



# Scottish Union Learning Annual Report

2020 - 2021

# Learner Quotes

*"It was a really good day and it was lovely to share that with everyone. Loads of really useful stuff and I'll use every scrap of it."*

*"I have learnt so much from these courses. I think they are excellent, as I previously knew nothing at all about the subject, but the courses were presented extremely well in easy and interesting bite-sized learning sessions."*

*"I didn't want it to end. A real privilege to learn so much from such an accomplished writer. It has inspired me to carry on writing and I would love to participate in any future creative writing courses I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this course to others."*

*"Feel like I have learned a lot which will assist me in my current role and going forward to any new roles in the mill in the future."*

*"I think the Union is to be commended on making this course available to Members across our rural part of the world. Covid has boosted appetite for delivery of online courses generally but in Highlands and Islands this would always be a valuable medium for course delivery."*

*"A very well delivered course with motivated and supportive course leaders."*

*"I feel that the training has now given me the basics and confidence to enable me to move forward"*

*"Very extensive and informative but put in plain speak so layman could understand."*

# Contents

Introduction _____	4
Structure _____	5
The Board _____	6
Advisory Groups _____	7
The Development Fund _____	8
The Learning Fund _____	12
Learning Outcomes _____	22
Improving Everyday Skills _____	24
Digital Unions: Cyber Resilience ____	26
Fair Work: Leadership and Equality Programme _____	28
Apprenticeships _____	29
Awards _____	30
Conferences and Events _____	32
Working with Partners _____	34
TUC Education Scotland _____	35
Resources and Communications ____	36

# Introduction

Peter Hunter, Chair, Scottish Union Learning Board



The last year has been a particularly challenging year for Scottish Union Learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our funders, the Scottish Government, and all our key partners and sponsors for their continued support throughout this period.

SUL doesn't run courses on spiritual wellbeing, but if we did there'd be no need for one on gratitude. When it comes to gratitude, we all have credit for prior learning. I say that for three reasons. Firstly, because the quality and innovative work of SUL has always been recognised by members, affiliates, employers, and the Scottish Government. That isn't taken for granted; we appreciate the recognition and commitment.

Secondly, when the SUL Board met early in the lockdown, it was inspiring to see how the core staff, project workers, and learners had adapted so effectively to the disruption of the pandemic. Not only did delivery and administration switch seamlessly to the online world, but new content emerged – tailored to the emerging needs of learners. Our gratitude to staff and activists is on record. Thirdly, I make the point about gratitude knowing about the complex learning challenge we now face. When we look to England and the callous decision to end funding for union learning, we are grateful that our vital work in Scotland attracts strong political support from the Scottish Government and all parties.

The learning challenge in Scotland is immense, but we start with the assets developed over more than a decade of innovation. As workplaces close and workers face poverty, we can turn to union learning as one element of a wider pandemic response. It is a vital asset. So, we stand in solidarity with our colleagues in England in defence of the fundamental right to access learning and skills, and all the opportunity, security and fulfilment that learning brings at a time of uncertainty. What then, about the union learning response to the current crisis? The first response is to secure, maintain, and deliver our core offer to learners. It is needed now, more than ever, and as Chair of the SUL Board I want to send my sincere thanks and congratulations to all the members of the union learning community. We're still standing and we're still learning. However, we have done so much more. The tailored response to COVID-19 has been outstanding. We have developed learning options around safety, homeworking, online skills, cyber resilience, trauma awareness, and bereavement. Sadly, that need will continue for some time, which makes union learning a key contribution to the resilience of the workforce, including many frontline services.

Finally, we have a vital role in the process of building back better. STUC affiliates have always played a leading and influential role in the organised response to inequality. Our investment in support of the Black Lives Matter movement is just one example of how our learning promotes equality and social justice. This progressive impact of our work will be in high demand given the challenges of COVID-19 recovery. The disruptive change of automation and climate change will have an adverse impact on disadvantaged communities unless the challenge is met by a range of policies to support workers facing change and redundancy.

This territory is very familiar to all SUL projects. We lead the wider union movement in knowledge-based innovation in response to changing skills needs, and our new funding priorities will keep SUL at the forefront of recovery as we support workers seeking a place in a new tech economy based on sustainability and social justice. The challenge is immense but, as we proved during lockdown, we stand ready. Ready to learn!

# Structure

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.

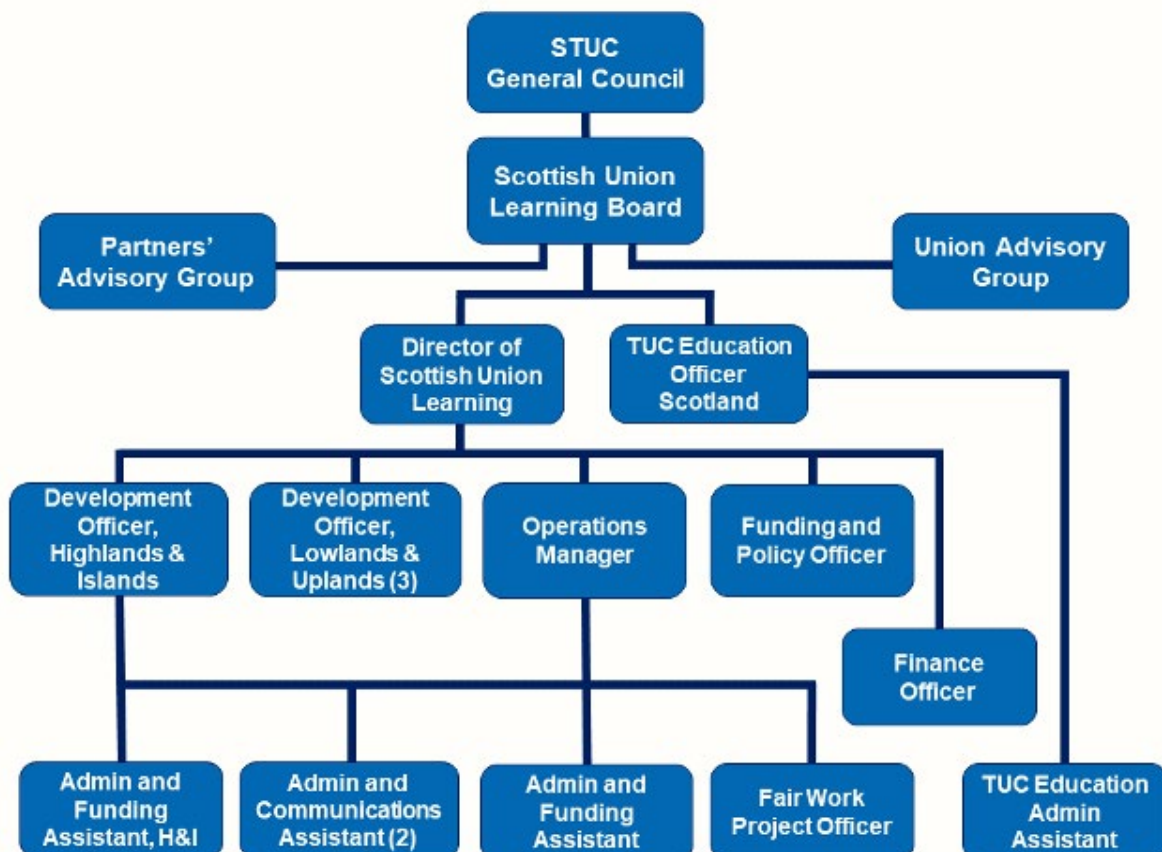
The STUC General Council established Scottish Union Learning to deliver, in partnership with unions, workplace learning opportunities in all sectors across Scotland, in line with STUC policy on learning and skills.

**The Scottish Union Learning Board** is made up of members of the STUC General Council, representatives of affiliated trade unions, the STUC General Secretary and a TUC nominated member. The purpose of the Board is to direct and oversee the strategy, funding and work of Scottish Union Learning.

**The Union Advisory Group** is made up of nominated representatives of trade unions. It provides advice and information on strategic and operational matters, at the request of the Board, and advises on any changes in the strategic direction on learning and skills made by individual unions.

**The Partners' Advisory Group** includes a wide range of partner organisations who come together to find out about the strategic direction of Scottish Union Learning. It advises on future development and shares information on the strategic direction of partner organisations.

**Scottish Union Learning** has staff located in the STUC offices in Glasgow and in the UNISON office in Inverness. Staff deliver the work of Scottish Union Learning in line with the Business Plan and Workplan approved by the SUL Board and Scottish Government.



# The Board

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

The SUL Board has responsibility for agreeing the strategic objectives of SUL and setting and monitoring its business and operational plans and budgets, in line with STUC policy.

Chair: Peter Hunter (UNISON) Vice Chair: Susan Quinn (EIS) Members: Brian Linn (Aegis the Union); Jim Baxter (ASLEF); Steven McGurk (Community); Craig Anderson (CWU); Karen Foster (PCS); Satnam Ner (Prospect); Esther O'Hara (Unite the Union); and Robert Mooney (Disabled Workers' Representative).

Rozanne Foyer, STUC General Secretary, replaced Grahame Smith as an ex officio member of the Board during year. Ian Borkett, unionlearn Service Manager, is the TUC nominated member. A representative of the Scottish Government's Fair Work Directorate attends meetings of the Board as an observer.

The Board receives regular reports on the work of SUL including the Development Fund and Learning Fund, the Fair Work: Leadership and Equality programme, the Cyber Resilience Project, and the work of TUC Education in Scotland.

Staff in Attendance: Wendy Burton, SUL Director; Ann Garscadden, SUL Operations Manager; Jill Little Woodhouse replaced Sarah Wiktorski as TUC Education Officer during the year.

## Aims and objectives

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 and awareness of Cyber Security issues in workplaces across Scotland;
- promote the development of leadership capacity within unions;
- promote learning or action which increases equality awareness and tackles inequality and under-representation at work;
- support workers facing redundancy or unemployment;
- 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

**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.

Membership is 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.

## Partner Organisations

Dyslexia Scotland, Education Scotland, Glasgow Kelvin College, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Learning Link Scotland, Newbattle Abbey College, Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Government, SCQF Partnership, SCVO, Skills Development Scotland, SQA, The Open University in Scotland, WEA Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland.

The Board reviews membership of this Group on an ongoing basis.



# The Development Fund

**The Development Fund complements existing trade union learning strategies and supports developments in workplace transformation by increasing the capacity of unions to offer learning and development opportunities to workers across Scotland.**

Sixteen projects in the Lowlands and Uplands area of Scotland and five in the Highlands and Islands area were allocated funding for 2020-21 to support and increase workplace learning opportunities. This funding helped unions to develop capacity through building networks of Union Learning Reps (ULRs), create and develop strong working relationships with new and existing employers, and to identify and address skills needs of their members in a wide range of sectors and industries.

## Highlands and Islands Projects

- National Union of Journalists (NUJ): Broadening Horizons in the Media Industry
- National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT): All Aboard for Learning
- Scottish Artist Union (SAU): Artists Are Workers - Highlands & Islands
- UNISON: UNISON Member Learning Project
- Unite the Union: Learn with Unite

## Lowlands and Uplands Projects

- Aegis the Union (Aegis): Developing Skills in Financial Services
- Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF): ASLEF Education, Scotland
- Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU): Developing Learning through Structures
- Community: Engaging with Employers to Drive Workforce Development
- Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS): EIS Professional Learning Programme
- Fire Brigades Union (FBU): Building Capacity in the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- National Union of Journalists (NUJ): Scaling the Changing Face of Journalism
- National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT): Developing Skills in Rail Passenger, Rail Infrastructure, and Ferry Passenger
- Prospect: BECTU Vision
- Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS): Union Learning – Building, Growing, Winning
- Scottish Artist Union (SAU): Artists Are Workers - Lowlands & Uplands
- Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (Usdaw): Bridging the Workplace Skills Divide
- UNISON: UNISON Member Learning Project
- Unite the Union: Learn with Unite - The Next Steps
- Young Workers' Project (YWP): Controlling the Future



# Development Fund Case Study

**Union:** Unite the Union

**Location:** Cummins Diesel Recon, Cumbernauld



In October 2019, Cummins Diesel Recon revealed plans to close operations in Cumbernauld. A week before Christmas, the company announced that it was going ahead with closure. The union engaged through ACAS and provided an alternative to closure in the form of a financial assistance and diversification package from the Scottish Government however this was ultimately unsuccessful.

Cummins was an engineering company. The overall closure affected over 130 workers, predominantly within the North Lanarkshire area. These jobs were high skill, high pay. The decision to close the site led to a tense industrial relationship between the union and employer. The Learning Organiser became involved with Cummins in February 2020 and redundancies were scheduled to take place in three waves in June, September and November.

Unite established a Joint Learning Committee which included the site manager, HR director, PACE and workplace reps to manage the redundancy support programme. Unite established a Learning Survey and distributed this to the full workforce including GMB and any non-members. Returns were collated and analysed and Unite began organising around the collective learning demands of the workers.

We were able to organise a PACE presentation within the workplace for June leavers in March prior to COVID-19 taking grip in Scotland. During the pandemic, Cummins remained open. During this incredibly difficult time the workplace reps played a key role in ensuring the learning agenda was not forgotten.

The union submitted Learning Fund applications to Scottish Union Learning (SUL) for 18th Edition Wiring Regulations, CNC Programming and Electrical Vehicle Charging Equipment Installation courses. These courses, traditionally face-to-face, were expected to benefit 24 workers who were being made redundant in June.

However, around this time, SUL suspended in-person delivery until the end of May, and potentially up to the end of September, based on Scottish Government guidance.

During April and May PACE arranged one-to-one sessions, delivered CV and Interview Skills support by telephone for around 15 individuals, and referred workers to the Employability Fund for LGV training and Forklift training.

To support the work of PACE around CV & Interview Skills, the union organised the delivery of two basic IT courses within the workplace (adhering to social distancing, anti-bacterial cleaning of hardware, hand washing, temperature checking protocols and other strict health and safety measures) with the tutor joining remotely via Zoom. The IT course provided workers with the Microsoft Word skills to compile a CV.

The Unite Learning Survey identified high demand for individual specialist vocational courses which Unite could not facilitate. It was initially agreed Cummins and PACE would identify appropriate funding streams to support the learning needs of these workers.

Up until the end of May, the employer had delayed making a financial contribution to address individual demand. The situation was exacerbated as the union was unable to organise delivery of face-to-face courses due to COVID19 restrictions. Moreover, the criteria for Learning Fund courses specified that learners must be in employment to benefit from the fund. In addition to these complications, Colleges were operating with greatly reduced capacity because of COVID-19 and were preparing for the summer break. This left a potentially disastrous situation where June leavers would only receive CV and IT support but no vocational courses.

The Learning Organiser worked intensely with reps to identify what members' expectations were of the union, PACE and the employer during the redundancy period. The reps were able to collectivise the issues and influence change in the employer's behaviour. Cummins agreed to establish a redundancy fund - £600 per person - to explicitly support workers to upskill and re-skill leaving in June, September and November. The fund was available to all affected.

The union also engaged with PACE to review and refine their support for members. One member who was referred to the Employability Fund was successful in obtaining full funding to cover the costs of a 'CPCS 360 Excavator above 10 Tonne' qualification.

SUL worked with Scottish Government to amend the Learning Fund criteria to allow the provision of learning opportunities to workers who have recently been made redundant or otherwise lost their jobs. This change benefits all union affiliates.

The union organised and delivered courses including 18th Edition Wiring Regs, CNC Programming, Basic IT and Excel through the Collective Learning Partnership.

Through the union-negotiated employer redundancy fund, workers were able to obtain funding in the following areas: RTITB Dual Forklift (counterbalance and reach), IMI Level 2 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Routine Maintenance & Repair Activities, IMI Level 4 Award in Diagnosis, Testing and Repair of Electric/ Hybrid Vehicles and Components, Green CSCS Labourer Qualification and HSE test, Scottish Beauty Expert, CIMA Accredited Sage Certificate and Higher Certificate, Skills First Award in Computerised Payroll for Business Level 1 & 2, IC Diploma in Counselling, Damascus Forging, Blacksmith Tool Forging, Bespoke Gas Forge, Steel Tool Introduction and SVQ in Health and Social Care.

The establishment of the fund would not have happened if it was not for workers collectivising around the learning agenda. This has supported the individual learning needs of our members to help them find new employment in the sector or job role they wish to move into.

Within days of leaving Cummins, 17 workers confirmed they had found new employment. This would not have been achieved if it was not for the hard work of workplace reps and if this project was not funded by Scottish Union Learning.

*"The reps at Cummins Diesel Recon in Cumbernauld would like to thank SUL for their support during the COVID19 pandemic by expanding the remit of the Learning Fund to include workers who had been made unemployed. Some of our members were made redundant early in June 2020 and have now benefited from 18th edition and CNC programming courses. These learning opportunities have been invaluable during this difficult time and our members will remember the union was there for them when it was needed"*

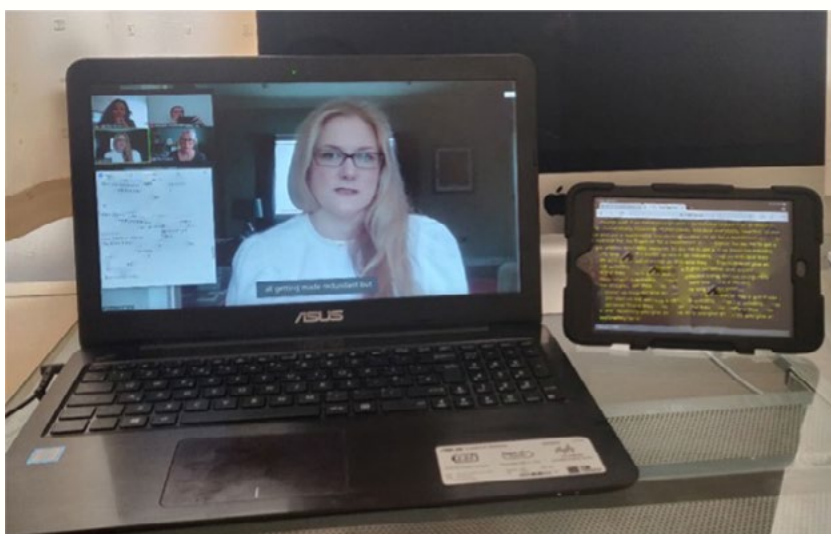
David Jarvie, Engineer, Workplace Rep

# Development Fund Case Study

**Union:** Bectu sector of Prospect

As the COVID-19 pandemic forced most of the world into lockdown in Spring 2020, many workers across Scotland had to quickly adapt to the move online. Within a matter of weeks, much of the face-to-face training Bectu offered their members had to be delivered virtually and this presented a number of challenges around accessibility.

One of Bectu's Base group members, Gordon McGowan has been involved with the union since participating in Bectu's Hit the Ground Running event and 1-2-1 career advice sessions. Gordon is profoundly deaf and Bectu worked with him to ensure the best support was in place to make learning sessions as accessible as possible.



Presented with options of a BSL interpreter and/or captioning for the online sessions, Gordon reflected:

*"If I talk informally to deaf friends and family we just sign in BSL and there is no need for captions at all but for professional mainstream video conversations I prefer this."*

Taking this into account, Gordon opted for Zoom closed captions. In addition to the live captions, it was arranged for a live notation of the discussion to appear on screen. A separate webpage broadcasted the text, which enabled Gordon to scroll backwards if there was something he didn't catch. With the captions, live notation, and broadcasted text, Gordon felt able to participate fully in the session.

Following the first session, Gordon said:

*"This was the first time I have used Zoom with closed captioning, and I think it was a huge success. It was a totally immersive experience. I had fiddled around with controls and it was good to have a chat sidebar as with Skype it was either video or chat and it was a struggle to get both simultaneously."*

Overall, Gordon attended three of Bectu's Coffee Convo's and, as an aspiring researcher, he completed the three-part Research Skills online course.

The experience of moving online and having to quickly adapt has not only provided enhanced access for Gordon but has been useful for Bectu project workers in exploring emerging technology for future courses.

# Development Fund Case Study



**Union: RMT**

**Workplaces:** Scotrail, Caledonian Sleeper,  
LNER and Network Rail

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, RMT organised an Adult Achievement Award (AAA) at SCQF Level 6 (conferred by Newbattle Abbey College) to run at the RMT Scotland office in Glasgow from April 2020 – June 2020. This programme was for rail workers and was to be delivered by WEA. Although the learners were still required to report to their workplaces, it became clear in March 2020 that it would not be possible to deliver this programme in person due to the emerging pandemic. The Learning Organiser negotiated with the learners, Scottish Union Learning and WEA to develop an effective online model of delivery. RMT worked with the learners and WEA to develop a short pre-course digital skills programme to ensure learners could confidently and successfully access and participate in the course.

The AAA ensured learners reflected on:

- previous programmes of union-led learning in which they had participated;
- their activities as union members in supporting their colleagues in the workplace;
- developing their personal and professional skills in organising and participating in future union-led learning opportunities.

The AAA programme was well received by the learners. The opportunity to learn together as a cohort of union learners was particularly helpful during the pandemic as learners benefited from the social interaction and this subsequently helped support positive mental health and wellbeing. The online delivery model helped increase the confidence of the learners in utilising technology to maintain contact with each other, this provided new skills which were utilised both within and beyond the workplace. This social learning aspect ensured positive peer support and brought together rail sector workers that are employed by different railway companies.

Dennis Fallen (Learning Co-ordinator, RMT) said “The initial challenges that the pandemic brought were overcome by the RMT working closely with the learners and WEA to develop a learner-centred approach to the online delivery of this programme. This was the first course which RMT (LUPS) organised to run wholly online. Feedback from the learners has been consistently positive with evidence of strong group dynamics and peer support. Following the success of this programme, RMT has been working with learners to further support their learning journey.”

In October 2020, the RMT LUPS project organised an online presentation for the nine key workers who had achieved their Adult Achievement Award. Mick Cash (General Secretary, RMT) and Wendy Burton (Director, Scottish Union Learning) presented the Certificates to the learners.

# The Learning Fund

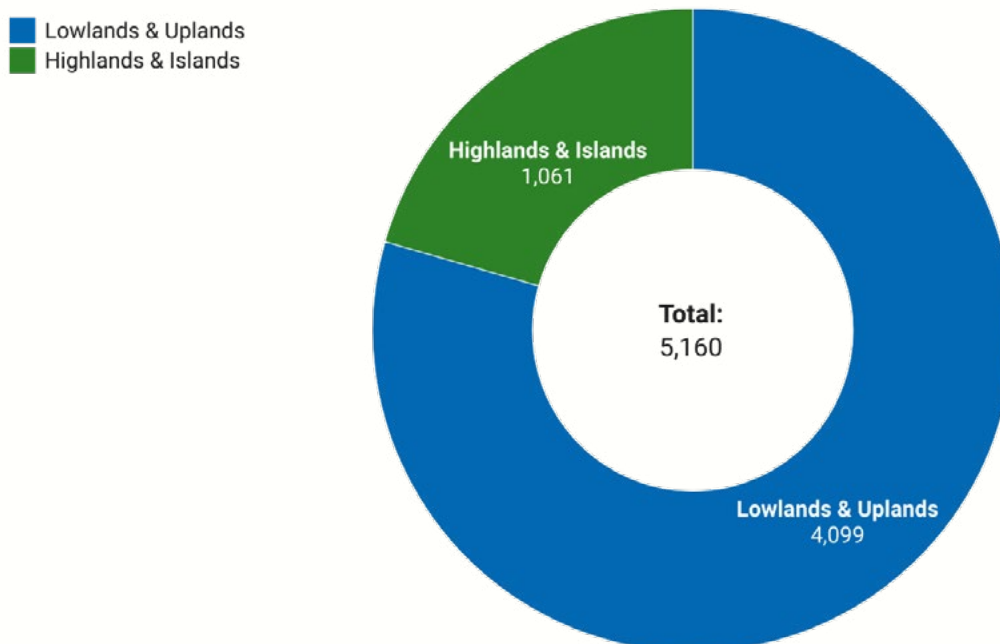
**The Learning Fund is accessed by unions to offer workplace learning opportunities to learners throughout Scotland.**

The Learning Fund supports unions to work with members, employers, and training providers to identify and address skills needs across a wide range of industries and sectors. This has enabled unions to support thousands of workplace learners throughout Scotland each year to upskill and reskill to protect and enhance their employment prospects and improve the skills base for employers.

Unions, learners, and employers have worked together to identify skills gaps and specific workplace learning needs, which has led to delivery of courses that are tailored to suit particular groups of learners and scheduled to take account of shift patterns and other operational requirements. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, learning has been delivered online. This method of delivery has enabled us to engage with learners who previously faced barriers to face-to face delivery, including disabled workers, those with caring responsibilities, and those in rural and remote areas.

Over 5,000 learners participated in accredited and non-accredited courses through the Learning Fund during 2020-21. The type of learning offered reflects the different learner, workplace, industry and sector needs and includes Everyday Skills, IT and cyber resilience skills, vocational and trade skills, and social and health care skills including awareness sessions in mental health, suicide intervention, trauma, autism and dyslexia. The improved skills, knowledge, qualifications, recognition, and certification of skills gained by the learners taking part in these courses has increased their confidence to move into higher level roles and, for some at risk of redundancy, to retain current employment with their existing employer or to seek alternative employment.

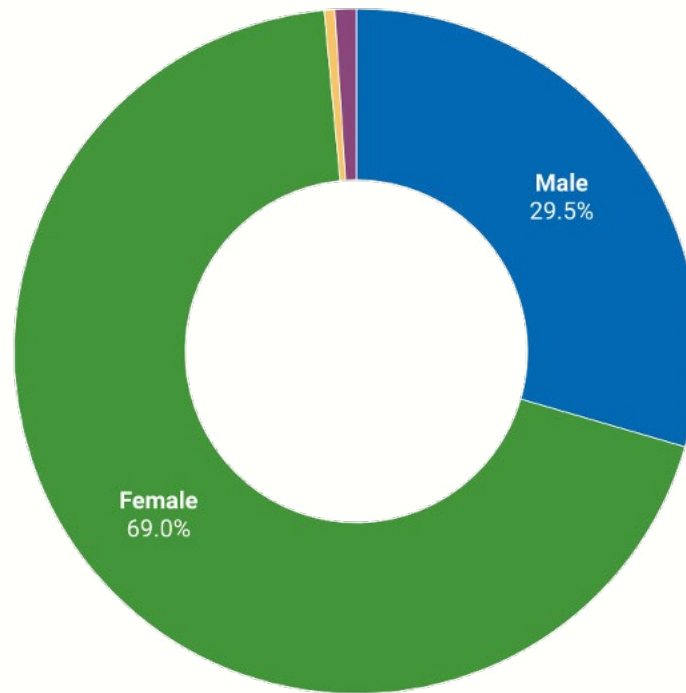
## Learning Fund: number of learners 2020-2021



# Who are our learners?

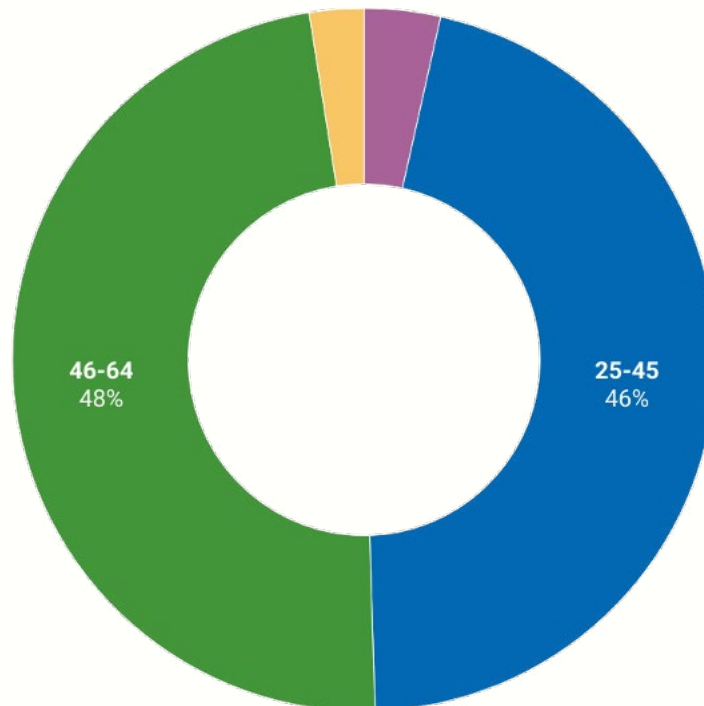
## Gender Identity

- Male (29.5%)
- Female (69.0%)
- Other (0.5%)
- Rather not say (1.0%)

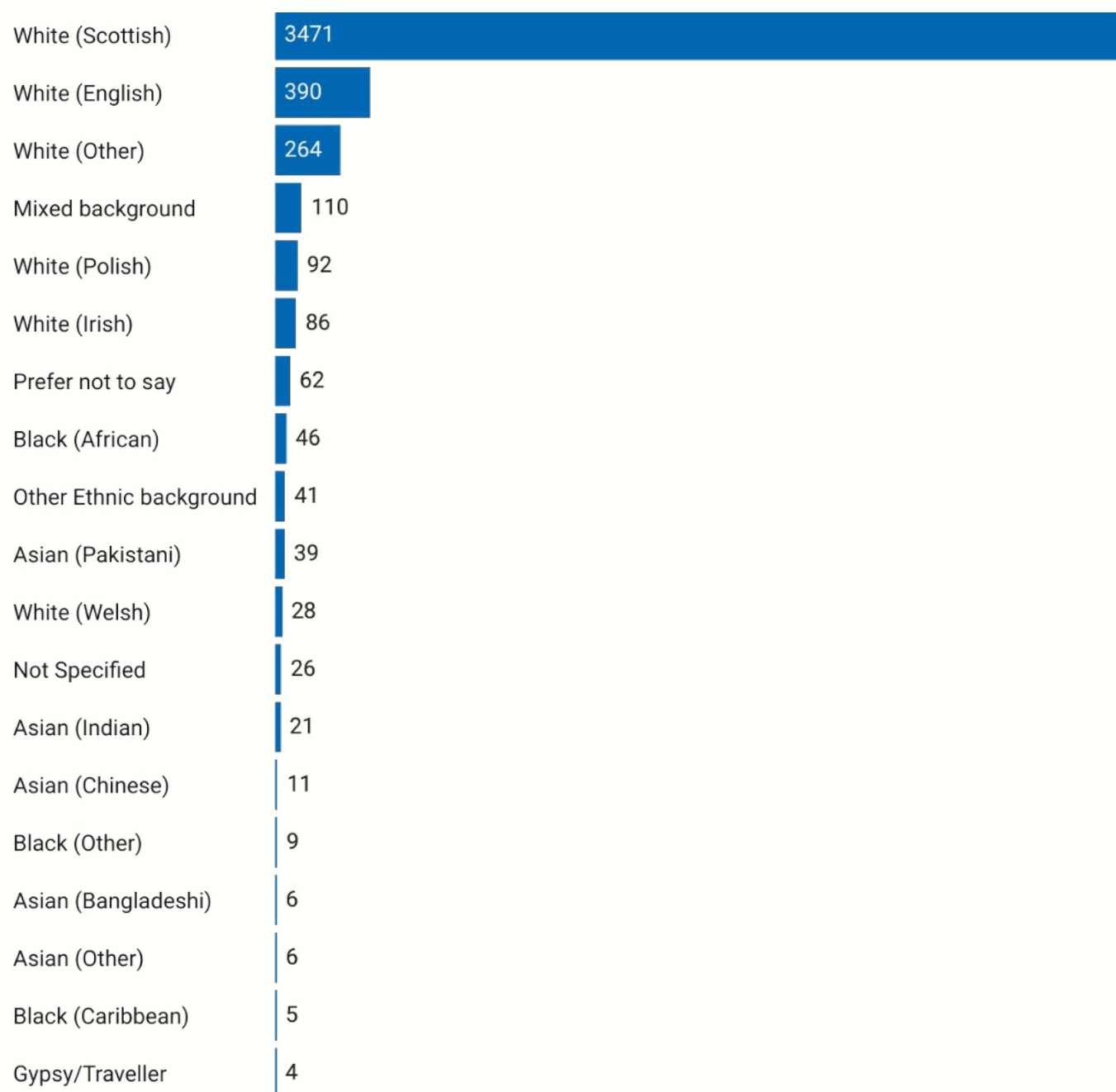


## Age Range

- Under 25 (3.5%)
- 25-45 (46%)
- 46-64 (48%)
- 65 and over (2.5%)



## Ethnic Origin



\*Based on data from 4717 completed Participant Equalities forms returned to SUL in 2020-21



# Learning Fund Case Study

**Union:** Professional Footballer Association Scotland



PFA Scotland's Applied Management in Football programme, in partnership with Napier University, was delivered fully online from August 2020 to March 2021. The one-year course is delivered at SCQF Level 9 and on completion graduates are awarded 60 credits. This was the second year the Applied Management in Football course ran, partially funded by PFA and Scottish Union Learning, and it has proven very popular - with 13 graduating in April 2020, 11 graduating in March 2021, and a further 14 registered on the course starting in August 2021.

## Background

Professional footballers may have many transferrable skills such as taking instruction, self-discipline and working with people as part of a team, but many lack the skills and formal qualifications to build a second career, once their playing career comes to an end. PFA Scotland supports members to plan for the future and gain new skills, and a learning needs analysis identified a gap in the skills needed by footballers to progress their career within the sport and successfully transition from footballer to coach, manager or academy director. While the differences between the responsibilities of a footballer and those of a coach or manager were clear, there was no existing learning pathway available to players, and no employers supporting the transition.

A Learning Fund bid was submitted by PFA Scotland in 2019 to develop a programme of learning which would develop players' off-field skills, and lead to a qualification which would also be transferrable to other workplaces.

## Learning Activity



### Introductory Day

The first day of the programme explores the importance of self-reflection in learning. This is used to underpin all of the sessions as participants are encouraged to look critically at their own experience and explore different aspects of the business of football. The session looks at the importance of a growth mindset in learning, as learners seek opportunities for feedback to improve their performance.

### Regular Sessions – half-day attendance via Zoom (4pm-6pm)

The remaining programme is spread over 8 months and covers a wide range of topics. The level of homework is 12-14 hours per week. Regular group sessions begin with seminars and are followed by a relevant case study discussion. This allows participants to meet up and learn from each other's experience, as well as sharing their own. One of the aims of the course is to encourage collaborative teamwork and use the skills developed through practice.

Topics covered include Creativity and Innovation, Stakeholder Influence, Business Decision Making, Managing Culture, Dealing with The Media, Dealing with Social Media, Developing A Strategy, Football and The Law, Resistance to Change, Football Finance, Influencing – Tactics & Responses, Budgeting and Cash Flow, Negotiating, Football Marketing, Managing the Project, Fan Relationship Management, Stress Management, Building Teams, Implementing Change, Stakeholder Influence.



## Positive Impact

Since completing the course, Gary Irvine has been appointed manager of Forfar FC – and credits the course with helping him prepare for his interview and successfully land the job.



*“Since, completing the course, my career has progressed into a new position as a team manager at Forfar and I have the course, PFA Scotland and tutor Stevie to thank for that.*

*The course work that we covered, along with Stevie’s knowledge and experiences shared with my fellow students helped me through interviews and preparing for my new role.*

*I was unsure how I was going to adapt to an online University course having been full time in football since I was 16 years old and never studied or sampled any sort of learning courses since school.*

*However, the course work and the way in which Stevie presents makes it enjoyable and very understandable.”*

# The Learning Fund

## Highlands and Islands

**Union Learning Projects in the Highlands and Islands are meeting the needs of workers in different sectors through courses supported by the Learning Fund, which reflect the variety of workplace contexts and the challenges of organising learning in the remote and rural region.**

The **National Union of Journalists (NUJ)** Highlands and Islands learning project began the year with a consultation of their members around learning needs, reaching out to workers at HN Media, the West Highland Free Press, Shetland Times and Wyvex Media. The subsequent programme of professional development ran throughout the year and reached more learners than ever before. Subjects covered included podcasting, media law and writing for the web.

In addition to the professional development programme, NUJ’s Collaborative Leadership course, which is designed to make a constructive contribution across the creative industries, enabled participants working in a variety of roles to explore alternative models of leadership to make their workplaces fairer, more inclusive and more collaborative.

The **Scottish Artists Union** (SAU) Highlands and Islands learning project is concerned with finding creative and innovative ways to support freelancers and those in precarious work. SAU's project surveyed its members in 2020, with findings suggesting that:

- artists are among the lowest paid workers within the creative sector, and
- 83% of artists are earning less than the Living Wage.

SAU's programme of professional development for 2021 included courses on *Art Law for Artists*, *Benefits and Finance for Artists* and *Public Speaking for Women in the Visual Arts*. Also on offer was an *Artists & Climate Change* programme, which looked at sustainable ways of working in these times of climate crises.

In the pre-pandemic months of 2020, the **UNISON** Highlands and Islands learning project reached out to workers in rural and island locations through its Learning Road Show, which was organised in partnership with Branch members and staff. The interest generated was significant and resulted in the delivery of several courses including *Introduction to British Sign Language*, which was particularly well received. When the pandemic occurred, UNISON's project shifted online, with a programme reflecting the needs and ambitions of members.

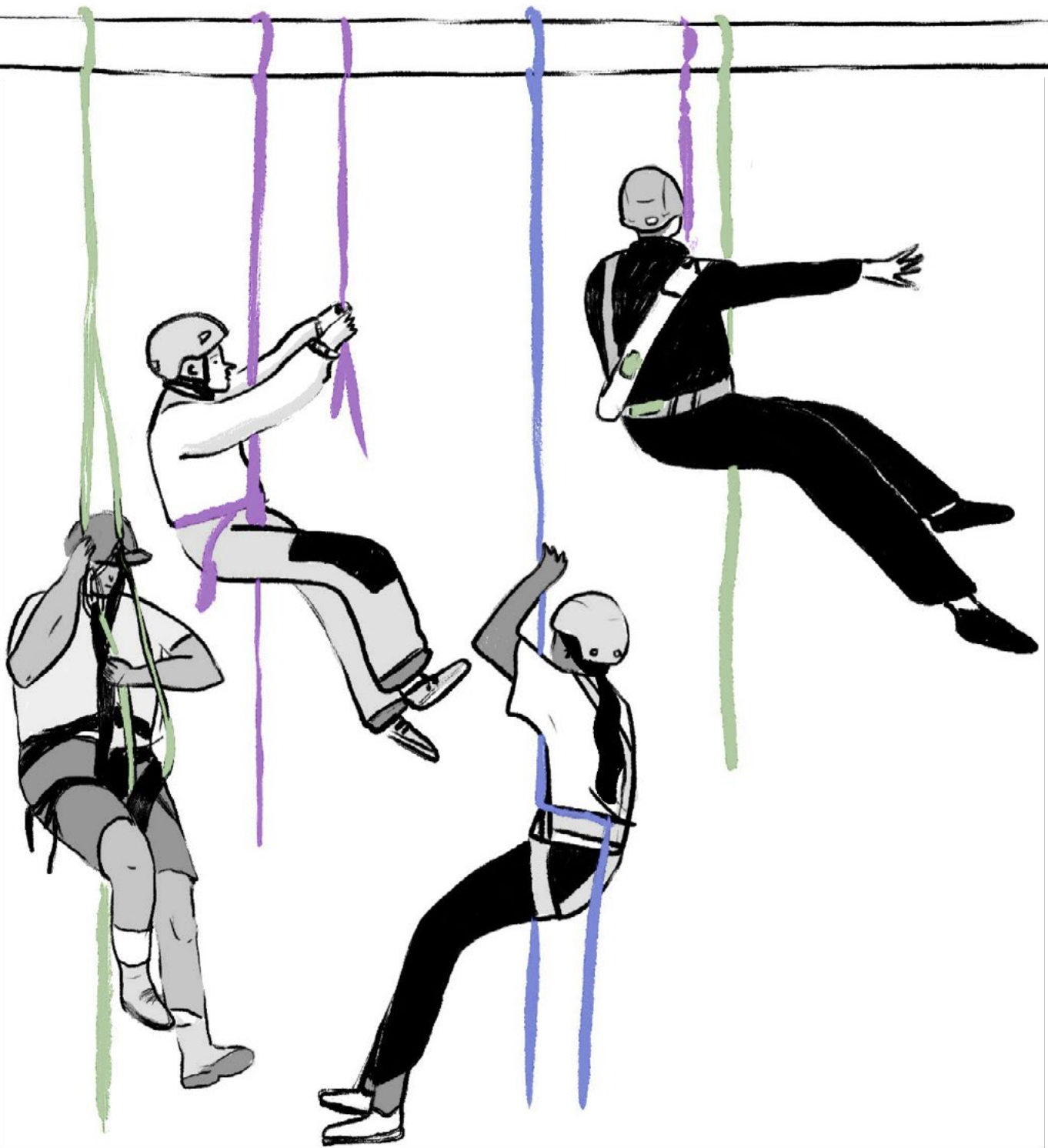
Subjects included: *Understanding Depression*, *Suicide Prevention*, *Managing Menopause at Work*, *Effective Team Working* and *CMI Introduction to First Line Management*.

Evidence from previous pandemics suggests that health and social care workers have an increased risk of adverse mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. UNISON continued to offer relevant learning opportunities throughout 2020 to support workers during extremely challenging circumstances.

It understandable that resilience proved to be a common theme throughout 2020's learning programme. The **RMT** Highlands and Islands learning project developed a range of mental health and wellbeing programmes aimed at challenging stigma and building networks of support. Programmes included: *Mental Health First Aid*, *Awareness for Line Managers* and a *See Me - Time to Talk* event.

Inclusion and Diversity continued to be priorities for the RMT project throughout 2020, and a number of LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Staff Networks courses were delivered for workers at CalMac. These courses formed the basis of an action plan which led to structural change through the creation of 'Inclusive CalMac', a group tasked with implementing measures for a fairer, more inclusive workplace, with genuine representation from workers at all levels of the organisation.

The **Unite the Union** Highlands and Islands learning project supports members from a broad range of sectors, some of which became particularly vulnerable in 2020. With significant redundancies anticipated across the aviation sector, support from the project around employability skills and retraining ensured workers were able to develop skills and knowledge to support themselves and their families going forward. The transition from Oil and Gas to renewable industries also has significant implications for large numbers of Unite members across H&I and in 2020, the project created numerous opportunities for reskilling and upskilling, including *Mental Health Awareness*, *Portable Appliance Testing*, *Abrasive Wheels*, *Rope Access Level 1* and *Electrical Vehicle Charging*. Finally, like all of the H&I projects, Unite developed successful learning programmes around mental health and wellbeing to support workers in various sectors in what was the most challenging of years.



# Learning Fund Case Study

**Union:** Scottish Artists Union (SAU)

**Location:** Highlands and Islands



## Public Speaking for Women in the Arts – January 2021

*"I don't feel there's enough female voices in the arts.  
There's a huge gap that can be filled."*

Kelly Green, artist.

In the past two years, since SAU started running courses in Highlands and Islands I, there had been a small but noticeable drop-out of female members citing anxiety around attending learning events. The Project responded with a course to address the situation. Training around public speaking is not offered as part of an art school education and artists find themselves having to regularly deliver lectures, give exhibition tours and demonstrate to groups within a workshop setting as part of their professional working life. Artists need to find an authentic and personal voice that articulates their own artwork.

Originally planned as a face-to-face course for early November 2020 at Cromarty Community Cinema, the pandemic led to postponement until January 2021, and whilst the change meant a couple of people were no longer able to take part, the shift to online did increase the geographic reach of the course to include members from Island communities who would not have travelled in the winter for an in-person course. Delivered by Susan Christie and Dr Vanessa Collingridge, the course aimed to support women to become more confident about speaking in public by learning how to craft and deliver a clear compelling message within a supportive network of peers. The interactive online sessions included exercises that dealt with voice, breathing and body language.

The online sessions were broken down in to 1 hour 15 minutes periods with decent breaks in between for learners to work independently to prepare a two-minute talk at the end of the course. The practical training covered:

- Exploring the barriers - when speaking publicly, what are the physical and emotional barriers that are holding us (all) back - and what can we do about them? This session explored mindsets and "stress profiles" - what happens physically and emotionally to us when we are about to speak in public.
- Presenting Yourself Online - a practical, interactive session which focussed on the three basics of presenting with impact: how you LOOK (setting up your screen, your "frame" - what works and what doesn't); how you SOUND (voice coaching for beginners. How to sound confident, relaxed and convincing online); what you actually SAY (crafting the right message for the right audience; getting your point across).

To reduce screen time the course was split over two days, and instead of group work, 1-to-1 sessions were offered in the afternoon with the tutors. During the 1-to-1 sessions, nearly all participants expressed having neuro-diverse conditions like ADHD and autism as well as experiencing high levels of anxiety around public speaking. Although totally confidential, the scale of hidden disabilities within the group was not anticipated, so planning for neuro-diverse members will become a stronger focus for SAU when developing future learning.

The course was attended by 18 SAU members, including 17 from the Highlands and Islands. The Friday night session included a film screening. In the final session, the group came together to celebrate their work over the past day/evening, sharing their 2-minute talks, and getting constructive and supportive feedback from the tutors and fellow participants. Although many expressed fears of doing this, everyone was able to take part within a supportive and encouraging environment.

SAU have received several messages since the training expressing how the course has helped with learner's confidence. Comments from learners include:

*"It was a really informative and insightful workshop. The facilitator was supportive and inclusive and I came away feeling connected and armed with loads of practical tools to use and try out."*



*"It was a really good day and it was lovely to share that with everyone. Loads of really useful stuff and I'll use every scrap of it."*

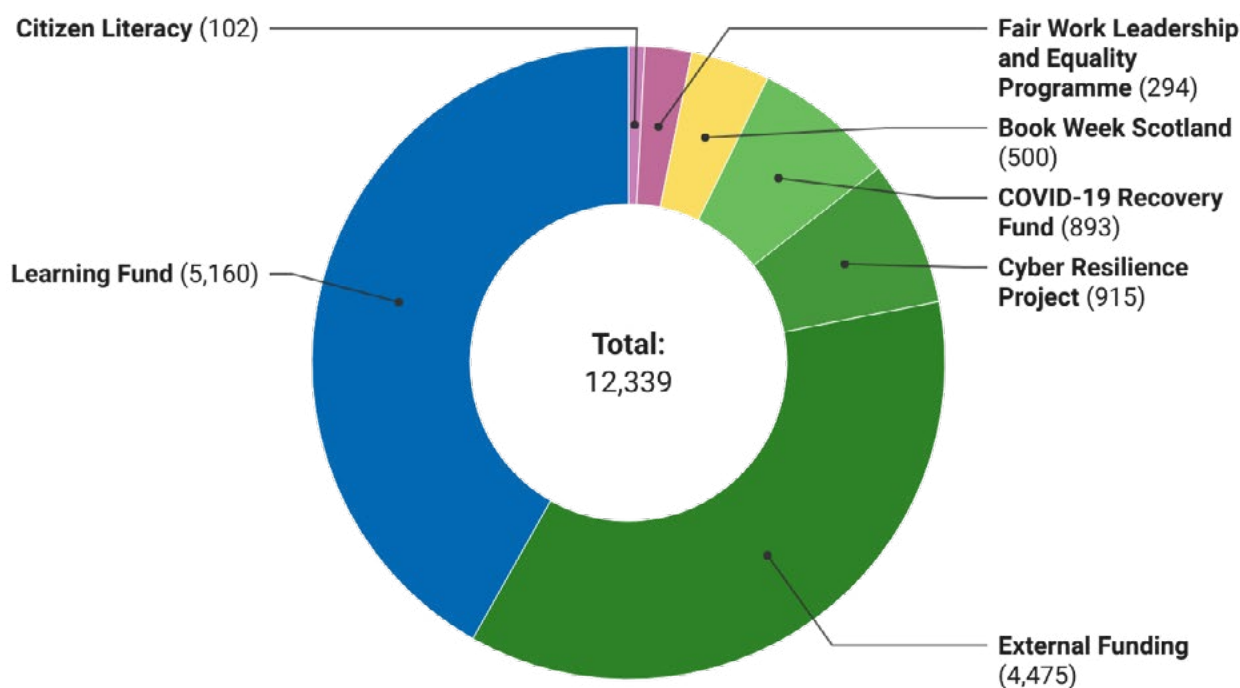


*"Thank you for creating this workshop which was so thoughtfully conducted, and even though it had to be held online, the space felt very supported leading to a greater sense of connection with everyone."*



# Learning Outcomes

Scottish Union Learning records information on outcomes from a range of learning activity throughout the year. These include outcomes from the SUL Learning Fund, Fair Work Leadership and Equality Programme, and Cyber Resilience Project, in addition to outcomes from externally-funded sources and other initiatives. During the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, SUL recorded 12,339 learning outcomes – the highest ever total!



## **SUL Learning Fund**

The Learning Fund is accessed by unions to offer workplace learning opportunities to learners throughout Scotland. The Learning Fund supports unions to identify and address skills needs across a wide range of industries and sectors.

## **SUL Fair Work Leadership and Equality Programme**

Building leadership capacity within unions is essential in taking forward the Fair Work agenda. This programme is aimed at developing leadership capacity at all levels within the trade union movement in Scotland, with a focus on under-represented groups.

## **SUL Cyber Resilience Project**

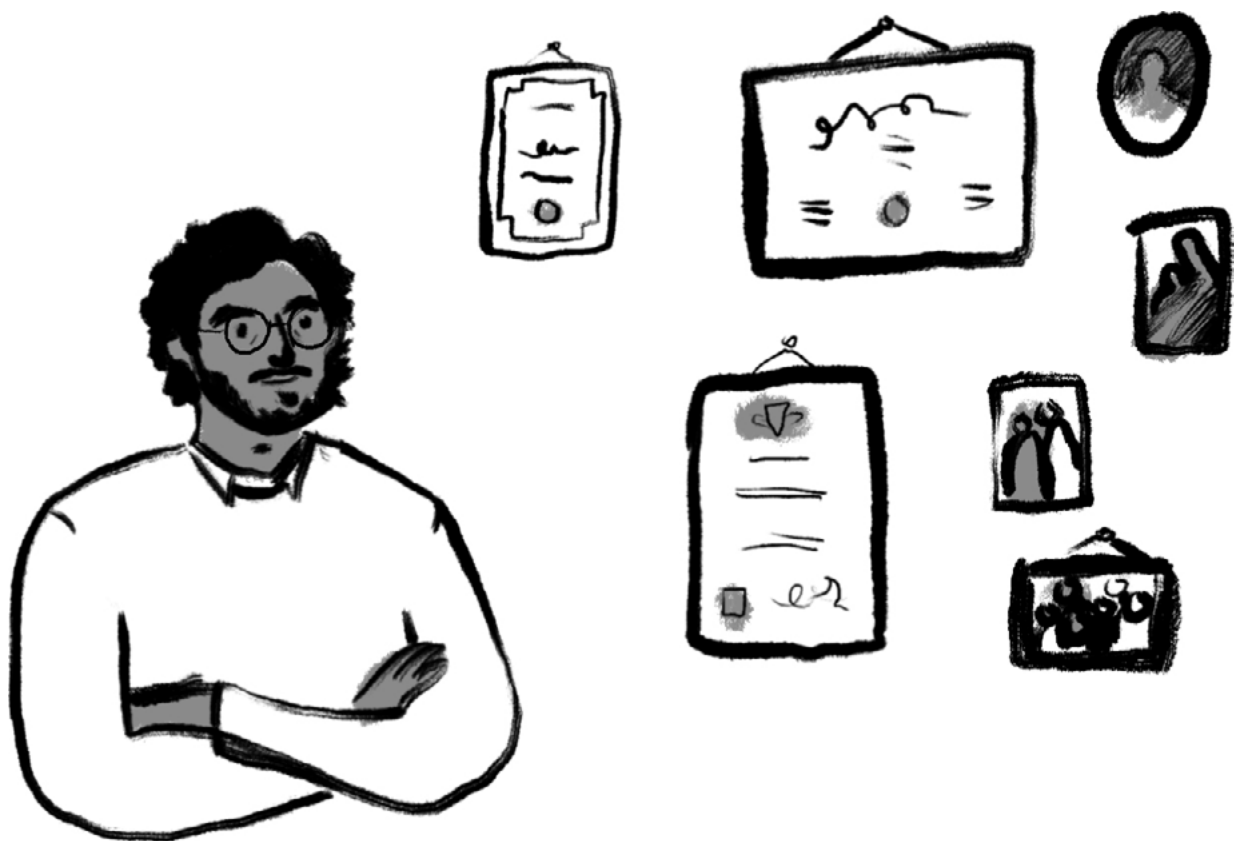
This project is aimed at building the capacity of organisations, unions, reps and workers by embedding cyber resilience into their learning offer in workplaces. In partnership with Digital Skills Education Limited, the project provides the opportunity to continue to improve workers' cyber security and data protection skills, and provides reps with Cyber Resilience 'Train the Trainer' skills.

## External Learning

Unions delivering SUL Development Fund projects also report on external learning outcomes achieved due to the work of these projects. This learning activity is funded by unions, employers, and also through partnerships with learning providers.

## Other Initiatives

Additional learning outcomes achieved during 2020-21 include our work with Scottish Book Trust, to promote the Book Week Scotland Campaign, and outcomes from the Citizen Literacy project, led by City of Glasgow College, to develop an adult literacy interactive phonic app for learners.





# Improving Everyday Skills

Scottish Union Learning promotes Everyday Skills activity through Development Fund projects, STUC Conferences, Learning Conferences, Everyday Skills Events and Union Rep Development Days.

Scottish Union Learning works with Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Dyslexia Scotland, Dyslexia Scotwest, Learning Link Scotland, Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Qualifications Authority, Workers' Educational Association and other partners to raise awareness of Everyday Skills and suitable means of support.

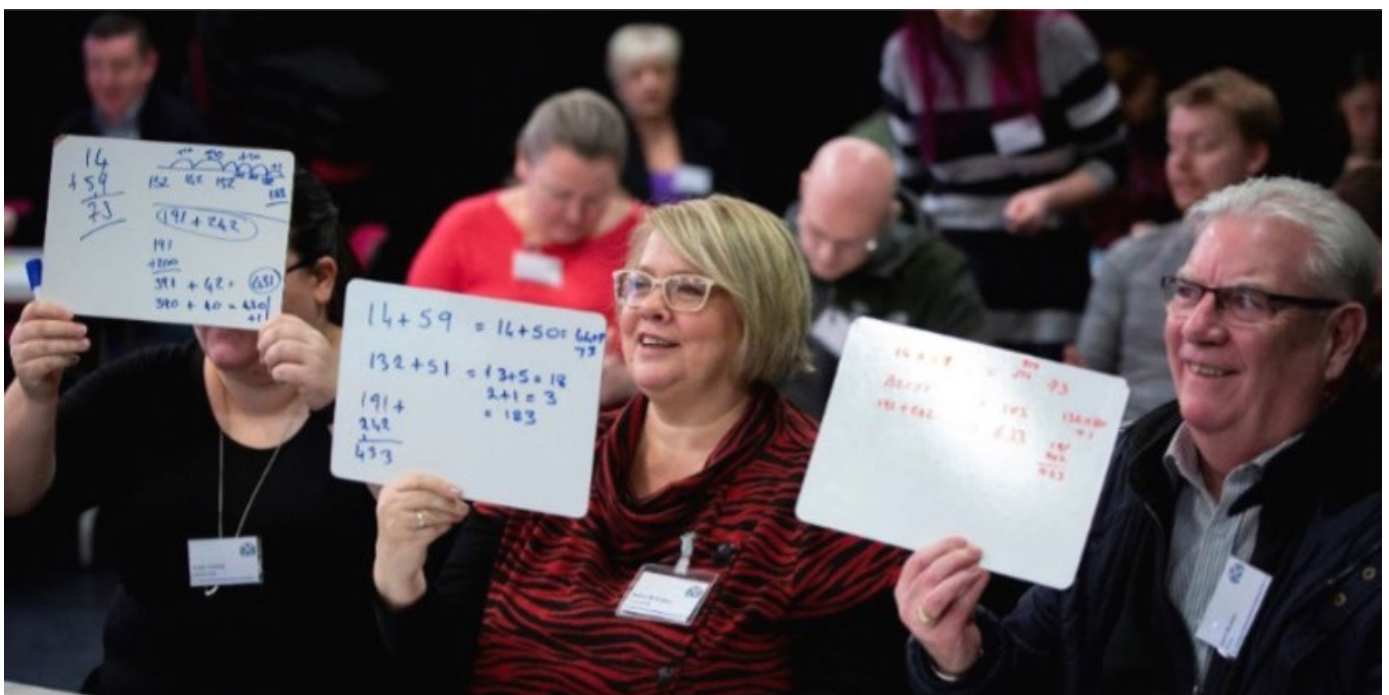
## Everyday Skills

Scottish Union Learning defines Everyday Skills as the language, literacy, numeracy, basic IT, digital and cyber 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 abilities.

## 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, Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) Education and Training Strategy for Scotland 2017, and Safe, Secure and Prosperous: A Cyber Resilience Strategy for Scotland Public Sector Action Plan 2015. Unions are also supported in participating in national initiatives such as Book Week Scotland, Dyslexia Awareness Week and Maths Week Scotland.

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 relating to workplace literacies, digital participation, cyber security, dyslexia and additional learning support needs; it is also responsible for contributing to the planning of the annual Everyday Skills Event.





## Everyday Skills Spotlight

### Book Week Scotland

Scottish Union Learning and Scottish Book Trust worked in partnership with unions to celebrate Book Week Scotland, which took place in November 2020. Unions participated in a series of virtual book-related events to read more during Book Week Scotland. Activities were based on Scottish Book Trust's 'Future' theme and reps, members and workers encouraged to share stories.

CWU organised and hosted a programme of virtual interactive events with authors Nadine Aisha Jassat and Alison Irvine who provided talks, storytelling, reading and creative writing workshops for members.

NUJ celebrated Book Week Scotland by delivering a 'Virtual Book Club.' Top Scottish writers Angus Peter Campbell and Janice Galloway provided a series of short readings and shared their thoughts about their writing, the use of language and collaborating across different creative mediums. Workers were invited to participate in question-and-answer sessions and provided with advice about developing their writing skills.



SAU in the Highlands and Islands hosted an informal practical session around flag books which are unique 3D books based on opening and closing movement changes and experiences. Members participated in a tutor led PDF tutorial which included sharing a quote from a favourite book. Participants could choose to make a start on the flag book before the session or join on the day and work alongside everyone online.

Participants could choose to incorporate existing work on paper or creative writing to make their flag book.

Usdaw organised a series of events on books and reading which included producing and distributing a free book and distributing Covid-secure Book Week Scotland campaign bags to ULRs. In addition, the Week provided Usdaw with the opportunity to highlight their work with the Royal Literary Fund's 'Write Now' project encouraging retail, distribution, and food production workers to tell their stories and during the aftermath of the pandemic.

*"We are delighted to still have been able to get involved in Book Week Scotland and are grateful for the support that allowed us to distribute our ever-popular campaign bags. Book Week Scotland also had clear links for us to the work we are doing with the Royal Literary Fund, in encouraging Usdaw members to share their stories of working throughout the pandemic. These stories are a powerful testament to the work our members have delivered during the pandemic, and how much of an essential service they have proved themselves to be."*

- Jill Little Woodhouse, Usdaw's Lifelong Learning Project Worker

# Digital Unions: Cyber Resilience

This project secured further funding from Scottish Government's Cyber Resilience Unit and continued to build the cyber capacity of organisations, unions, reps and workers. This was achieved by embedding virtual cyber resilience training into their learning offer in workplaces. In partnership with Digital Skills Education Limited, the project provided reps, members and workers with the opportunity to continue to improve their cyber security and cyber resilience skills. The cyber security workshops included training on Picking Better Passwords, Staying Safe on Social Media, Staying Safe when Working from Home, Keeping Online Meetings Safe Online and Cyber 'Train the Trainer' workshops. Workshops were delivered with ASLEF, Community, CWU, FBU, FDA, GMB, Prospect, PCS, RMT, UNISON, Usdaw and Unite, reaching over 550 learners.

## Case Study: UNISON



### Staying Safe on Social Media

UNISON, the public service union, and Unite the Union, the UK and Ireland's largest union with members working across all sections of the economy, came together for this webinar in July 2020 to learn more about how to stay safe on social media.

The 33 UNISON members and ten Unite members were joined by an additional 68 attendees, 42 of whom were members of 12 other trade unions, and 26 of whom were not trade union members. The webinar had been promoted as widely as possible, due to the increasing relevance of the subject in the post-Covid landscape, and uptake exceeded expectations. Attendees learned how they could protect themselves and their families when using social media, and how to recognise some of the socially engineered cyber-attacks related to COVID-19. All participants who gave feedback indicated that their knowledge of staying safe on social media had increased as a result of the webinar.

*"Excellent information at an easy-to understand level."*

*"... highlighted issues I was unaware of and gave useful advice to protect myself."*

### Keeping Online Meetings Safe and Secure

Sixteen reps and members of UNISON attended a virtual Cyber Security workshop on the subject of 'Keeping Online Meetings Safe and Secure' – an important topic in the context of the rapid move to mass homeworking. As workers had to adapt to, and increasingly depend on technology, for both work and personal purposes, this course used advice from the National Cyber Security Centre and shared tips on how to keep video conferencing safe. It included sensible steps participants could take to protect their privacy when using conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Hangouts and Teams.

This workshop was offered at three different times, on two separate days. This increased the accessibility of the course, allowing participants to work around shift patterns and caring commitments. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with all learners reporting improved knowledge and understanding at the end of the course, and many requests for further workshops of this type.

*"I've never felt confident about computers before but have learnt so much from these courses. I feel more confident about using computers which will be very useful for my work."*

## Case Study: Communication Workers' Union



John McAlinden is a ULR with the Communications Workers Union (CWU) and is based in Dundee. Having worked for BT as IT support, John became interested in learning around the designing and deployment of enterprise level networks. Through speaking to colleagues, he quickly realised this was the direction in which he wanted to progress his career. John reached out to the CWU regional lead and successfully secured a place on the Scottish Union Learning funded CISCO CCNA Routing and Switching course. After a year, John passed the exam and became certified.

John then enrolled in a microcredential with the Open University, having heard about the course from Scottish Union Learning staff. The course gave learners access to the CISCO Cyber Ops programme, which was an invaluable introduction to formal CISCO industry training. In addition to this, the Open University gave learners access to a wraparound course to support learners with online study. Speaking about the benefit of completing these courses through Scottish Union Learning, John said:

*'The difference in participating in learning through Scottish Union Learning is that you not only complete it, you successfully complete it because you have structured support built around you'*

This support, John says, took the form of a WhatsApp group and regular study group with other learners. John is registered blind and found the support from the learning network invaluable. Having progressed in his learning journey, John is now looking to get his CISCO Cyber Ops certification.



# Fair Work: Leadership and Equality Programme

The STUC obtained funding from the Scottish Government's Fair Work Directorate to help develop leadership capacity within the trade union movement in Scotland. This programme is managed by Scottish Union Learning. Building leadership capacity within unions is considered to be essential in taking forward the Fair Work agenda. This programme is aimed at developing leadership capacity at all levels within the trade union movement in Scotland, with a focus on under-represented groups. For 2020-21, the Scottish Government revised the criteria to include greater support for workers impacted disproportionately by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, including greater support for Black workers.

Participating unions included: BFAWU, EIS, FBU, FDA, PCS, UNISON, Unite, YWP, STUC Black Workers' Committee, and a Highlands and Islands cross-union project. On completion of the activities funded through the programme, a final dissemination event took place in Glasgow in March 2021, allowing participating unions to share experience and good practice in relation to the development and delivery of leadership and equality training.

As part of the Fair Work: Leadership and Equality Programme, further efforts are being made to develop the Equality Rep Network, including the continuation of quarterly networking forums and increased learning and development opportunities. Scottish Union Learning has hosted eight Equality Rep Networking sessions to date, as well as an equalities panel discussion in December 2020. The sessions are designed to give reps an opportunity to discuss the challenges of their role, share good practice, and discuss any learning needs. Several pieces of learning were organised as a result of the networking sessions. Reps attended a training session around homeworking using Zoom, sessions with Thompsons on Employment Law and Equalities Legislation, a course with Show Racism the Red Card, and courses around Fair Work, Mental Health and Hidden Disabilities. More recently reps have been given the opportunity to engage with learning around neurodiversity.

In co-operation with Equality Reps and the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee, Scottish Union Learning published an accessibility guidance document. This document is employer-focussed and can be used by reps to engage with their employer on how to ensure accessibility in the workplace.

Further funding has now been secured to allow work to continue through the Fair Work: Leadership and Equality Programme in 2021/2022.





# Apprenticeships

Scottish Union Learning has continued work around with Skills Development Scotland on the growing 'Apprenticeship Family' programme through representation on the Apprenticeship Approvals Group, Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board. SUL has worked with affiliates to ensure appropriate trade union representation in the now established Technical Expert Groups.

Trade unions have continued to consult with Sector Skills Councils in the development of Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, SUL participated in consultations and proposals to address the impact on Apprentices and Apprenticeship opportunities.

## Case Study: Unite the Union



Through the union's links with the Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust (SECTT) / (SELECT), the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF), the Scottish Building Apprenticeship and Training Council (SBATC) and Scottish Painting and the Decorating Apprenticeship Council (SPADAC), Unite negotiate the national agreements and working rules for all construction apprentices in Scotland. A comprehensive apprenticeship agreement is issued to employers with the promulgated collectively bargained terms for the apprentice, to make sure they are aware at what minimum rate the young person should be paid. These links also provide a mechanism where the apprentice can independently raise issues and seek guidance.

In 2018, Unite and the Scottish Government introduced the role of a construction Fair Work Apprentice Coordinator (FWAC) to engage with the trade federations and college sector to identify apprentices undertaking their necessary training, and provide support and guidance where required; and to engage with these young workers and increase their knowledge and understanding of their employment rights and how this relates to the Fair Work. Working with the Unite organising department, the FWAC visits construction apprentices in colleges and workplaces across Scotland to promote Fair Work and trade union membership.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this activity was moved online and Unite worked with colleges, SECTT and SNIPEF training officers to ensure it was possible to engage with the new intake of apprentices and adult trainees this year. At the beginning of the initial lockdown in 2020, Unite conducted a survey of construction apprentices. The survey was sent to all Unite construction apprentice members, and through SECTT, SNIPEF, SBATC and SPADAC it was also sent to non-union apprentices. Over 600 apprentices completed the survey. The results identified key concerns, including issues with furlough payments, redundancy, concerns over college work, future prospects, and a complete lack of communications from employers.

A major issue highlighted by fourth year apprentices was they could not complete their apprenticeship, as they could not take the final skills test. There were approximately 1100 apprentices across all trades affected. This information was passed onto the Scottish Government and the trade federations, which resulted in plans being put in place to address the issue as a priority. Colleges were allowed to open earlier than planned, and opened at weekends, to ensure these apprentices could complete their training.

Extending trade union recognition and collective bargaining at workplace and sector levels can address areas where the young worker's voice is absent in Scottish workplaces. The work Unite does with construction apprentices proves how effective this can be, ensuring young workers' voices can be heard.

# Awards

## Learner of the Year Award 2020

**The Learner of the Year Award was established by Scottish Union Learning to recognise the range of journeys currently undertaken by learners in the workplace, supported by trade unions.**



The recipient of the 2020 Learner of the Year Award was Barry Young, a member of Unite the Union. Barry, who works in Kilmarnock as a painter in Housing Asset Services for East Ayrshire Council, received the 10th Annual Learner of the Year Award from the STUC at the Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Event, which took place online on 25 February 2021. The Award was presented by Wendy Burton, Director of Scottish Union Learning.

Barry was chosen for his commitment as a learner and as an advocate for suicide prevention and mental health awareness. He has overcome numerous challenges, including juggling the roles of workplace Rep, on site assessor and verifier, and suicide interventionist.

His personal learning and skills development journey began when he was elected a workplace Union Learning Rep, and subsequently a Shop Steward and Health & Safety Rep. Through Scottish Union Learning, Barry completed Health, Safety and Environment training and obtained a Gold CSCS card on two occasions within the last ten years.

His learning within the area of mental health has meant workers have had access to vital support. Since beginning training in suicide prevention via his employer in December 2018, Barry has carried out six interventions. He has also used his networks to enable workers from all local authority areas who were affected by the collapse of Thomas Cook to access to East Ayrshire Council's counselling services.

Barry's experience has also provided a good understanding of Modern Apprenticeship frameworks, and the standards involved in assessing and verifying craft portfolios. He is one of a very small group of people outside the college sector with the expertise to carry out onsite assessments of experienced workers with no, or limited, formal qualifications and apprentices completing their training in Painting and Decorating.

Currently working with the wider union to support apprentices who have been left unemployed due to the global pandemic, Barry engages with his employer through the 'Adopt an Apprenticeship' scheme. Ultimately, Barry is supporting the construction sector's aims to ensure young apprentices become fully qualified and pursue a career within their trade - which is increasingly important, as the sector faces skills shortages.

## STUC Union Rep Awards

**The STUC Union Rep Awards consists of four awards, two of which are administered by Scottish Union Learning: The Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning and the STUC Equality Award.**

### Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning

**Established in 2006 to commemorate Helen Dowie's lifetime achievements in lifelong learning, and to recognise other trade unionists' commitment to union values and promoting the learning agenda in Scotland, this award is sponsored by the Open University in Scotland.**

The recipient of the 2020 Award for Lifelong Learning was Shenaz Boyce, Unite the Union, who works in security at Glasgow Airport. Shenaz is both a workplace rep and a Union Learning Rep and was instrumental in launching the workplace learning initiative within Glasgow Airport. She was also involved in the establishment of a learning agreement between the employer and union.

Working alongside the Union Learning Organiser, Shenaz facilitated an organisation-wide learning needs analysis, using the data from this to create a learning programme available to all employees of Glasgow Airport. Making a compelling case for the day-to-day organisational benefits of some of the courses, such as British Sign Language and Autism Awareness, Shenaz was able to secure paid release for attendees. The impact of these courses was demonstrated in subsequent interactions with airport users that benefited both employees and customers, giving them a more inclusive and accessible experience.

In bringing the trade union learning agenda into Glasgow Airport, Shenaz had to work around hurdles such as staff shift patterns, the impact of peak holiday times, public safety requirements and ongoing industrial disputes. Despite this, her enthusiasm and commitment kept the learning programme going as she went above and beyond to meet the expectations of union members.

### STUC Equality Award



**The recipient of the 2020 STUC Equality Award is Kate Sang, UCU. Kate is UCU Equality Rep at Heriot Watt University and Professor of Gender and Employment Studies at Edinburgh Business School.**

Kate's tireless commitment to equity and equality has had a major impact on her own workplace, her union and other workforces. She has been particularly effective in advocating for disability awareness and inclusivity and has written prolifically with an intersectional approach to explore the experiences of disabled women.

# Conferences and Events

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

The Scottish Union Learning Conference and Highlands and Islands Conference were cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead, SUL organised a series of webinars throughout the year to support Union Learning Reps and Project Workers in the delivery of their learning programmes during the pandemic. These webinars were open to all union Reps, activists and members.

Between June 2020 – March 2021, twenty-two webinars were organised - with a combined reach of over 1000 - by SUL and STUC in partnership with external organisations, including The Open University in Scotland, the NHS and Show Racism the Red Card.

## Webinars 2020 - 2021

- 9 June: Make your online learning engaging with Open University
- 15 June: No Return to Unsafe Workplaces in Scotland
- 16 June: COVID-19: upskilling and reskilling across Scotland's sectors with Open University
- 22 June: Roving Health and Safety Reps Webinar
- 23 June: Show Racism the Red Card in the workplace
- 25 June: Organising Opportunities in the Post-COVID Period
- 29 June: Open Learning Champions with Open University
- 30 June: Going Back to Work after Lockdown
- 7 July: Open Learn: Red Clydeside with Open University and Glasgow Trades Union Council
- 10 July: Briefing session: Gain Skills with the Open University
- 23 July: Safe Return to Work through trade union action
- 17 September: Supporting workers with health conditions – a NHS and trade union approach
- 30 September: Open Learning Champions (Open University in Scotland and Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands & Islands)
- 1 October: Health and Safety Webinar with Scottish Hazards
- 6 October: Supporting workers with Health Issues part 2 - NHS/STUC/Edinburgh TUC
- 11 November: Introduction to The Citizen Literacy Project: 'Reading and Writing for Everyone'
- 16 November: Congress Fringe: Learning in the Time of COVID-19
- 18 November: Congress Fringe: Read Yourself Happy
- 18 November: Zero Waste Scotland - Scotland's Circular Economy: Now and in the future
- 19 November: Congress Fringe: Staying Safe and Secure when Working from Home during COVID-19
- 19 November: Redundancy: The National Transition Training Fund and how unions can work with PACE
- 2 February: Skills Development Scotland:  
Apprenticeship Employer Grant & Adopt An Apprentice



## Everyday Skills Event

The Everyday Skills Event was held virtually on 25 February 2021.

The theme of the Event was Everyday Skills: Virtual Learning and 60 delegates attended. Wendy Burton, Director of Scottish Union Learning, addressed the event and announced the SUL Learner of the Year, Barry Young from Unite the Union.

Interactive sessions included:

- How to be irreplaceable in an automated workplace  
– Craig Steele and Daniel Devine, Digital Skills Education Ltd
- Developing creative strategies to cope during the pandemic  
– Mary Colson, Royal Literary Fund
- An update on COP26, including how to access information and resources to support workers during climate change and explore opportunities to access green skills training  
– Emma Woodham and Alison McLachlan from Glasgow Science Centre.
- An overview of The Future of Work: Baseline Employment Analysis and Skills Pathways for the Circular Economy' report by Zero Waste Scotland and Circle Economy. The first assessment of its kind, it provided vital data on how sustainable the nation's workforce is now, and how to drive progress forward by creating valuable new jobs and businesses to forge a truly circular economy – Sarah Wotton from Zero Waste Scotland

## Leadership Dissemination Event

The Leadership Dissemination Event took place virtually on 17 March 2021.

Unions that received funding through the Leadership Development Programme delivered presentations on the activities they had undertaken, sharing experience and good practice. This year, twelve projects provided feedback.

## STUC Congress

Due to the pandemic, STUC Congress was postponed until November 2020, when it took place online. SUL held an online fringe meeting as part of STUC Congress on 16 November 2020 to demonstrate how unions have adapted learning provision to meet the needs of learners during the pandemic. Webinars were also organised to run as part of Congress with The Citizen Literacy Project; Scottish Book Trust; Zero Waste Scotland; Digital Skills Education and Skills Development Scotland.

# Working with Partners

**Scottish Union Learning has developed strong working relationships with many learning and skills partnerships throughout Scotland. The following are some of the partners SUL has worked with during the last year.**

## Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

SUL has a strong focus on working with SDS around the apprenticeship programme through membership of the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board Employer Engagement Group, Standards and Frameworks Group, Apprenticeship Approvals Group, PACE and the Engineering Skills Leadership Group. This ensures that unions can influence the development of Apprenticeship Frameworks and the wider apprenticeships programme. SUL delivered webinars with SDS on the National Transition Training Fund (NTTF), Apprenticeship funding and PACE.

## The Open University in Scotland (OUiS)

A series of webinars were organised in June and July in partnership with OUiS, focussing on the rapid move to Online Learning. Participants were able to develop their understanding of:

- good practice in supporting learners utilising Online Learning
- how to access to high quality Online Learning resources
- and becoming Open Learning Champions.

The Open Learning Champions webinar was run for a second time in September. OUiS funded six cohorts of union learners to access postgraduate microcredentials specialising in areas of CISCO and Online Teaching. Work on a started on the 'Women in Scotland 1900 – 2020: Workplace Struggles' project, where learners will develop material for inclusion on the OpenLearn platform.

## Scottish Book Trust

SUL continued to work with Scottish Book Trust to promote the Book Week Scotland Campaign. By providing access to a small pot of additional funding, unions develop and deliver book related events and activities for reps and workers in November each year.

## Citizen Literacy

SUL worked with lead partner, City of Glasgow College, to develop, deliver and promote a new adult literacy interactive phonics app for learners. The app is available to use in web format and on smartphones. It is suitable for adults with low level literacy skills and is supported by tutor resources and materials.

## Zero Waste Scotland

SUL continued to work with Zero Waste Scotland to promote current research and information to unions on The Future of Work Baseline Employment Analysis and Skills Pathways for the Circular Economy in Scotland. This included feedback on Just Transition, Green Economy, Climate Emergency, Future Skills and Green Jobs and Net Zero Targets policies for Scotland.

# TUC Education Scotland

**TUC Education in Scotland works in partnership with Scottish Union Learning to develop and deliver training opportunities for Reps across the country. Over 900 Scottish Reps completed online courses with us in 2020 – across a wide variety of topics including employment law; health and safety; union learning; organising and mental health.**

TUC Education trains union reps to work with union members and officers to make a difference in their workplace. Training is run in partnership with further education colleges and online across the UK. Union reps attend from a wide range of industries and unions. There are two trade union education centres across Scotland, based within City of Glasgow College and Fife College. Reps in Scotland can choose from self-study online training, supported tutor led delivery of learning, a webinar or an interactive guide.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have moved to a fully online model of delivery. We have supported the delivery of online courses through our new online learning platform Stream. Stream can complement the online tutor led delivery of courses, as well as allowing Reps to access some self-directed study modules in their own time. This means courses can be accessed as soon as a rep takes office, at a time and place most convenient, using a smart phone, tablet or computer.

In addition to our Rep courses TUC Education delivers interactive guides and webinars. Interactive guides are short, bite-sized chunks of online learning that contain a mix of text, video and quizzes, and we have over 30 to choose from. Webinars are short briefings held for an online audience. Webinars have been very popular during the pandemic, we are regularly seeing over 1000 Reps attending.

TUC Education in Scotland works to ensure materials and learning in Scotland are relevant and accessible for Scottish Reps. Work is ongoing to develop materials to help upskill Reps in the use of the Fair Work Framework, on addressing the Climate Change emergency as well as refreshing and updating our core training to better reflect Scottish specific policy and sector organisations.

To look for TUC courses, training, events, webinars and eNotes visit our training page at:

[www.tuc.org.uk/training](http://www.tuc.org.uk/training)



# Resources and Communications

Scottish Union Learning has continued to raise its profile in 2020 through social media, online events and the website, as well as through trade union and partner websites.

## Scottish Union Learning website

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

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

## Social Media

Scottish Union Learning can be found on Facebook and Twitter.

 Facebook: @scottishunionlearning

 Twitter: @unionlearning

You can watch recorded webinars on Crowdcast at [www.crowdcast.io/stuclearning](http://www.crowdcast.io/stuclearning)

There is also a Facebook Group for ULRs in the Highlands and Islands, accessible via the main Scottish Union Learning Facebook page.

## Contact Us

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# Learner Quotes

## Data Detox for Film & TV

*"I thought it was very informative and simply explained (so even an un tech person like me understood it :) thanks!"*

## Excel Level 1

*"Great course and trainer. Would recommend to others. Would love to do other digital skills courses structured in this manner."*

## Search Engine Optimisation

*"Excellent presentation. Matthew was fantastic. Explained everything really clearly and it felt that you were in the hands of a real expert. Cheers!"*

## BSL Introduction

*"This course was really interesting. John was a great tutor. Included everyone on the course. Treated everyone the same despite all learning at different pace. John made the course very interesting and enjoyable. John also made it very easy to understand and was very encouraging to everyone. I was enjoying it so much I could have done another 6 weeks, and that is all down to how good the tutor was. Highly recommended this course to work colleagues and have a few interested in doing this course also."*



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