ESOL and Employability Skills)	78
Everyday Skills (Digital skills)	34
IT (including European Computer Driving License (ECDL) and Microsoft Office	59
Vocational Training	80
Modern Languages	7
British Sign Language	11
Development Training	46
<b>Total (all LF)</b>	<b>305</b>

others will undertake a progression course to complete their training that will allow them to gain a recognised qualification to assist with career progression. Courses have been delivered throughout Lowlands and Uplands Scotland, from Aberdeen to Dumfries, Glasgow to Edinburgh and a number of locations in-between.

“I thoroughly enjoyed this course, I gained valuable knowledge and would love to continue learning.”



“I’m delighted that I undertook this course and have already recommended to colleagues and friends that they take the course too.”

“Very entertaining and a useful session in ways to increase confidence in myself.”

“Overall this has been an enjoyable and memorable learning experience.”



# Case Study

Historic Scotland  
Stone Carving



**Union:** UCATT

**Duration:** 2 days

**Location:** Granton

**Attendees:** 15

**Funding:** The Learning Fund

Stone Carving is an ancient craft requiring specialist techniques and skill. The course recruited 15 learners: a mix of apprentice and time-served Stonemasons from Historic Scotland sites including Melrose, Blackness, Edinburgh, Stirling, Dirleton and Glasgow Cathedral. Candidates were given a 1ft x 1ft block of limestone, a template of a mythical figure, and specialist stone carving tools. Participants were then given the opportunity to carve the mythical figure from initial

starting point to finished artefact with the comprehensive support of renowned Stone Carver, David Lindsay. The venue for the course was Edinburgh College's stonemasonry facility at Granton Campus which provided the necessary health and safety equipment (such as airstream helmets and dust extraction units/cowls) to ensure participants were protected from high dust levels/silica dust.

Feedback from UCATT members has been extremely positive, with one participant, Heather Griffith, stating: "this is the best course I have ever been on." Stone Carving is not part of the every day duties of Stonemasons within Historic Scotland and this course has provided the participants with additional skills which will enhance their prospects in the future. Such was the success and positivity of the feedback that UCATT is planning further Stone Carving courses.



# The Learning Fund

Evaluation of the Highlands and Islands Learning Fund

Scottish Union Learning commissioned Stewart Research and Scottish Centre for Employment Research to conduct an independent evaluation of the Highlands and Islands Learning Fund for the period April 2011 to March 2015.

The evaluation concluded that Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands & Islands delivered a spread and variety of workplace learning additional to that which already exists, which was both job-related and non-job-related, accredited and non-accredited, and successfully attracted non-traditional and traditional learners across their range of abilities and provided opportunities for adult lifelong learning. "The feedback from learners was particularly satisfactory and demonstrated that the learning activities were associated with positive and empowering outcomes for learners."

As Figure 1 shows, the Learning Fund supported 166 courses. The types of courses supported were reasonably wide ranging in duration e.g. one day courses to a two-year part time HNC course; as well as subject type (see figure 2) and level e.g. manual skills, Everyday Skills - in numeracy and literacy, to 'softer' and higher levels of organisational skills in areas such as 'leadership and management', and basic and advanced use of particular types of new and emerging digital technologies. Most courses (83%) were session based (face-

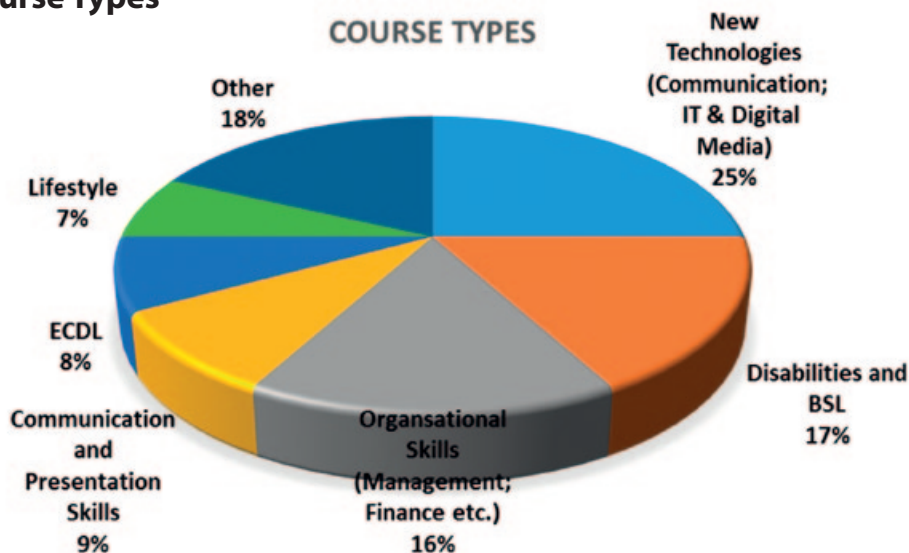
**Figure 1: Key Statistics from the Highlands & Islands Learning Fund – April 2011 to March 2015**

Number of courses supported	166
Number of accredited courses	81
Number of non-accredited courses	85
Number of course places supported	1587
Number of learners supported	1189
Number of learners who undertook more than one course	251
Number of learners to gain qualification	497
Average number of learners per course	9
Average cost per learner	£144

to-face delivery) while 17% were delivered either online or by distance learning.

As Figure 3 shows, the evaluation identified that 97% of learners were satisfied with the course they have undertaken, with over three quarters of those, very satisfied. The evaluation also highlighted that learners' feedback on the perceived benefits they felt they had learnt or gained as a result of the learning undertaken showed that 72 % had extended their knowledge and skills; 62% were incentivised to learn more; 48% and 47% respectively had developed new skills and confidence; 31% felt more able

**Figure 2: Course Types**



to perform their job and 24% felt they were more able to apply for other jobs.

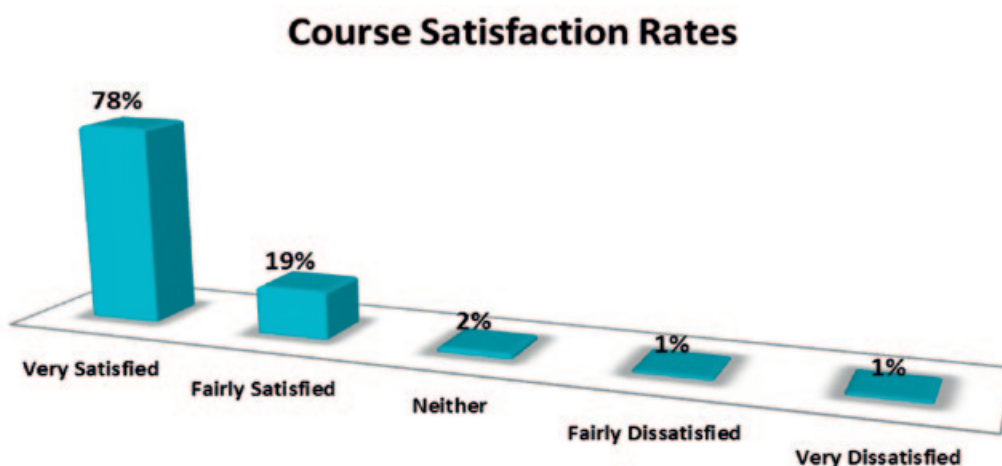
Learning was also delivered, as Figure 4 (overleaf) demonstrates, to workers in every location across the Highlands & Islands

The evaluation, as well as identifying the overwhelming positive benefits provided to learners, also evaluated some of the benefits being provided to trade unions, employers and learning providers. Trade union representatives outlined these benefits in terms of increased membership services, increased capacity and promotional issues and as one

trade union representative interviewed commented: "People have this negative view of trade unions around conflict and while we are quite a strong union around campaigning, learning offers members something back, it shows them that we can offer something else and counter that sort of negativity."

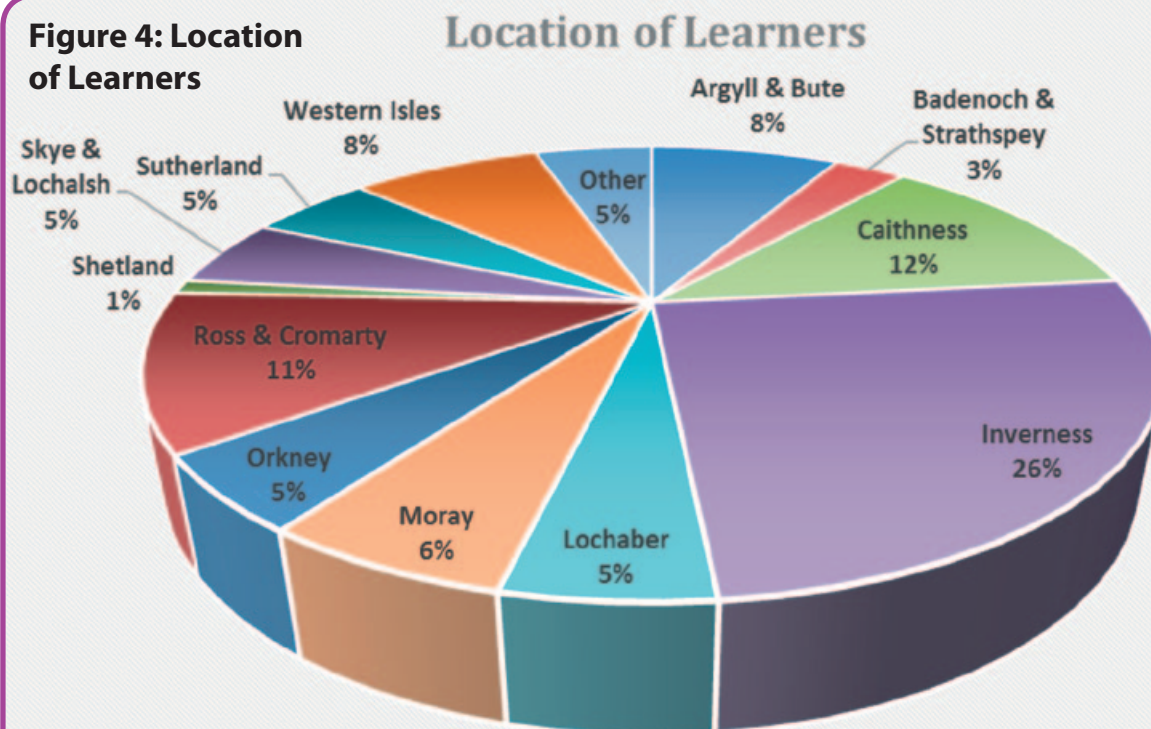
The learning providers interviewed highlighted the importance of union-led learning activities, stressing that union-led learning had a number of economic and social benefits for their organisations. As one learning provider interviewed put it, "Scottish Union Learning helps us reach a diverse range of employees in a diverse

**Figure 3: Course Satisfaction Rates**





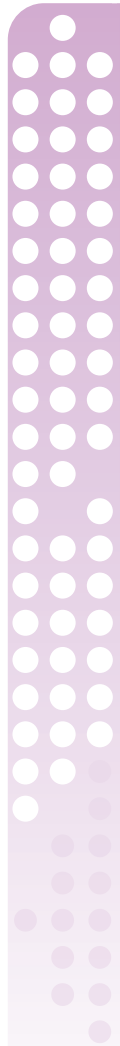
**Figure 4: Location of Learners**



range of organisations that we would not be able to otherwise do ourselves. We provide the courses but it's the creativity of Scottish Union Learning that allows us to reach these people."

Employers interviewed tended to equate union-led learning largely in terms of better skills in the workplace and the impact of these on employee performance, with one employer commenting, "Getting to the bottom of

our staff problems was difficult. We had staff problems going back some ten years, had tried some things that didn't work and we needed a different mechanism to work. This (training) brought people together, gave them a shared goal and exceeded our expectations by settling things down. This is a workforce that has now gone on to win awards for their levels of service."



## Learning Fund – An Introduction to Social Media



The introductory course supported learners in the development of their social media skills with a particular focus

15



# Improving Everyday Skills

Scottish Union Learning promotes Everyday Skills activity through Development Fund Projects, Everyday Skills Events, Learning Conferences and Local Learning Forums.

Scottish Union Learning works with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Dyslexia Scotland, Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and other partners to raise awareness of Everyday Skills needs and suitable means of support.

## **Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Group**

Through the Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Group, unions are encouraged to engage with Scottish Government strategies, such as Adult Literacies in Scotland (ALiS) 2020 and Digital Participation: A National Framework for Local Action. Unions are also supported in participating in national initiatives such as Adult Learners' Week, Book Week Scotland and Dyslexia Awareness Week. The Group is comprised of members from affiliated unions, Scottish Union Learning, Dyslexia Scotland and Workers' Educational Association. The Group meets quarterly to discuss all aspects related to workplace literacies, digital participation and dyslexia; it is also responsible for contributing to the planning of the annual Everyday Skills Event.

## **Everyday Skills**

Scottish Union Learning defines Everyday Skills as the language, literacy, numeracy, and basic IT and digital skills required both in the workplace and at home. Everyday Skills activity also includes English language learning for those who do not have English as their first language and support for learners who may have dyslexia and/or other learning differences and disabilities.

## **Digital Unions Project**

Since its inception, Scottish Union Learning's Digital Unions project has delivered digital skills and 'Train the Trainer' courses to over 80 Union Reps across Scotland. The courses ensure that learners are provided with practical 'Train the Trainer' techniques to be confident and able to deliver short basic online skills sessions to colleagues in the workplace.

With the acquisition of a second round of funding from the Scottish Government, two additional 'Train the Trainer' courses took place in November 2015, with further courses planned between January and March 2016. Through this project, Scottish Union Learning is able to support trade unions in improving workers' online skills and promote the benefits of digital participation to employers.



# Focus on Digital Skills



## Digital Unions

The Digital Unions project, funded by Scottish Government, was launched at the end of 2014, and has enabled the facilitation of a specific training model for ULRs. This will lead to increased digital participation, with trained ULRs able to deliver digital skills sessions in their workplaces, and also in their wider communities.

Digital Unions was a major focus of SUL activity throughout 2015, including the Everyday Skills Event, the Highlands and Islands ULR Conference, and Local Learning Forums in Dumfries, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Tayside,

Caithness, Inverness, Orkney and the Western Isles.

In addition, a group of ULRs addressed delegates at a Fringe Event at the STUC Congress in April, explaining what they had learned through Digital Unions, how they will use this to support people in their respective workplaces, and how their overall involvement in Digital Unions is helping to increase their confidence, not only in digital skills and in supporting learners, but also in public speaking and delivering presentations. The work they are doing through Digital Unions is an essential aspect of their learner-centred approach to workplace learning.

# Case Study

## Refugee 'Journeys'



**Unions:** CWU and GMB

**Duration:** 2 days

**Location:** Glasgow

**Attendees:** 12

**Funding:** GMB Glasgow  
APEX Branch and  
Scottish Book Trust

In partnership with the CWU, GMB Glasgow Apex Branch, Scottish Book Trust, STUC and WEA, Scottish Union Learning delivered a project to support workers, refugees and asylum seekers who live in Scotland. Facilitated by experienced tutors from the WEA, 12 learners took part in creative writing workshops where they told the story of their own 'Journeys'. Encouraged to create their written narratives to reflect their experiences and

understanding of migration, the learners' stories were a mixture of personal testimonies and part biographical and/or fiction. In addition, they had the option to read their own story, or have a narrator read it, and record it on video camera. Short films of the recordings were produced and two were screened to a full house at the STUC St Andrew's Day rally at the Glasgow Film Theatre. Over 100 copies of Book Week Scotland's 'Journeys' books were distributed.

This creative writing experience enabled the learners to reflect on their new-found skills and explored the potential for future learning opportunities. Feedback included the benefits of being able to develop a general awareness of creative writing in both a fictional and non-fictional context, develop their storytelling and writing confidence, and gain an understanding of the creative writing process. The workshops also provided an introduction to utilising digital recording equipment and the opportunity to deliver their work to a live audience.





# Event Spotlight

Book Week Scotland



Scottish Union Learning, in partnership with Scottish Book Trust, worked with unions to celebrate Book Week Scotland, which took place in November 2015.

Through a programme of workplace events, unions and their members participated in Book Week Scotland by encouraging people to read more, and distributed the Scottish Book Trust book, 'Journeys' which focuses on people across Scotland sharing stories of the journeys that mean the most to them.

ASLEF promoted Book Week Scotland at the Yoker Depot which resulted in more people using the workplace library. Workers reviewed the book and the best three were awarded a book token.

RCM organised coffee mornings and distributed over 100 copies of 'Journeys' at St John's Hospital in Livingston and Forth Valley Hospital in Larbert.

RMT organised book reviews at train stations and depots in Aberdeen, Ayr, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth with over 300 Reps, members and workers. Writers of the best reviews were awarded book tokens.

Events at leisure sites, hospitals, and universities were organised by UNISON. Over 600 people took part, with activities ranging from prize-giving as part of the 'Six Book Challenge' at Wishaw General Hospital, running Adult Learners' Week book stalls at NHS sites and Heriot Watt University, and the launch of the 'Reading Ahead Challenge' at Glasgow Caledonian University.



Over 600 packs and 20 campaign boxes were distributed by Usdaw at Book Week Scotland stalls in Morrisons and Tesco from Galashiels in the Borders to Buckie in Morayshire. Campaign boxes included copies of the book and information about ILAs and the Big Plus. The 'Journeys' book and information were utilised to stimulate conversations about literacy and reading in the workplace.

“Book Week Scotland is fast becoming one of the stand out campaign weeks for our project. We use these excellent free books to start conversations about literacy and reading in our workplaces. I've had a very busy week, with the books proving incredibly popular wherever I went. At our stall in the Tesco Call Centre in Dundee we gave out over 100 books in the space of one hour!”

Jill Little Woodhouse, Usdaw's Lifelong Learning Project Worker supported events in some of the busiest workplaces



# Highlands and Islands

A key objective 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.

The Highlands and Islands covers some 15,000 square miles, which is more than half of Scotland's landmass. It includes more than 90 inhabited islands but accounts for less than 10% of Scotland's population.

Recognising both the challenges and opportunities of supporting union members in accessing learning opportunities in this predominately rural, sparsely populated region, Scottish Union Learning has a dedicated Highlands and Islands Team based in Inverness.

The Team's activities focus on:

- ✦ Working with unions to increase the number of ULRs and developing the ULR infrastructure to create opportunities for workers to participate in union-led learning;
- ✦ Establishing and maintaining ULR Forums across the region, which provide opportunities for networking and support and for organising courses;
- ✦ Developing and co-ordinating good practice models of cross-union working extending the reach of union learning;
- ✦ Identifying innovative ways to deliver learning programmes which help overcome potential barriers such

as remoteness and low density population;

- ✦ Working with government agencies to contribute to economic strategies for the Highlands and Islands which reflect workers' aspirations in workforce development;
- ✦ Supporting unions and ULRs to build collaborative working relationship with employers, to develop more productive and rewarding workplaces;
- ✦ Working in partnership with trade unions, local learning providers and other key partners to develop learning provision that meets the needs of unions;
- ✦ Ensuring that the needs of the Highlands and Islands are incorporated in the development of Scottish Union Learning.

The ULR role is recognised as being the cornerstone of trade union learning. Typically, in the smaller workplaces of the Highlands and Islands, there may be only one ULR, or the ULR may cover several workplaces.

Consequently, Scottish Union Learning prioritises support for this crucial role though the provision of guidance and resources for organising courses and learning events, including the annual Highlands and Islands ULR Conference.

The Scottish Union Learning Team is in regular communication with unions and ULRs through email and the quarterly newsletter eNews. The Highlands and Islands ULR Facebook group provides another forum for ULRs to discuss and organise learning.





# STUC Union Rep Awards

STUC Helen Dowie Award  
for Lifelong Learning

The STUC Union Rep Awards consist of four awards: the STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning, the STUC Equality Award, the STUC Health & Safety Award and the STUC Organising Award.

The recipient of the 2015 STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning was Billy McKay, a Union Learning Representative and Convenor for Unite the Union at BAE Systems. Sponsored by SQA and Skills Development Scotland, the award was presented at the STUC Annual Congress by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP.

Billy has delivered learning opportunities for members in BAE's Govan and Scotstoun yards, as well as Rosyth, Barrow-in-Furness and Portsmouth. He has integrated learning into collective bargaining within BAE Systems, and has successfully negotiated a 50-50 split in

paid time off for member-driven learning opportunities. Led by Billy, Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union (CSEU) ULRs have brought learning into the workplace, facilitating a return to learning for hundreds of non-traditional learners.

Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary, said: "Over his last seven years as a ULR, Billy McKay has provided unparalleled support in learning to hundreds of shipyard workers across the country. In addition, he has placed learning at the heart of the collective bargaining agenda within BAE Systems and has successfully negotiated a 50-50 split in paid time off for learning, which is unprecedented in this hard-hit industry. Across Scotland, ULRs are working to help workers raise their skill levels by securing agreement with employers for better access to learning and training. Billy McKay is an inspirational example of this exceptional work and the STUC is proud to present him with the 10th Annual Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning."



Louis Flood

# Learner of the Year Award

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.

Scottish Union Learning presented the 5th Annual Learner of the Year Award to RMT member Barry Weldon, who is a Travel Clerk based at Glasgow Queen Street Railway Station. The Award was presented by Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Skills and Training.

Barry was chosen as the 2015 Learner of the Year because of his commitment to learning and equalities. Barry struggled at school, and left aged 17, giving up his dream of going to university to work in the retail sector, and subsequently the rail industry. He returned to learning through his passion for equalities by undertaking an equalities course organised by RMT at Glasgow Kelvin College.

Barry was identified as having dyslexia, but he found this liberating as it gave him

an understanding of his difficulties, and hope for the future. With the assistance of software technology and reasonable adjustments made by his employer, Barry has made real progress in achieving the TUC Diploma in Equalities, in addition to other courses facilitated by his union. As an Equalities Rep, he has been using his own learning experience, and increased confidence, to fight for equality and fairness in the workplace.

Barry has ambitions to work within railway operations logistics, and is now a student on the Institute of Rail Operatives Certificate at Glasgow Caledonian University.

RMT Learning Organiser, Dennis Fallen, commented on Barry's achievement: "Barry is an inspiration in overcoming barriers, and has achieved so much. We are proud he has won this award, proud he is a member of RMT, and even more proud that he has used his learning to help others in his role as an RMT Equality Rep.





# Fair Work

Working with the  
Scottish Government

The 'Working Together: Progressive Policies in Scotland' Review, which was published in 2014, recognised and promoted the positive role played by trade unions, not only in the workplace but also in the economy and wider civil society. It proposed recommendations for developing a more collaborative and productive relationship between employers and trade unions. In 2015, the Scottish Government responded to the Review, however, prior to publishing its formal Response, it had already begun to implement some of the Review's key recommendations. This included the creation of a new post of Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Skills and Training, continued support for Scottish Union Learning, and the establishment of a stakeholder body, the Fair Work Convention.

The Fair Work Convention has responsibility for developing a Framework for Fair Work in Scotland, building on the foundations of 'Working Together'. The Convention is co-chaired by Anne Douglas, former STUC President and also former Chair of the Scottish Union Learning Board, and Linda Urquhart, Chair of Scottish law firm, Morton Fraser. Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary, is a member of the Convention, alongside other union colleagues Mary Alexander of Unite and Lilian Macer of UNISON, employers and academia. In addition to developing a Fair Work Framework, the Convention will advise Ministers on a range of workplace issues such as job security, workplace innovation, and the promotion of both workplace equality and the Living Wage.



Opportunities for skills development are essential in achieving Fair Work. Through Scottish Government's continued support for Scottish Union Learning, unions are able to facilitate a wide range of learning initiatives, including Everyday Skills, apprenticeships, up-skilling and re-skilling and workforce development.

Additional funding arising from the recommendations of the Working Together Review is supporting an Equality Rep project and a Leadership Development programme. Job security, employee voice, decent pay, flexible working hours and opportunities to learn contribute to progressive workplace policies, and lead to improvements in the wider economy and society. The STUC, Scottish Union Learning and trade unions have a pivotal role to play in establishing Fair Work practices across Scotland.

# Equality Rep Development Project

The Equality Rep Development Project is aimed at increasing the role of Equality Reps in the private and third sectors, based on recommendation 18 of the Working Together Review. Work is being carried out with four pilot workplaces/branches which are at different stages of creating Equality Reps and delivering equality work. Meetings have been held in these workplaces and the groups will be brought together for sessions to identify common barriers for equality reps across different sectors.

Data was collected from most unions on the number of Equality Reps who are currently active in Scotland but this was difficult to gather from all unions and, in some, difficult to determine which Equality Reps worked in the private and

third sectors. A Scottish Union Learning poll of union members has shown that the understanding of the role which Equality Reps play is low. 55% of respondents answered that they were not confident that they knew what Equality Reps did in the workplace and 59% wrongly believed that Equality Reps were entitled to the same statutory release time that Health and Safety Reps receive. However, a significant majority of those who had an Equality Rep present in their workplace believed that they were effective.

Findings will be circulated as recommendations for support for Equality Reps in the private and third sectors – for unions and for the Scottish Government – and guidance for Equality Reps themselves.



# The Leadership Development Fund

During the year, the STUC secured funding to support a Leadership Development Fund aimed at helping to develop leadership capacity within the trade union movement in Scotland. This work relates directly to the Scottish Government's Fair Work agenda.

Unions were invited to apply for funding, individually or collectively, to allow them to create new and original activities aimed at promoting leadership skills in ways which are interactive, challenging, innovative and expressly inclusive.

## Union Projects

A total of nine applications were received from unions, with bids including a very wide range of activities and target groups. These applications were submitted to

an Assessment Panel, appointed by the Scottish Union Learning Board, for approval. Funding was allocated to the following unions: Aegis, BFAWU, EIS, FDA, GMB, PCS, Unite, UCATT and Usdaw.

## Outcomes and Evaluation

Activities in relation to leadership development were organised to take place between December 2015 and 31 March 2016. The combined learning from all of the activity supported will be crucial in determining the requirements for future provision of leadership training in unions across Scotland.

A leadership event will be held in March 2016 as part of the evaluation of the project to allow participating unions to share outcomes and good practice.





# Conferences and Events

Scottish Union Learning Conferences 2015



Scottish Union Learning organises conferences and events throughout the year to support Union Learning Reps and trade unions promoting and accessing learning opportunities.

## Scottish Union Learning Conference 2015

The 8th annual Scottish Union Learning Conference was held on Tuesday, 10 November 2015 at the Stirling Court Hotel, Stirling. The theme of the Conference was "Fair Work through Partnership". The Conference was chaired by Harry Frew, Chair of the Board and addressed by Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary. Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet

Secretary for Fair Work, Skills and Training also addressed the Conference and presented the Learner of the year Award to Barry Weldon of the RMT.

The Conference included a panel session involving Modern Apprentices and Young Workers chaired by Samantha Ritchie, Chair of the STUC Youth Committee. Workshops: Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments, SCQF - Working with employers, Better than Zero, Digital Unions, and Equality Reps. Anne Douglas, Co-Chair of the Fair Work Convention and Professor Patricia Findlay, Professor of Work and Employment Relations, University of Strathclyde, delivered a session on Fair Work. The new Scottish Union Learning website was launched at the Conference.



## Highlands and Islands ULR Conference 2015

The 8th Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands ULR Conference 'Working Together – A Collaborative Approach to Workplace Development' took place on Friday, 11 September 2015 at Eden Court, Inverness. The Conference provided Highlands and Islands ULRs with the opportunity to share experiences of organising union learning and to learn new skills and knowledge through themed workshops and discussion. Delegates participated in a range of activities including workshops covering 'Digital Unions' and 'Creating Fairer and Equality Aware Workplaces.' The Conference also heard from Pauline Sutton, SCQF Project Officer, on 'How to Use SCQF for Workplace Development' and Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary, on the role and remit of the Fair Work Convention. Delegates also considered the question, 'What does Fair Work mean to you?' and



the delegates' responses have been fed back to the Convention.

## Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Event

The 7th Annual Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Event was held on 26 February 2015 in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. The theme was "Everyday Skills: Opening to Door to Learning", with a focus on 'open' online learning opportunities. This Event was attended by 80 delegates from 12 trade unions, and was addressed by Alyson Mitchell, Head of Digital Participation at Scottish Government, and David Kendall, Project Manager from The Reading Agency. Delegates were invited to attend breakout sessions on "Open Educational Practices", facilitated by The Open University; "Digital Participation", facilitated by BBC Learning; and "Everyday Skills in the Workplace", facilitated by the Workers' Educational Association.



# Local Learning Forums

Local Learning Forums provide an important vehicle for ULRs to network and share practice, on a cross-union and cross-employer basis. In the course of the last year, there has been a greater focus on providing ULRs with learning opportunities to help develop skills in advancing the learning agenda within their individual workplaces.

## Lowlands and Uplands Scotland

In the Lowlands and Uplands, Forums take place in Dumfries, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Tayside. Scottish Union Learning has also established a new Forum in Aberdeen. This year there has been a concerted effort to ensure that all Forums have a common theme while maintaining their distinct identities. During 2015, the focus of Local Forums has been around developing the skills of ULRs to utilise free open learning resources in order to facilitate workplace and community learning. Forums were held during Spring and Autumn, with sessions delivered by The Open University, through the Open Educational Practices in Scotland (OEPS) project, and Scottish Union Learning, on utilising Open Learning Resources. These Forums were extremely well attended, with excellent feedback from ULRs on the benefits of using Local Learning Forums as a vehicle to develop and support the ULR role.



## Highlands and Islands Scotland

In the Highlands and Islands, Scottish Union Learning continues to support local ULR Forums in Inverness, Caithness, Orkney and Western Isles. Themes and Forum meetings held during 2015 included Digital Unions and an Open University workshop for ULRs on using Open Educational Practices. Highlands and Islands ULR Forums also organise cross-union courses across several workplaces/unions extending the reach of union-led learning in the region. Courses organised through the Local Forums in 2015 have included CMI Level 6 Award in First Line Management (Orkney), CMI Improving Team Performance (Inverness), and Counselling – An Introduction (Western Isles).

In December 2015, the Inverness ULR Forum, in partnership with Scottish Union Learning and Inverness College UHI, organised a special open evening for union learners at Inverness College UHI's new campus in Inverness. The College arranged tours of the new facilities for the workers and ULRs who attended the event. College staff were also on hand to provide information and advice about a range of different courses, including Leadership and Management; Microsoft Office IT etc.

# TUC Education

TUC Education has an unrivalled reach into Scotland's workplaces providing education and training for workplace representatives. In 2015, TUC Education in Scotland reported that nearly 3,000 union reps accessed TUC training through the TUC's partnership with a network of Scottish colleges.

## Number of Reps Trained

Overall, the latest UK figures for union reps training have demonstrated another outstanding year with some 38,000 union representatives accessing TUC Education training.

The TUC Education training programme includes core and additional courses with increasing flexibility of access to suit the needs of union reps. Numbers of reps participating on the TUC Education programme in Scotland continue to be very strong despite pressure on reps in gaining release and cuts to facility time.

## The TUC Education Programme

TUC Education runs a fully accredited programme for union reps and despite increased pressure on release, overall enrolment numbers are holding up reasonably well in the 165th year of the TUC programme. Accreditation and gaining workplace qualifications through the TUC route is widely taken up by workplace reps and their achievement is recognised within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

The 10-day union reps programme and the 5-day course for ULRs continue to show a slight downward trend in numbers attending, despite the fact that there are

legal rights to paid release in place to support reps' workplace activities.

Most union reps access their union learning through the TUC Education short course programme. Shorter courses are now vital to the programme, supporting TUC Education priorities and the work of affiliates. The wide range of short courses now offered varies from Organise, Workplace Accident and Investigation to Mental Health Awareness to Handling Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.

To improve take up of paid release, a TUC booklet, 'An Employers Guide to Trade Union Training' is now available. The guide is designed to be a tool for reps to use with employers and can be obtained from TUC Education in Scotland.

ACAS, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, says that training for union representatives:

"...will enable them to undertake their role with greater confidence, efficiency and speed and thus help them work with management, build effective employment relations and represent their members properly."

## Union Learning Representatives

Last year TUC Education in Scotland trained 130 Union Learning Reps. Numbers are slightly down on the previous year with many ULRs reporting increased pressure on release for training. This reflects a trend across Scotland and the wider UK that ULRs and other union reps are finding increasing difficulty in obtaining release for training even though

ULRs have a statutory right to access training.

### **TUC Education Online**

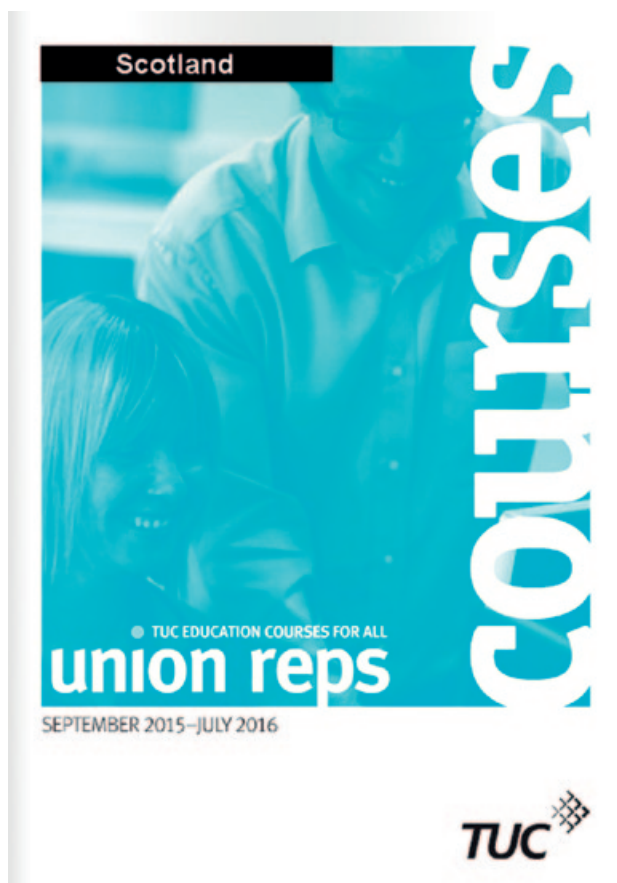
TUC Education in Scotland offers a coherent and comprehensive online offer. Union reps in Scotland can now access all core TUC courses online enabling reps to improve their representational skills no matter where they live and work in Scotland. An increasing number of reps are choosing to learn on line every year.

### **eNotes**

TUC Education continues to develop short, topic based e-learning modules, (eNotes) for union reps who wish to study online and without the need to join a formal college course. eNotes are a convenient way for reps to get up to speed on fast moving topics such as: The Living Wage, Building a Stronger Workplace Union, Facility Time, Understanding Universal Credit as well as other relevant themes. All eNotes can be accessed online at [www.tuceducation.org.uk](http://www.tuceducation.org.uk)

### **New Course Directory**

Union reps can now find course and booking information on TUC training courses as well as how to access any of the current 21 TUC eNotes on the new TUC Education Course Directory at; [www.tuceducation.org.uk](http://www.tuceducation.org.uk)





# Working with Partners

## **Scottish Government and Digital Unions**

Scottish Union Learning has worked with the Scottish Government Digital Directorate to improve the digital skills of workers throughout Scotland. The Digital Unions project enabled the development of 'Train the Trainer' courses for Union Reps to provide them with the practical teaching techniques to be able to deliver short basic online skills sessions to colleagues in the workplace. Reps also learned about the issues surrounding digital participation and skills in Scotland, with reference to the Scottish Government's National Framework, Let's Get On campaign and Digital Scotland.

## **Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)**

The STUC and Scottish Union Learning signed up to Scotland's Digital Participation Charter with SCVO, with the shared ambition for Scotland to be a world-leading digital nation by 2020. The Charter establishes a framework for organisations in Scotland to work together to support the Digital Participation Programme.

## **Open Educational Practices in Scotland (OEPS)**

Scottish Union Learning has been working in partnership with OEPS and The Open University to develop the skills of ULRs in understanding Open Educational Resources, and how these can be utilised in workplace settings. Scottish Union Learning and The Open University, through the OEPS project, delivered workshops through Local Learning Forums to over 100 ULRs.

## **Scottish Book Trust**

Scottish Union Learning has continued to work with Scottish Book Trust to organise workplace events during Book Week Scotland in November 2015. Throughout the week, workplace activities were organised by unions, which also distributed over 500 copies of the campaign book 'Journeys' to workers throughout Scotland. In addition, a short creative writing project was organised, to reflect the journeys of migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers.

## **Zero Waste Scotland**

Scottish Union Learning has continued to develop its working relationship with Zero Waste Scotland through the Scottish Waste Industry Training, Competence, Health and Safety (SWITCH) Forum. The Forum has two main areas of focus, Health & Safety and Education, Training and Competence. Scottish Union Learning has helped the work of the Forum by promoting Zero Waste Scotland frontline leadership training courses and providing up-to-date sector information to unions.

## **Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)**

Throughout the last year, Scottish Union Learning has built upon its relationship with SCQF around credit rating, focusing on how credit rating could be used within the workplace. So far, Scottish Union Learning has had positive engagement with employers in the food and drink, justice and financial sectors. A Partnership Agreement between Scottish Union Learning and SCQF was established, which will strengthen this relationship and enable expansion of joint work.

# Partner Spotlight

The Open University



Almost 10 years ago, the STUC and The Open University in Scotland signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU recognised both organisations' commitment to working in partnership to enhance workers' opportunities in accessing Higher Education. This strengthened the existing relationship that had developed from the formation of The Open University in 1967. Throughout the last decade, Scottish Union Learning and The Open University have worked together to organise learning across numerous workplaces working with individual unions and on a cross-union basis.

During the last year, Scottish Union Learning and The Open University refreshed their approach. There is now a greater focus on engaging with employers, creating clearer pathways for

union learners to engage with The Open University, supporting opportunities for young workers, and using innovative open learning practices to bridge the gap between informal and formal learning through the delivery of 12 Open Learning Workshops for ULRs.

Plans for the next year include the following:

- ✦ Refresh the MoU to include an annual plan with key engagement events;
- ✦ A showcase event to highlight innovative use of open learning pilots;
- ✦ Create pathways for those engaging in open learning opportunities to progress to accredited learning;
- ✦ Focus on collective workplace learning and workforce development, to include examining how the OU fee waiver can be better utilised within the workplace.



# Case Study

## Modern Apprenticeships



### Digital Journalism Modern Apprenticeships (Level 3)

**Union:** NUJ

**Location:** Scotland

The National Union of Journalists played a major role in the development of the Digital Journalism pathway in the Digital and Creative Media Modern Apprenticeship and continue to play a leading role in the uptake and delivery of the programme.

Paul Holleran, Scottish Organiser, NUJ, said: "We are paving the way with modern apprenticeships in digital journalism in Scotland. The union seized the chance

to inject new blood to an industry that is undergoing drastic transformation with newspapers' print sales declining and the ever-growing public consumption of digital media via mobile phones, tablets, laptops and PCs."

The NUJ's lead has meant employers in the media sector taking on trainee reporters to learn the trade on the job, earning while they are learning, and at the same time attending college for further training in technical skills such as filming and editing, and more academic subjects, like media law. The modern apprenticeship in digital journalism means trainee reporters are receiving a comprehensive training experience, gaining valuable skills in the newsroom supplemented by technical and ethical training and guidance at college."



Nick McGowan-Lowe





# Case Study

## Modern Apprenticeships

**Aegis**  
the union

Modern Apprenticeships in  
Business Administration  
(Level 3 & 4)

Modern Apprenticeships in  
Providing Financial Services  
(Level 3)

**Union:** Aegis the Union



**Location:** Edinburgh

After a very successful MA pilot in 2014 where six staff were taken through the very first Modern Apprenticeship programme in Aegon, it was agreed at the Union Learning Steering Group to expand the programme in 2015. The Steering Group consists of Aegis officials and reps, Aegon senior management and Scottish Union Learning. In January, the expanded programme was launched to include a total of 26 Modern Apprentices

in Business Administration (Level 3 and 4) and Providing Financial Services (Level 3).

Aegis ULRs have undertaken courses to equip them with mentoring skills, and these ULRs are now the designated mentors for the Modern Apprentices. The programme will continue to grow; in 2016 a further 60 Modern Apprenticeship opportunities will be initiated. The Union Learning Steering Group is also exploring the possibility of an external recruitment drive for Modern Apprentices to be launched in Aegon's new Retire Ready department.

In February 2015, the partnership between Aegis and Aegon led to Aegon being chosen as Skills Development Scotland's Youth Employer of the Month. Maria Clark, Aegis Learning Project Worker, said: "We believe that it has helped people see the value of training and helped them feel valued by the employer. There is a new energy in the workplace. It is a win-win for Aegis and Aegon, and to receive the Youth Employer of the Month Award was just fantastic."

# Case Study

## Modern Apprenticeships – Highlands and Islands



### RMT and CalMac Steer a Course to Success

Delegates to the Scottish Ratings Summit in November recognised the commitment of Rail Maritime and Transport (RMT) union and Caledonian MacBrayne to the introduction of Modern Apprenticeships. The event was hosted by the Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) to consider rating employment and training opportunities in Scotland.

A host of speakers, including RMT National Secretary Steve Todd, spoke of the urgent need to recruit young workers into the maritime industry. Another speaker, Engine Rating Megan MacDonald, received a warm welcome from the delegates.

Megan, from South Uist, is one of ten trainees taken on by CalMac in 2014. She has been based on the MV Lord of the Isles for the last year. Megan said, "It's been brilliant for me. As an islander, I always had a thing for engines and boats, and everyone has been so supportive." The RMT and CalMac were among those who discussed the challenges of providing quality training and careers for young ratings. In the last three years, two intakes of trainees were trained in England, as there was no regional Maritime MA programme.



Caroline Barry, Learning Partner, CalMac, revealed to the delegates that the 2016 apprentice cohort would utilise the state of the art maritime facilities at City of Glasgow College.

Dan Henderson, RMT Learning Project Worker, welcomed the positive development. He said, "We've worked in partnership with CalMac since 2012 to introduce the Scottish Modern Apprentice programme for our trainees and now finally have a provider located within the community that CalMac serves."

# Resources and Communications

Scottish Union Learning has continued to raise its profile during 2015. The launch of the new website, increased social media activity, new publications and new initiatives with partner organisations, as well as ongoing media coverage, have all assisted in highlighting the work of Scottish Union Learning.



## **www.scottishunionlearning.com**

The new Scottish Union Learning website was launched in November 2015. The website provides access to resources, publications, events and information and is a valuable resource for unions, ULRs, learners and partner organisations.



## **Social Media**

Scottish Union Learning can be found on Facebook and Twitter.

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

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/UnionLearning](http://www.twitter.com/UnionLearning)

## **Scottish Union Learning Highlands and Islands e-news**

Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands and Islands distributes an e-newsletter on a bi-monthly basis that is designed to keep ULRs in the Highlands and Islands and Development Fund Project Workers up-to-date with local learning activities. This is sent to every known ULR in the Highlands and Islands, local union members with an interest in learning, Development Fund Project Workers and partners in the Highlands and Islands.

## **Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Case Studies**

The Scottish Union 'Union Learning and Everyday Skills Learner Case Studies' publication, which was supported by Skills Development Scotland, is available to view on-line. The publication features case studies from different trade unions and workplaces across Scotland.

## **Scottish Union Learning Dyslexia Guide**

The Scottish Union Learning Dyslexia Guide is available to view on-line. This publication provides useful information on raising awareness of Dyslexia in the workplace and on providing support to people who may have dyslexia.





# Contacts

Scottish Union Learning  
Team

## Glasgow Office

Wendy Burton, Director  
wburton@stuc.org.uk

Ann Garscadden, Admin Manager  
agarscadden@stuc.org.uk

Tommy Breslin, Development Officer  
tbreslin@stuc.org.uk

Catherine Garvie, Development Officer  
cgarvie@stuc.org.uk

John Slaven, Development Officer  
jslaven@stuc.org.uk

Alan White, Development Officer  
awhite@stuc.org.uk

Tricia Gallagher, Funding and Policy Officer  
pgallagher@stuc.org.uk

Jennifer Payne, Marketing Officer  
jpayne@stuc.org.uk

Tariq Akhtar, Finance Officer  
takhtar@stuc.org.uk

Catherine Macdonald, Admin Assistant  
cmacdonald@stuc.org.uk

Kirsten McTighe, Admin Assistant  
kmctighe@stuc.org.uk

Natalie Price, Admin Assistant  
nprice@stuc.org.uk

## Inverness Office

Eleanor Adam, Development Officer,  
Highlands and Islands  
eadam@stuc.org.uk

Pam Urquhart, Development Officer,  
Highlands and Islands  
purquhart@stuc.org.uk

Mairi Maciver, Admin Assistant,  
Highlands and Islands  
mmaciver@stuc.org.uk

Diana Nicholls, Admin Assistant,  
Highlands and Islands  
dnicholls@stuc.org.uk

## TUC Education in Scotland

Harry Cunningham, TUC Education Officer  
hcunningham@tuc.org.uk

Stuart Bell, Secretary/Admin Assistant  
sbell@tuc.org.uk

Email: [learning@stuc.org.uk](mailto:learning@stuc.org.uk)

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

[www.unionlearn.org.uk/education/index.cfm](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/education/index.cfm)

# Scottish Union Learning



**Learning**

Scottish Union Learning supports trade unions in accessing skills and lifelong learning opportunities for their members that contribute to collective prosperity, fairness and equality, for workers across Scotland.



**Leadership**

Scottish Union Learning, in partnership with the Scottish Government's Fair Work Directorate, is currently providing support to unions in developing leadership capacity within unions and increasing the number of Equality Reps in workplaces in Scotland.



**Equality**



For more information: [www.scottishunionlearning.com](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com)



## **Scottish Union Learning**

### **STUC Centre**

333 Woodlands Road  
Glasgow G3 6NG  
Tel: 0141 337 8111  
Fax: 0141 337 8101

### **Highlands and Islands**

UNISON Building  
53 Shore Street  
Inverness IV1 1NF  
Tel & Fax: 01463 248 905

Email: [learning@stuc.org.uk](mailto:learning@stuc.org.uk)  
**[www.scottishunionlearning.com](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com)**



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