



CAMPAIGN FOR LIFELONG LEARNING



The key tasks undertaken by learning representatives can include:

- *Raising awareness of the benefits of learning*
- *Working with employers and employees to identify learning needs*
- *Providing advice and guidance to employees*
- *Helping negotiate learning agreements*
- *Securing equal opportunities in learning*
- *Helping to establish learning centres*
- *Helping negotiate and arrange training*
- *Monitoring the quality of learning provision*

■ THE ROLE OF THE UNION LEARNING REP

The union learning representative (ULR) is a new category of union activist, trained in advising members on learning needs and opportunities. ULRs have demonstrated that they can complement and add value to employers' efforts to engage workers in learning. They share a level of trust with their members, and can often engage those who would be wary of discussing their learning issues to their employer direct.

Their work mostly involves face-to-face meetings and other direct contact with their fellow workers. But they also work with employers and training providers to identify the range of learning opportunities available.

■ THE BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES

There are many advantages to employees in having a trained and supported ULR on site. The introduction of learning representatives gives employees:

- A familiar face, someone who they know and who may have helped them in the past.
- Someone who is independent and whose advice they can trust.
- Someone to talk to in confidence.
- Advice in the familiar surroundings of the workplace.
- Information about learning opportunities available both inside and outside the workplace.
- A person who is properly trained and informed, capable of representing their learning needs and interests.

- A source of reliable information about everyday training matters as well as new and existing learning and skills initiatives such as Essential and Key Skills, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), and Learndirect.

■ THE BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

All organisations benefit from having a skilled, trained and efficient workforce. The ULR provides the vital information, support and encouragement that enable employees to update and acquire the new skills necessary in the world of work and beyond. The role of the learning representative helps organisations to:

- Promote a positive attitude to learning and skills.
- Improve the skills and employability of the workforce, helping them to become more adaptable to change.
- Increase participation in workplace learning.
- Provide accessible independent advice and support for employees about learning, at shop floor level.
- Introduce and help develop a 'learning culture', where training and education are highly valued in the workplace.

Many employers and training bodies recognise that union involvement is essential for the success of training initiatives, mainly because:

- Training just won't work if it is introduced in a top-down manner by employers and does not reflect the views and needs of the workforce.
- Although their priorities may differ, unions and employers often have similar aims. Therefore, joint action on training is possible.

Unite is developing a national network of ULRs working across the whole union. Training for ULRs is available from Unite both nationally and regionally and through the TUC. Regional Learning Organisers (RLOs), have been appointed across the UK to advise and support ULRs, co-ordinate learning representative networks and work with TUC learning services, providers and employers.

All learning representatives receive learning information through an online network site and through a chat-room and forums. Learning Representatives can also access information, advice, guidance and details about courses, and learning support through RLOs.

For more information contact your RLO – details at <http://alturl.com/ffhq>

*Alternatively ring the Learning Development Coordinator:-
Ian Scott 07768 93 13 06 or
01248 362 098 or
ian.scott@uniteunion.org*

Regional Lifelong Learning teams – Contact details

London & Eastern and South East Regions

Steve Rowlatt
128 Theobald's Road
Holborn
London
WC1X 8TN
Tel: 020 7611 2517
Mobile: 07515 279 843
steve.rowlatt@unitetheunion.org

South West Region

Brendan Parkinson
9 Trevarthian Road
St Austell
Cornwall
PL25 4BH
Tel: 01726 76043
Mobile: 07967665614
brendan.parkinson@unitetheunion.org

East & West Midlands Regions

Keith Cockcroft
Transport House
9-17 Victoria Street
West Bromwich
B70 8HX
Tel: 0121 553 6051
Mobile: 07967974985
keith.cockcroft@unitetheunion.org

North East/Yorkshire & Humberside Region

Martin Wright
Transport House
John Dobson Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8TW
Tel: 0845 604 6390
Mobile: 07768931242
martin.wright@unitetheunion.org

North West Region

Jason Beckett
Unite the union
Transport House
Merchants Quay
Salford Quays
Salford
M50 3SG
Tel: 0161 848 0909
Mobile: 07533 843 786
jason.beckett@unitetheunion.org

Scotland

Lyn Turner
Unite
John Smith House
145-165 West Regent Street,
Glasgow
G2 4RZ
Tel: 0845 604 4384
Mobile: 07980871394
lyn.turner@unitetheunion.org

Ireland

Clare Caulfield
26-34 Antrim Road
Belfast
BT15 2AA
Tel: 0845 604 1402 or 02890 232 381
Mobile: 07769616967
clare.caulfield@unitetheunion.org

Wales

Julie Evans
1 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9SD
Tel: 02920 394 521
Mobile:
julie.evans@unitetheunion.org