

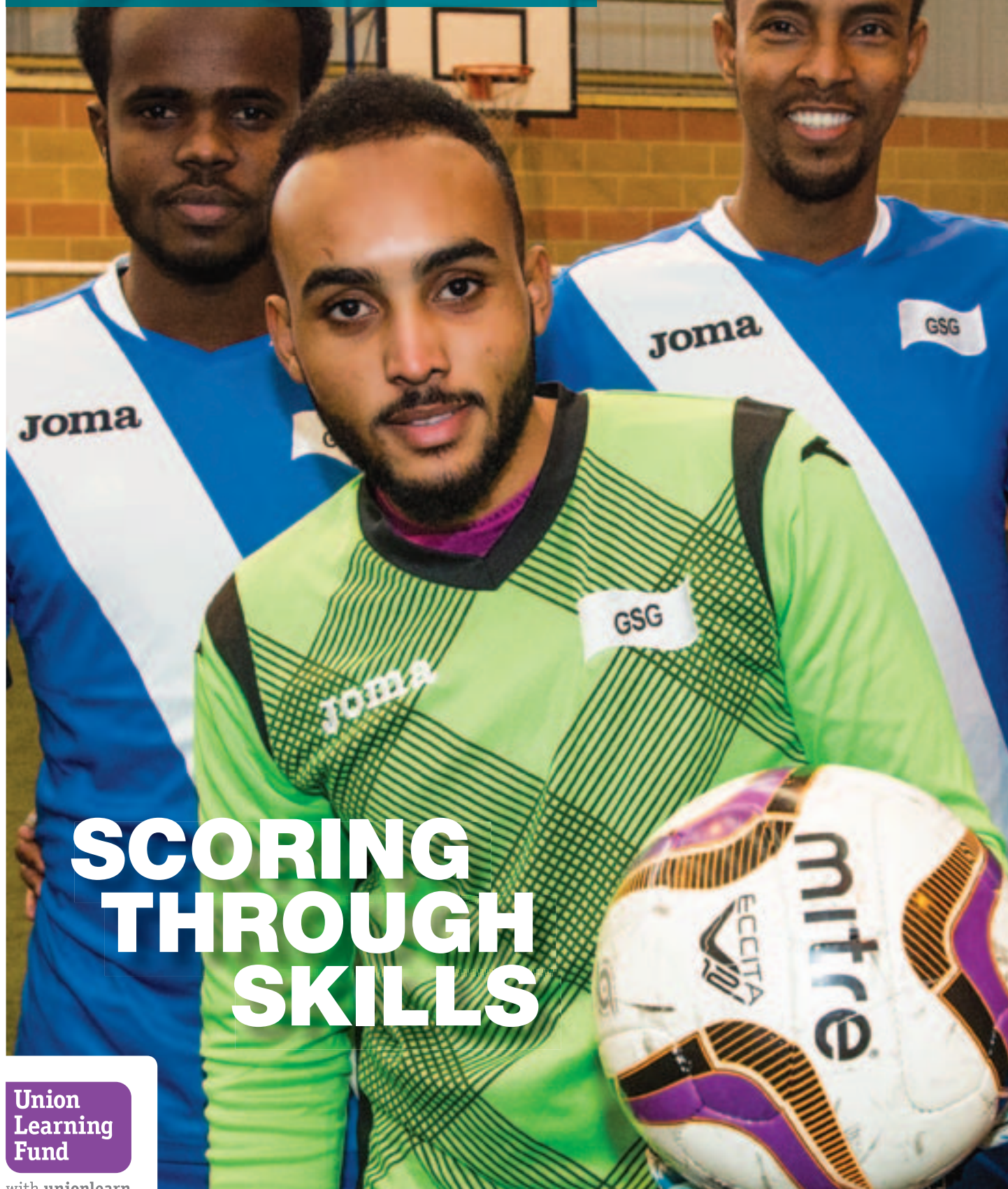
LEARN

EDITION 4

WITH UNITE

www.learnwithunite.org


unite
the UNION



SCORING THROUGH SKILLS

Union
Learning
Fund

with unionlearn



OUR LIFELONG LEARNING VISION

Unite's lifelong learning vision and our strategy for growth

- increase the life chances of its members in the workplace and the community using lifelong learning
- guarantee the high standard and quality of all its flexible learning opportunities
- use lifelong learning to develop its members so that they will be able to reach their full potential within the Unite organisation
- bring flexible learning opportunities into the heart of communities
- be the most progressive trade union organisation that will be able to create sustainable and innovative alternative education models
- use lifelong learning to enhance ongoing employment opportunities to its members through the member retention strategy
- measure the success of lifelong learning through its activities delivered within its strategy for growth.



Unite would like to take this opportunity to make the unionlearn team aware of our appreciation for the continued support of the Union Learning Fund, without which we could not have undertaken the projects presented in this publication.

Once again special thanks to our brothers in London & Eastern Region stores for their work producing drafts for proofreading.

Pictured left, the Clerkenwell & St Pancras Branch banner approaching Trafalgar Square on the 2016 May Day march. Picture by Branch Secretary Monica Gort.

Editor: Brian Davis (for Unite)

Editorial: Martin Moriarty

Design & print: design-mill.co.uk

Front cover photograph: Members of the Manchester Refugee Support One five-a-side team at the Celebrating Diversity Through Learning football tournament in Barnsley, January 2016, by Mark Harvey.

Publication date: August 2016

HELLO...

Although the trade union movement has faced yet another challenging year since the last edition of this booklet, especially within the field of workplace learning, Learn with Unite continues to flourish: more than 43,000 learners in England alone took up opportunities provided and brokered by Unite in 2015-16, supported by well over 300 newly trained ULRs – who represent almost one-third of all the ULRs trained in England last year.

Our unique ESOL offer has really started to make an impact and the organising opportunities are well documented throughout this edition. The football tournament held in Barnsley proved a particularly memorable and inspirational day for all involved, as the number of images in this edition testifies!

Learn With Unite ESOL is a particularly welcome addition to our armoury, since recent analysis by Refugee Action shows how ESOL funding has more than halved since 2008-9. A new study on the impact of union learning by the University of Leeds sets out how ESOL unlocks opportunity for further learning – which is no surprise to us, as some of our most effective activists began their trade union journey in the UK with an ESOL course.

But ESOL is just one aspect of Learn with Unite. We offer support to learners of all kinds, right up to degree level. The University of Wolverhampton now offers a 10 per cent reduction on course fees for trade union members, just as Birkbeck in London has been doing for several years – HE discount arrangements that are proving a financial incentive to join Unite.

We work to extend our learning offer to everyone in our workplaces and beyond. That's why our branch at East Midlands Trains ensured the agency staff who are depot cleaners can access the learning offer we brokered



MARK HARVEY

with the employer. That's why our learning centre at the Argos logistics site in the West Midlands has opened its doors to learners from Mencap – as a result of which the charity's staff are perceiving unions in general, and Unite in particular, differently from the way we are usually portrayed in the media. And that's why we have helped members of the disability charity KeyRing in London access our courses beyond the physical boundaries of the workplace and into the local community.

Ultimately, the point of all of these efforts is clearly illustrated by another of the recent findings from the University of Leeds, which concludes that those taking part in three or more episodes of union-led learning were 26 times more likely to become active in their union! That is a clear message we should be taking into our branches. Please enjoy and be inspired by this latest edition. ■

Kenny Barron
Head of Lifelong Learning



DESTINATION: SKILLS

The national learning partnership between First Bus and Unite is paying off for members, the union and the business.

Thousands of First Bus staff in bus depots up and down the country have developed their skills in everything from English and maths to music and photography since Unite signed its first national learning agreement with the transport operator ten years ago. (The latest agreement, signed in December 2015, runs until January 2019.)

Whether they want to gain Functional Skills qualifications or take up a new hobby, union members and non-members alike have been able to take advantage of the support of 100-plus trade union learning reps (TULRs), the backing of management and the resources of 32 different learning centres.

After 14 years as a TULR and 37 as a bus driver himself, Project Worker Bob Holt now heads the Manchester TULR team based at the Queen's Road learning centre, which is undoubtedly one of the jewels in the crown of the learning partnership.

"We offer all the usual courses, such as Functional Skills English and maths, plus some IT qualifications through the LearnWithUnite portal – these are the bread and butter courses that can support our colleagues with career progression," Bob explains.

"But there are all kinds of subjects we get involved



with for the good of the workforce, such as British Sign Language and healthy living, and we have run a very successful initiative teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)."

The Queen's Road learning centre has also run a camera club to encourage people to explore the more advanced possibilities of their digital cameras and smartphones and organised a guitar club, both of them led by keen amateurs from the depot.

Bob says that the key to the learning centre's success is the dedication of the TULRs, who do not restrict their support role to the one day a week paid release the company gives them to promote learning.

Equally important is the support for workplace learning that goes right to the very top of the organisation. The annual TULR conference is always attended by senior

BOB HOLT (LEFT, BELOW) HELPS FIRST BUS DRIVERS IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS THROUGH THE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMPANY

executives from the company, such as Managing Director Giles Fearnley and Divisional Director Dave Alexander plus First Bus National Education Coordinator Dave Pugh, as well as senior officials from the upper echelons of Unite, such as Director of Education Jim Mowatt and National Officer Bobby Morton.

For the company, the benefits of supporting a workplace learning culture are clear. “We have a wealth of roles within our business and we want drivers to be able to see they have opportunities for progression,” Head of Learning and Development Linda Guthrie explains.

“Learning centres open up all these opportunities, and that is great for us as a business because we are able to grow our own – there is nothing better than having a supervisor or a manager who has had experience of being a bus driver, and it’s much more cost-efficient than recruiting from outside the business,” she says.

“Anything we can do to develop our existing staff so they can take advantage of these opportunities is a benefit for everybody, it’s a win-win.”

Driving forward the learning agenda with Unite makes equal sense, Linda says. “It’s testament to the company and the union that we have been able to make this work and remain successful for a substantial number of years.”

The learning partnership at First puts the transport operator at the head of the field in the sector, according to drivers who have left to work for rival firms and later returned to the fold.

“When they come back here, they report that there is nothing like this in any other company they have worked for,” Bob points out. ■



There are all kinds of subjects we get involved with for the good of the workforce, such as British Sign Language and healthy living”

PROJECT WORKER BOB HOLT



Speaking up for apprentices

Adele Claire Walsh is coming to the end of her four-year Level 3 NVQ in Electro-Technical Systems and Equipment at Lancashire County Council, where she has taken on the roles of Unite learning rep (ULR) and female ambassador for her training provider JTL.



Since taking on the role a year ago, Adele has already helped improve the council’s Apprenticeship programme.

“Because we were expected to do some jobs on our own in Years Three and Four that we hadn’t actually learned, as a ULR I suggested there should be a training schedule or learning plan for apprentices, which was put in place through the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JNCC),” she explains.

“Now the new apprentices coming through will be able to tick off what they have learned and if there are any gaps in their knowledge, so they should be able to go out and do jobs on their own when it comes to their fourth year.”

Adele’s training officer originally put her name in the ring for the JTL Ambassador programme, which uses female apprentices to promote engineering career opportunities to young women.

“A lot of events are in schools: I go to careers evenings and try to persuade more people to become electricians or engineers – I love it!” she says.

“I have also worked with North-West Regional Learning Manager Jane Broome and Learning Organiser Steve Hewitt doing events for Unite a couple of times – it’s the Apprenticeship thing that makes me buzz!”



Organising a football tournament in Barnsley to celebrate learning and diversity has helped asylum-seekers and refugees starting new lives within our region.

LEARNING 1 RACISM 0

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Barnsley have been improving their English and their football skills thanks to a combination of learning and sporting initiatives by the regional lifelong learning team.

What would eventually blossom into a five-a-side football tournament with a learning theme in early 2016 all started last year, when the Barnsley Unite Community Support Centre (CSC) logged a significant increase in the numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers using its facilities.

Recognising that the new arrivals would benefit from courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Union Learning Organiser Linda Hughes and Unite learning rep Brian Clarke discussed their options with local Red Cross staff, who were offering support for asylum-seekers and refugees in the Quaker Meeting House close to the miners' union NUM offices that house the Unite CSC.

"We struck up a partnership and they agreed we could use their facilities at the meeting house to deliver ESOL classes once a week to the asylum-seekers and refugees," Linda explains.

As a result of the ESOL classes, some of the

learners started dropping in on the Unite CSC to use the computers, and the obvious next step was to enrol them on the LearnWithUnite platform.

Since non-members can't access the union's learning portal, Regional Organiser Joe Rollin encouraged local industrial branches to support the asylum-seekers and refugees by paying for their membership.

Jimmy, one of the learners who was using Unite's IT facilities, even wrote a short piece



Football transcends languages: it's a universal thing that speaks to people, it's a way of bringing people together"

LEARNING ORGANISER LINDA HUGHES

North-East, Yorkshire & Humberside



HEAD OF LIFELONG LEARNING KENNY BARRON PRESENTED ESOL CERTIFICATES TO THE BARNSELY ESOL TEAM DURING THE TOURNAMENT

for a local newspaper about how many of the refugees were also getting together to play informal football matches in a local park.

"I bought a football for £3, then all refugees collected and I told them that life is tough but we must live with all the pain and rigours, and I told them that the tiger stands strong and the eagle loves space and life of freedom," Jimmy wrote.

When lifetime football fan Linda saw the piece, it struck a chord. "I have always believed football transcends languages: it's a universal thing that speaks to people, it's a way of bringing people together," she says.

"It was a very hostile environment and I just thought football was an ideal opportunity to show we are not all like that, and try and do something positive," Linda says.

Thus was born the idea for organising a five-a-side football tournament with an educational component that Linda and Joe decided to call Celebrating Diversity Through Learning. Through her contacts with the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), Linda was able to encourage the PFA's lifelong learning team to support the event and then use its own connection with Barnsley Football Club to secure the ground as the venue.

Sixteen teams took part in the tournament, which was held at the Barnsley FC Training Academy in January 2016. As well as four sides from Barnsley, there were two each from Leeds, Sheffield, Middlesbrough and Manchester and one apiece

from Doncaster, Pudsey, Leicester and London. The line-up included Yorkshire St Pauli and Leicester's FC Kolektivo, teams that both promote anti-discrimination, the all-women's team AFC Unity from Sheffield and a team from Manchester's Refugee Support Centre.

As well as Unite and the PFA, Barnsley Trades Union Council (BTUC), Barnsley FC Community Trust and Show Racism The Red Card all supported the tournament.

At the halfway point, Unite Head of Lifelong Learning Kenny Barron presented the Barnsley ESOL team members with their ESOL certificates while after the final whistle, Dave Gibson from BTUC handed the tournament trophy to the worthy winners from the Manchester Refugee Support Centre.

"The Barnsley ESOL team absolutely loved it, they really enjoyed the chance to play football in a properly organised tournament, and Barnsley FC gave them a strip to wear as well," Linda says.

The tournament's message of unity was underlined when one of the Barnsley ESOL team recognised that one of the Middlesbrough players was a friend from back in Eritrea that he had not known was even alive, let alone that he was now living 85 miles away.

"These two guys didn't even know that they were both safe and in this country and this football tournament brought them back together: I never thought that it would bring people together in that way, which was absolutely fantastic," Linda says.

Since the tournament, the team has been playing a weekly game at the Barnsley ground, members have been invited to home games as guests, and they continue to take their ESOL classes through the union.

"Because they are Unite community members, they can get involved in anything we are doing community-wise: some of them travelled with us in the minibus to the Durham Miners' Gala in July, for instance," Linda says.

"It's about trying to get people a bit more integrated and show them that there are people who will support them as well."

■ Brian Clarke won the unionlearn ULR award for supporting disadvantaged learners in the community at the TUC skills organisation's annual 2016 conference. ■



FRANK KEOGH



Health service support staff are too often overlooked when it comes to development opportunities at work, but a new project in the West Midlands aims to change all that.

HEALTH WORKERS GET SKILLS CHECK-UPS

The Unite lifelong learning and industrial teams are working together to bring new learning opportunities to thousands of mostly low-paid health service staff across the West Midlands, in a project overseen by the new Learn with Unite in Health steering group, which is taking a strategic approach to developing work with a wide range of employers across the country.

The key target is the huge Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham (QEHB), the third largest in the country, which employs 8,500 staff alone on its new site in Edgbaston and is host to the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine (RCDM), which treats all seriously injured British military personnel evacuated from overseas.

"We realised from early conversations with the industrial side, including Regional Officer Frank Keogh, that doing one-off things wasn't going to work: we needed a permanent presence at QEHB covering all the different shifts," explains Learning Organiser Michelle Abbotts (who chairs the new Learn with Unite in Health national steering group).

That's why the team has been setting up a stand in the main café on a different day every week (including weekends) to promote learning and Unite membership to staff, targeting support

staff in NHS pay bands 1–4, whose development needs have tended to be overlooked when training budgets have been drawn up in the past.

The strategy is beginning to pay off already. After three months of regular event days at QEHB and producing a regular newsletter, the team has recruited more than 60 new members, a new union learning rep (ULR) and a new steward.

The team is also keeping records of the courses people are interested in and capturing data about skill levels through initial assessments in English, maths and IT that they will be using to demonstrate the appetite for learning to management at the Trust.

"We are going to put all that data together and then make the case to QEHB," Michelle explains. "We are very optimistic that we'll have ULRs trained and classes up and running by the end of the year."

In addition, the team is also focusing on two mental health Trusts that employ more than 4,000 staff each: Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHT) and Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust (CWPT).

At BSMHT, where Unite has already gained three new stewards and one ULR, the union was scheduled to sign a new learning agreement with the Trust as



Charity begins at work

The Unite learning centre at the Argos distribution centre in Barton under Needwood is not only helping staff improve their skills: new Unite learning rep (ULR) Ann Khan has reached out into the local community to offer bespoke IT courses to Mencap, the charity that supports people with learning disabilities.

It all started last year when Ann had a conversation with the Tamworth manager of Mencap about how she was arranging computer courses onsite for her fellow drivers (who are employed by contractor Wincanton Logistics).

“They said that what we were doing sounded exactly like what they needed for their own staff,” Ann recalls.

Ann then raised the charity’s IT learning needs with Unite Learning Organiser Stuart Webb, who maintains strong relations with the Unite reps on the site since he himself was an Argos/Wincanton ULR until he started working for the union last year.

When the two of them met site convenor Mick Casey to discuss opening the Unite learning centre to Mencap staff, Mick offered them all the support they needed to make it happen.

Ann decided that the best solution

would be to offer the Mencap support workers bespoke sessions on the same day as the regular classes that tutor Brian Sullivan was already delivering to the drivers onsite once a week. As a strong supporter of Mencap himself, Brian waived his usual fee for the additional sessions.

“The bespoke IT learning and access to the learning centre has already had a massive impact on the service: it has raised staff morale, stimulated an eagerness to embrace a new systems launch and created an overall sense of achievement,” says Mencap Service Manager Gill Turnbull.

“Unite working with Argos in the local community has a massive impact on services like ours: this partnership working and any interaction between us, small or large, makes a huge difference to people’s lives.”

The course is changing perceptions at the charity. “One of the Mencap learners told me they had been watching the TV news with their family and had seen something negative about the union but they had said, ‘That’s not the Unite I see – the Unite I see is about learning, people giving their time, helping us to do our jobs’,” Ann says. “So learning is also giving them a different outlook on Unite – and that’s a bonus!”

this edition of Learn with Unite went to press.

And at CWPT, the team is hosting monthly events that are already successfully engaging new members.

Thanks to the union’s new regional profile on learning, South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT), which runs hospitals in Warwick, Leamington and Stratford plus a small rehab unit in Shipston-on-Stour, has asked Unite to be part of a new project to launch a Functional Skills assessment centre that would be open to all NHS staff, regardless of their employer.

“We believe that Unite can work with NHS Trusts across the region to develop and promote meaningful and relevant learning agreements that will demonstrate Unite’s commitment to our members who have a desire to learn,” says Frank Keogh.

“Working with NHS employers, we can use our collective resources and expertise to provide members with effective and engaging lifelong learning opportunities that will help them develop and remain in employment and help the NHS to maintain a highly skilled and motivated workforce.” ■



ON THE RIGHT TRACK AT EAST MIDLANDS TRAINS

A new learning agreement is bringing more opportunities to engineering and contract cleaning workers at the Etches Park maintenance depot.

The new workplace learning programme at the East Midlands Trains (EMT) Etches Park maintenance depot in Derby is creating development opportunities for the workers who maintain the company's rolling stock onsite and the contract staff who clean it.

Created in 2007, after the amalgamation of two previous rail franchises, EMT runs inter-city services between London St Pancras and Sheffield, Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, as well as local services across the East Midlands.

"In EMT generally, our engineers and electricians have had a fair amount of training: if people want to go on courses they can apply for them," explains Unite learning rep and senior workplace rep Andrew Grace.

"Setting up lifelong learning meant we would be able to start delivering Functional Skills training for the first time at the depot."

Andrew worked with Regional Learning Manager Donna Hendley and Learning Organiser Stuart Webb to develop the case for learning at the site and he and Stuart sat down with Depot Manager Kyle Stewart to discuss how to get the ball rolling.

Kyle was open to the suggestion since he himself had brushed up his English and maths through a learning initiative run by one of the other rail unions in the business while he was still a shift supervisor (and Unite member) some years before.



Setting up lifelong learning meant we would be able to start delivering Functional Skills training for the first time at the depot"

UNITE LEARNING REP ANDREW GRACE



The learners involved have expressed their gratitude that Unite is bringing these courses to their place of work"

DEPOT MANAGER KYLE STEWART

"I'd already utilised what they were proposing, albeit through another union, and I'd seen a lot of worth in it: for me, it was refreshing what I had learned at school but it was really valuable," Kyle recalls.

After updating his English and maths skills, Kyle decided to enrol on an MBA in Business at the University of Derby in order to drive his career development.

"Along with your commitment and enthusiasm for what you do, having a degree on your CV gives you that extra string to your bow and validates your knowledge," he says.

Starting in 2008, Kyle's three years of study on day release from the business gave him a couple of strings to his bow, in fact.

"One is that every project I did throughout the degree I did within the different areas of the business, and met senior people to discuss the assignments, so the networking aspect was fundamental," he says.

"The other is that it gives you the ability to put in better pieces of work by teaching you the level of detail you need to write a report or put together a business case: it gives you that better understanding of how far you have to go in everything you do."

While EMT had paid his course fees in year one, money suddenly became a lot tighter in his second year in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. "That was the point that I approached Unite and they assisted with funding," he says.

The study has clearly made the difference he had been hoping for. After graduating in 2011, Kyle secured a new job as production and planning

manager in 2012, before becoming depot manager in 2014. "I'm pretty sure I wouldn't be where I am today without my MBA," he reckons.

With all that experience behind him, he was more than happy to expand learning opportunities for staff onsite, both engineering workers and the cleaning contractors employed by Churchill Cleaning.

"My obvious concern was impact on production and if we kept that to a minimum I was happy to support," Kyle explains.

He recognises that engaging the workforce through learning pays off from a business point of view.

"The nature of work in our depot means that there are times when you have a bit of capacity to release people, and if you're doing some work with a tutor, it keeps your head in the game," he says. "You want to keep people focused: if they are improving their skills and flexing their brains, it can only be for the benefit of the business."

The two sides signed a learning agreement late last year that set up a steering group to oversee the project, with representatives from Unite, EMT, Churchill Cleaning and local provider Train4Talent.

Since then, the provider has been coming onto the site to deliver Functional Skills English with Churchill staff, IT courses with EMT staff and a longer Team Leading course with both groups.

"When the people finish the English course, we hope they will then sign up for maths and then move on to IT," Andrew explains.

Under the terms of the agreement, the company will match the time each individual invests in their learning wherever possible and those who have taken part so far are positive about their experiences.

"The learners involved have expressed their gratitude that Unite is bringing these courses to their place of work, which include anyone regardless of ability, nationality or union membership," Stuart says.

Branch membership is expanding since the programme took off, Andrew says. "We have had a 10 to 15 per cent increase in membership, because we have brought back some people who dropped out a few years ago: part of the reason they have re-joined is that they have seen us delivering learning – it's definitely been a positive." ■



KEYRING

LIVING AND LEARNING INDEPENDENTLY

Unite learning rep Marc Waldron is keen to help more people in the community access the union's learning services in and around Luton.

Unite learning rep Marc Waldron, who works in the street cleansing department at Luton Borough Council, credits two organisations with helping him get what he wants out of life: Unite and the national charity KeyRing, which helps people like him with learning difficulties live independent lives in the community.

KeyRing has a very particular style of working, eschewing the conventional service-user model for a participatory model in which local networks of members work together to support each other, with the additional help of locally-based volunteers.

When the charity launched 25 years ago, its members were all people with learning disabilities, but now it has extended its services to include people with mental health problems and people

on the autistic spectrum, among others.

"What we have always had at the forefront of our mind is mutual support, keeping people as independent as possible, reducing dependency as much as we can, encouraging volunteering and celebrating people's skills and talents," explains Communication and Involvement Director Tracy Hammond.

Marc first joined KeyRing around 10 years ago, after returning from South Africa, where he had been living for many years with his family – and was once part of the presidential guard of honour formed by people with disabilities before Nelson Mandela's state of the union address as president in 1997.

"It was a real honour to meet Nelson: I had been to his jail on Robben Island – it was so small, it was amazing how he lived there all that time," Marc recalls.

Over the years, Marc has played an increasingly active role in KeyRing, taking part in parliamentary lobbies on hate crime and health issues and helping to edit the members' magazine.

Unite Learning Organiser Micky Herbert first

heard about KeyRing from Marc when they had a meeting with Luton Borough Council to introduce Marc as the new ULR.

"Until Marc spoke to me, I knew nothing about KeyRing: I had never come across this model, helping people with learning disabilities to live independently," Micky recalls.

"But when we visited the office and met the staff and the members, you could see there was a need, that people were really vulnerable because they could not read and write but they really wanted to learn, so I thought, 'Let's do something, let's get classes in English going so people can get help with reading and writing'."

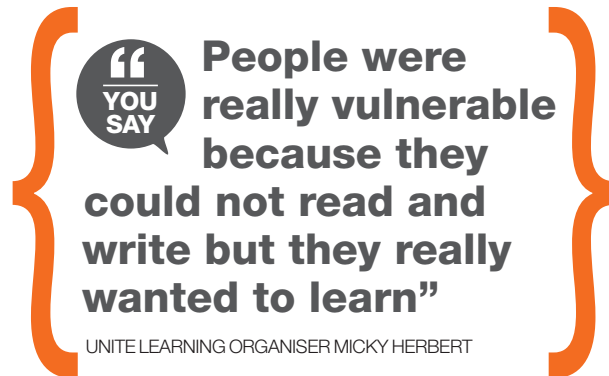
KeyRing was more than happy to partner with the union for the courses: it's a long-established way of working at the charity. "We are good at finding people who are experts and supporting those links to help people to get the best out of life and their community," Tracy says.

Micky helped set up new two-hour weekly classes at KeyRing's old offices in Hoxton, east London, which went down very well with the members there (the charity has since moved to new offices in Dalston). "I don't know of any long-term outcomes in terms of employment, but what I do know is that people thoroughly enjoyed them, they looked forward to them and it seemed to me that they were always well attended," says Tracy.

Although workplace learning is currently in its infancy at Luton Borough Council, Marc is determined to make things happen by using the knowledge, skills and contacts he acquired on both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 ULR courses.

Marc knows that he can rely on the support not only of Micky Herbert but also of Unite convenor Jimmy Cummings, Regional Officer Richard Gates and the other ULRs he has met while training: for example, Unite learning rep Steve Callear from DHL has invited Marc to see the learning set-up at the Iceland logistics operation in Enfield. "Steve wants to know how I am getting on with this role," Marc explains.

And once he is able to set up learning opportunities for council staff, he wants to extend the learning offer beyond the workplace. "I want to start in the



community too," Marc says. "When we have got it started, I want to try and open it up: a friend of mine asks me, 'When are you starting learning in the community?' every time he sees me."

Marc says that those who know him have noticed the difference since he became a ULR. "Since I have been a learning rep, my family have seen a lot of change in me," he says. "They say I am more focused on everything."

Micky agrees. "I have seen a change since I first met Marc: he became more outgoing after the first Unite course he went on and since the second, you can't shut him up!"

Tracy says something very similar. "Marc has always been quite an outgoing character but since he became a Unite learning rep he is contributing more at the level of a volunteer rather than someone using the service: I think he gives much more than he takes back these days," she says.

His role in Unite has helped in another significant way, she reckons, which is to strengthen his identity beyond his role in KeyRing.

"It's fine for people to take their identity from what they do within KeyRing for a couple of years but any longer than that and it creates further dependency, when we should be getting people to look beyond the organisation and to take those skills out and have an identity that is greater than their support agency," she says.

"So the other thing that being a ULR has done for Marc is to allow him to move away and move on from simply being a KeyRing member and be part of something much bigger, which is good." ■

DEAF COURSES TAKE OFF AT GATWICK

Unite learning rep Ian Cains is spreading deaf awareness to staff at Gatwick Airport.

More than 80 staff from across all the different departments at Gatwick Airport took deaf awareness courses during 2015, thanks to an initiative by Unite learning rep Ian Cains.

When Ian first took on the job of launching deaf awareness at the airport in 2014, he started looking for a company that could deliver a course on site, eventually opting for local charity Action For Deafness, which is affiliated with West Sussex NHS Trust and has its head office in nearby Haywards Heath.

After securing the agreement of department heads from training, finance and security that the employer would foot the bill for the training, Ian began advertising the new course to members of staff throughout the airport.

"With the help of Gatwick Airport's manpower team, we were able to either release staff from the operation or arrange for them to attend the course on a day off, subject to the Working Time Directive," Ian explains.

Over the course of 2015, Action For Deafness tutors Cathy and Julie ran a total of eight classes at the airport, enabling 81 staff to improve their deaf awareness and communication skills. The learners included information passenger assistants, security officers and team leaders, airfield operations staff and office staff.

The positive feedback from learners shows how popular and effective the courses have been so far. "I really enjoyed the deaf awareness class: I will be more aware of a person's hearing ability,



especially face-to-face contact," said one learner. "Attending the deaf awareness course has made me more aware of maintaining eye/facial contact, patience and a smile," commented another.

"It was a fantastic course and very enjoyable: the session was fun and time flew by," said another. "Unlike some courses, I can genuinely say I will be walking away from the classroom today a more educated man than the one who entered this morning."

Ian took the feedback along with the statistics, attendance and costings to a meeting in November 2015, when the employer agreed to continue to fund deaf awareness training over the coming year.

In addition, Gatwick is now trialling an on-line British Sign Language (BSL) course where participants can gain a BSL Level 1 via their PC or laptop from the comfort of their own home. ■



It was a fantastic course and very enjoyable: the session was fun and time flew by"

UNITE LEARNER

FROM ULR TO MAYOR OF READING

A decade's experience as a Unite learning rep helped give Sarah Hacker the self-belief to become Mayor of Reading and the confidence to pursue projects she is passionate about during her term of office.

When Sarah Hacker first became a ULR ten years ago, the branch was based in financial services firm Prudential, and Sarah was able to promote learning opportunities available through the company's learning fund (now closed) as well as union-based opportunities, such as the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) qualification.

When Sarah and dozens of her colleagues were TUPE-transferred to Capita eight years ago, she continued to encourage co-workers to improve their skills, with courses including holiday languages and, more recently, the popular equality and diversity certificate organised by Unite.

And she has remained in touch with the Prudential side of the branch, recently presenting certificates in her capacity as Mayor to members who had completed a health and well-being course through the union. "That was a nice way of supporting that group of learners," she says.

Sarah has recently moved on from being a ULR to become the branch equalities rep. "I felt I had now gained the confidence to use my skills in a different way," she says.

Originally elected as a local councillor in 2010, Sarah is currently in the middle of her second term, which has included a year as Mayor.

"It was daunting being Mayor initially, because you don't get any instructions, you have to make it up as you go along, but I had the confidence from being a ULR to know you can



READING MAYOR, SARAH HACKER AND HER FAMILY CELEBRATE HER YEAR AS MAYOR OF READING

do things and change things," she says.

"It's been wonderful, one of the best things I have ever done: I have met so many wonderful volunteers working hard to make the town a lovely place to live in, I got to meet Stephen Fry and I have even opened a bridge – it's been fun but rewarding too!"

Sarah has continued to pursue her passion for learning during her time in office, and has been helping set up the Cultural Education Challenge, which uses funding from Arts Council England to connect children and young people with arts and cultural experiences.

"Hopefully, we will see some good things coming out of it for the children of Reading, so my ULR experience and my desire to help people learn is still very much part of my daily life, it never leaves you really," she says. ■



LEARNING ON THEIR BIKES

A new learning agreement with a new company means new opportunities for Bristol refuse and recycling workers.

Bristol refuse, recycling and street cleansing workers have started to access an expanding range of learning opportunities, thanks to a learning agreement jointly signed by Unite and UNISON with Bristol Waste Company (BWC).

BWC, which is wholly owned by Bristol City Council, took over the refuse and recycling contract in the city last summer when the local authority and the previous contractor agreed to end the multi-million contract three years early.

Unite had originally tabled a draft learning agreement during the era when May Gurney ran the service, but senior management had dragged their feet and nothing had happened.

All that changed when the new company took over and the unions tabled a slightly amended version of the original agreement in autumn 2015, coincidentally around the same time that BWC HR Manager Karen Stephens contacted Unite Learning Organiser Matt Gillett about



UNITE LEARNING ORGANISER MATT GILLETT (FRONT, RIGHT) UNITE LEARNING REP PETE PARKER (BACK, RIGHT) AT THE SIGNING OF THE LEARNING AGREEMENT WITH BRISTOL WASTE COMPANY

the union's English and maths courses for council staff.

"Karen had heard about the good work we were doing with N-Gaged Training to deliver Functional Skills at the council, which she wanted to talk to us about, so all these things came together at the right time," Matt recalls.

After initial discussions in November 2015, it took just three months before both sides were happy with the agreement, which includes provision for the company to match time invested in learning by individual workers.

The agreement was then formally signed in February 2016, during the TUC's #heartunions week, which celebrated the positive contribution union reps and members make at work and in the wider community.

"This learning agreement will give members the chance to widen their skills and improve their career prospects,"

says Unite learning rep Pete Parker, who attended the signing ceremony alongside his UNISON counterpart Andy Taylor, while Karen Stephens and Managing Director Tracey Morgan represented the company.

Karen says that the agreement is a great opportunity for both sides to work together for the benefit of everyone. "Improving Functional Skills will help our employees with current roles as well as developing them for future roles within BWC," she points out.

Within a fortnight of the agreement, the unions ran a very popular cycle maintenance workshop for the refuse and recycling workers on the BWC Alban Road site, delivered by a mechanic from the Dr Bike programme run by the Julian House Bike Workshop. Feedback was so positive that the unions are looking into arranging similar sessions on the company's other two main sites.

Informal IT sessions followed the bike workshop, with Unite taking laptops around the different sites to encourage members to look at the Online Basics package of courses on the Learn My Way website.

The ULRs have also been collecting learning needs surveys to identify what members are interested in accessing at work: the plan is to move on to Functional Skills courses next, and the company has signalled its interest in starting an Apprenticeship programme with the support of the unions.

"It's early days but we feel there is great potential," says Matt. "The agreement is a perfect example of employers and unions working together in a really positive way." ■



Silver surfers catch the IT wave

Bristol retired members have been gaining IT skills with the help of two interactive sessions at Unite's regional office in Bristol run by Regional Learning Manager Steph Weston and Learning Organiser Matt Gillett.

Ten people attended each of the two sessions in late 2015 and early 2016, where Steph and Matt helped everyone navigate their way round the popular Online Basics packages on the Learn My Way website.

"Rather than do a session where we went through it bit by bit, we got everyone started up and let them work independently, while we went around the room and assisted people when they needed help, such as showing them where a certain key was on the keyboard," Matt explains.

"They were all pitching in to help each other as well, which was very good – and the coffee and cake helped keep things going!"

The regional learning team is now working to encourage retired members who have taken part in the sessions to volunteer to train to become learning reps, to support more retired members onto IT and other courses.

"We have already trained some community members as community union learning reps – and computer skills are really key for community members to support them in their daily lives," Matt says.

"We're now looking to see if we can get one or two of the retired members to become learning reps: that would be a great opportunity for them because of all the knowledge and experience they have gained in their lives."



This learning agreement will give members the chance to widen their skills and improve their career prospects"

LEARNING REP PETE PARKER

BROADENING MINDS DEVELOPING SKILLS

Apprentices from Unite workplaces across Wales have been developing their careers through a European work experience programme.

Unite apprentices in Wales have been taking advantage of two-week work experience placements in France and Belgium, gaining new skills they have been able to bring back to the companies they work for.

This year, around 50 apprentices from several different workplaces will be on the two-week placements, which are funded through Erasmus+, the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport.

The workplaces expected or confirmed to be taking part are RAF Sealand in Flint, Rockwell Automation in Cardiff, electrical firm Honeywell in St Asaph, and four organisations based in Wrexham: Kellogg's, Portable Foods, Magellan Aerospace and Wrexham County Council.



IAN ROWLEY

The apprentices will be travelling to Rheims in the north-east of France, where they will be working in companies connected to champagne production, and to Belgium, where they will be working on an environmentally-friendly housing project.

"There is no cost to the companies apart from continuing to pay the apprentices' wages while they are away," explains Learning Organiser Ian Rowley, who has been helping companies access the funding for the past five years.

Some companies open the opportunity to all their apprentices, while others make participation a reward for their most successful apprentices, but they all expect the young people to make a presentation when they return home about what they have learned and how it could be applied to their workplace.

Ian has been working in partnership with Rotherham-based not-for-profit B&E Together to link the companies with the work experience opportunities, which are organised through



This is a really good thing for building the relationship between Unite lifelong learning and the companies involved"

LEARNING ORGANISER IAN ROWLEY

PASSIVE HOUSE CONSTRUCTION ADHERES TO RIGOROUS ENERGY-EFFICIENT STANDARDS

France's oldest training provider, Les compagnons du devoir, and the Flemish government's adult education institute, CVO Heusden-Zolder.

"B&E Together are the project managers for the whole thing, which is brilliant for us because one of the stumbling blocks for getting anyone involved in industry is the time it takes to fill out any European funding paperwork," Ian says.

In France, Les compagnons du devoir have usually assigned apprentices with companies connected to the champagne industry around Rheims. "We have had young people working on the tractors that do the grape harvest and we have had them welding wine vats," Ian says.

In Belgium, the apprentices are often put to work on 'passive house' projects, the rigorous energy-efficient construction standard that all new buildings in Brussels must now comply with (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council in Ireland became the first English-speaking authority to do the same in early 2016).

"Belgium is miles ahead of the UK on this issue, so the apprentices are using really up-to-date techniques," says Ian.

But there are other options too. "The placements don't always match the apprentices' disciplines: in Belgium one year, we had them working on event building in a theme park, which is nothing to do with what they do in work," Ian recalls.

The placements are cultural as well as work experiences, he points out. "It's not about them going for a two-week jolly: they are immersed in the language, the culture, everything about the country," he says. Everyone has the chance to gain the relevant language skills before they go to enhance their experience, and while they are away they stay either in a hotel or a residential training centre.

"They see things they would never see as tourists," Ian says. "Through Les compagnons du devoir, who have contacts everywhere, the apprentices in Rheims were able to get onto the roof of the cathedral, which has huge medieval statues, and were able to take some amazing photographs."

Several of the apprentices have developed ideas they picked up on their European work placements. "Some of the apprentices from Kellogg's in Wrexham



SUSANA SECRETARIAT

were absolutely enthusiastic about what they saw on the passive house project in Belgium, and a couple of them are now quite heavily involved in energy efficiency projects in the plant."

The feedback from the majority of the apprentices who have taken part over the past five years has been very positive, Ian reports. "80 per cent of the apprentices come back and say to me they would love to go again, although unfortunately the project only allows them to go once," he says.

For Unite, delivering work experience through a European-funded programme eases the financial burden on the Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) and strengthens the relationship between the union and the companies involved.

"It's a great thing for us to go into these companies and offer these placements to training departments, who have absolutely no idea that they exist because they don't have time to go out rooting around for all the funding," Ian explains.

"This is a really good thing for building the relationship between Unite lifelong learning and the companies involved, who now see these placements as part of their Apprenticeships, which is kudos for us as Unite." ■



LOUIS FLOOD

LEARNING IN THE SHIPYARDS

Shipbuilders on the Upper Clyde have been gaining new skills at work, thanks to the dedication of Unite learning rep Billy McKay, whose outstanding record of work won him a learning award from the Scottish TUC in 2015.

Hundreds of Unite members at BAE Systems in Govan and Scotstoun, where they are building the Royal Navy's biggest-ever aircraft carriers, have knuckled down to improving their English, maths, ICT and many other skills, with the help of ULR Billy McKay and the support of the company.

Even members displaced to Rosyth, Barrow-in-Furness and Plymouth have been able to access the learning opportunities Billy has organised as leader of the multi-union learning committee at the shipyards under the banner of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU).

As well as providing courses in Everyday Skills, Spanish, British Sign Language (BSL) and even computer-aided design (CAD), Billy has helped members

gain industry-recognised qualifications, such as City & Guilds 2382 (wiring regulations) and City & Guilds 2394 (inspection and testing of electrical equipment).

Billy has always made sure everyone has had the chance to develop themselves. "We had a computer course for the night shift, which is unheard of," he says. "The guys were over the moon because they never normally get courses because of the shift hours, but the tutor came in at nine o'clock at night for two hours once a week for ten weeks."

Giving workers the chance to improve their skills and gain key qualifications has been hugely important while the shipbuilding industry in general has been navigating stormy economic waters in recent times. BAE Systems itself has not been untouched: 780 jobs on the Clyde were lost in 2013, when the company's Plymouth operation shut down entirely.

But by accessing funding from Scottish Union Learning, Billy was able to help many union members prepare for work outside the company by organising courses through which they could gain the kind of accredited qualifications that would stand them



UNITE LEARNING REP BILLY MCKAY COLLECTS HIS LEARNING AWARD FROM SCOTLAND'S FIRST MINISTER NICOLA STURGEON (CENTRE) AND SCOTTISH UNION LEARNING DIRECTOR WENDY BURTON



The courses have facilitated the return to learning for hundreds of members within BAE Systems who would never have had the opportunity to return to learning"

REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL OFFICER PAT MCILVOGUE

in good stead once they left the shipyards.

Billy originally took on the ULR role after experiencing the benefits of learning for himself on a computer course organised by Unite Regional Industrial Officer Pat McIlvogue (in his previous role as regional learning organiser) and delivered onsite by tutors from Glasgow's Stow College. "I needed the IT skills in my role as convenor, which was part of the reason I took the course," he recalls.

Since taking on the ULR role, Billy has since steered literally hundreds of Unite members through the same IT course he took. "We have had hundreds of people through it in different stages and it's been an absolutely roaring success, with the amount of people getting better roles for themselves," he says.

In the majority of cases, the Govan and Scotstoun learners are people who have not set foot in a classroom of any sort for 10, 20 or even 30 years – and often don't have especially happy memories of the last time they did, either. But the union approach has encouraged them to put aside memories of the past or worries about the gaps in their learning journeys to gain skills they wouldn't be able to develop anywhere else.

"The courses have facilitated the return to learning for hundreds of members within BAE Systems who would never have had the opportunity to return to learning if it was not for Billy's work in organising, negotiating and coordinating the learning with BAE Systems," says Pat.

Recognising that it gains a wide range of benefits by co-operating with Unite to develop learning opportunities for the workforce, BAE Systems not only provides

the learning centre onsite at Govan but also allows workers a couple of hours a week to attend courses, one hour in work time and one hour in their own time.

"We see many benefits of working with our union representatives in this learning arena – significant personal growth in confidence at work and home, increased efficiency at work (e.g. IT skills), engagement of employees – many move through the levels of training and return for more!" says Learning and Development Manager Julie Fallon.

There are clear business benefits, she points out. "Workplace learning provides our employees with key skills to utilise both at work and in other areas of their life, which has a positive impact on their confidence, engagement and view of the business: certainly, their new skills will enhance their opportunities to seek new or enhanced roles within the business, if this is one of their goals," Julie says.

In recognition of his dedicated work on behalf of hundreds of union members, Billy received the Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning from the Scottish TUC in 2015, which is named after the Fife shipyard worker and trade union activist who made a major contribution to the development of the union learning agenda in Scotland before her early death from cancer in 2005.

"I read the submission Pat sent in for me and I was quite impressed! I didn't realise there was that much I had done in that period of time, but it did sound impressive when you read it all: I was quite chuffed with myself when I realised how much I had done," he says.

"I was proud and honoured to get an award named after a shipyard worker from my own union. I never did it for recognition, it was for the people who would benefit, but when I was told I had won, I was chuffed to bits."

The key to the success has been the partnership between all the unions onsite and with the company, Billy says.

"I said in my speech at the Scottish TUC when I received the award, that the GMB, UCATT and Unite worked together and we involved everybody: it just goes to show that when unions come together with the backing of the company, it's amazing what you can achieve." ■



THE BEST **START** ON THE JOBS TRAIL

Hundreds of Unite members found the support they needed from the union when one of the fixtures of the Northern Ireland industrial scene announced it was going out of business.

When Japanese multinational JTI announced that it would be closing the Gallaher's tobacco plant in Ballymena, politicians and civil servants were quick to promise the 900 staff on the payroll (and dozens more contract workers) that they would do everything they could to help them find new jobs.

Although Unite urged management to treat these pledges with a degree of caution, the company brushed aside the union's concerns, just as it had rejected Unite's original counter-proposal to maintain the plant as a Centre of Excellence, albeit with a reduced workforce.

"JTI were relaxed in the belief that the Department for Employment & Learning (DEL), Invest NI (the regional business development agency) and the various governmental bodies were ready to supply all help whatever that maybe as soon as it was required," recalls Regional Learning Organiser Clare Caulfield (herself originally from the County Antrim town).

"I warned against relying on these promises as I had seen the same process many times with these bodies: as soon the dust settles after the initial shock of the

closure announcement, the promises never come to fruition – and unfortunately I was proved right."

With an unusually long closure period from the official announcement in October 2014 to complete shutdown in early 2017, Unite recognised it had a unique opportunity to develop a comprehensive retraining programme for its members.

However, management decided to pay for the very expensive services of a people management business that promised a two-stage support programme: phase one would concentrate on internal courses and external training assistance and phase two would provide careers advice, job search skills and financial planning.

While the initial meetings between JTI and the union about the transition process were positive, as soon as the company signed the training and development contract with the people management company, it shut Unite out of the process, despite the union's years of experience in local Essential Skills planning and delivery.

For the workforce, many of them feared re-entry into the jobs market, since Gallaher's was the

UNITE HAS HELPED HUNDREDS OF GALLAHER'S WORKERS SECURE NEW JOBS THROUGH LEARNING, AS WELL AS DEMANDING ACTION FOR JOBS FROM POLITICAL LEADERS

only job they had ever known. They had no idea of what it would take to successfully find decent work in middle age with none of the qualifications their younger counterparts had secured.

"Within Northern Ireland, JTI Gallagher's was known as 'a job for life,' which is evident from the length of service most employees have," Clare explains. "A vast number started in the factory as apprentices at 14 or 16, and with few or no qualifications, the core of the workforce were catapulted into a state of despair."

The company reassured staff that the career transition company would see them right, but a large percentage of the workers who managed to obtain a 15-minute slot with the advisers left their one-to-ones without having their fears allayed. "The majority left those meetings feeling they were right to be worried about their future," Clare says.

Knowing the workforce would stand a much better chance with Unite, Clare circulated a simple learning needs analysis to union members. Of the 200 responses she received in very short order, many were from people who needed support looking for a new job while others were from people who needed help coming to terms with their imminent retirement.

"A large cohort of retirees were sinking into depression due to the fear of having no worth outside of the only job they ever had," Clare recalls. "It became very evident very quickly that we would have to take a holistic view of each member separately, as they all had very individual needs."

The next step was to organise a change-management course called 'It's your job that's redundant, not you!' The two-hour interactive session was delivered to 140-plus members by local union training provider New Dawn Training & Development, experts in health and well-being.

"Those who attended came in blaming the world, and left with their eyes open in readiness to prepare for the change ahead, whether it be another job or retirement – we had something for everyone," Clare says.

Immediately after the course, Clare settled down to the business of one-to-one interviews with the workforce, speaking to 400 members about the specifics of what they needed.



It became very evident very quickly that we would have to take a holistic view of each member separately, as they all had very individual needs"

REGIONAL LEARNING ORGANISER CLARE CAULFIELD

After the one-to-ones, Clare set up Essential Skills classes for everyone who wanted them, designing a timetable that accommodated the factory's complex shift patterns.

"Along with the Northern Regional College (NRC), we juggled over 200 members into at least one maths or English class, where all of them gained at least one qualification, and 90 of them also attended ICT classes," Clare says.

With Unite members gaining more than 400 qualifications since starting classes in autumn 2015, the company has finally accepted that union learning has proved itself vastly superior to the external provider offer. "JTI realised that we were moving faster for the employees and started directing anyone looking for help to us," Clare says.

In addition to English, maths and ICT courses, Unite is now offering CV writing and interviewing skills courses, which are giving members the chance to update their skills in line with the current expectations of employers.

The first wave of redundancies occurred in May 2016, with the remaining staff working on until the factory gates close for the last time in early 2017.

"We are in it to offer a tangible service to the individual: it is in our interest to ensure our members gain the kind of high quality re-employability skills to stand against everyone else in a job interview," says Clare.

"We want our members to remain in work and Learn with Unite are best placed to help achieve that." ■



WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU **LEARN**

From improving your computer skills to studying at degree level, you can develop yourself with the support of your union.

LearnWithUnite

LearnWithUnite enables our members to improve their skills through online learning. We currently offer:

- Online Basics: introductory interactive course for people new to the internet and email
- Keyboard Pro: improves your typing speed and accuracy; costs just £10 to Unite members
- ITQ: geared to the novice user of the computer; enables members to study at Level 1, 2 or 3
- Functional Skills: nationally recognised English qualifications at Level 1 and 2; free to Unite members (contact your Regional Learning Organiser)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): covers daily life, going to work, culture, health, education and travel; free to Unite members, with support from facilitators in the classroom and online.

Helping migrant learners

The United Migrant Workers Education Programme (UMWEP) successfully delivers flexible learning opportunities for migrant workers and their families in many communities across London and further afield, using our pioneering Alternative Education Model (AEM). Courses include:

- ESOL
- English conversation
- ICT
- art, drama and dance.

Find out more from your Regional Learning Manager.

Find out more from www.learnwithunite.org

Apprenticeships

Through our national agreement with JT Development Solutions (JTDS), one of the country's leading training providers, we can help more Unite members obtain high-quality Apprenticeships. JTDS offers the following Apprenticeship pathways:

- Business Administration Level 2,3 & 4
- Customer Service Level 2 & 3
- IT Application Specialist Level 2 & 3
- Learning and Development Level 3
- Logistics Level 2 and 3
- Management NVQ Level 3, 4 & 5
- Providing Financial Services Level 2 & 3
- Retail Level 2 & 3
- Social Media Level 3
- Team Leader Level 2
- Warehouse and Storage Level 2.

Find out more from your Regional Learning Manager or Union Learning Organiser.

Distance learning

Our members can update their skills via distance learning, thanks to a new partnership agreement with Sunderland College. Accredited and certificated by NCFE at Level 2, the courses include:

- Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
- Equality and Diversity
- Nutrition and Health
- Dementia Awareness
- Mental Health Awareness
- Understanding End of Life Care.

Find out more: www.learnwithunite.org/file.php/1/forms/sunderland_offer/index.html

Community learning

Unite currently runs community learning centres in Durham (with the Durham Miners' Association), Barnsley (with the NUM and British Red Cross), Great Yarmouth and east London. The centres all offer their own range of courses to members of the local community (such as English, IT and employability skills), and many have trained staff on hand to offer advice on issues such as housing and benefits and signpost people to specialist support.

- Durham Community Support Centre:
0191 3727137 durhamcsc@gmail.com
- Unite Community Support Centre, NUM
Headquarters, Barnsley: 01226 215557
barnsleycsc@gmail.com www.barnsleycsc.com
- Herois do Mar Alternative Education
Project, Great Yarmouth: 01493 718646
heroisdomar@hotmail.co.uk
- Unite Community at Cable Street:
020 3435 6182 cable.street@unitetheunion.org

University discounts

The discounts we have negotiated with some key providers will help you access more opportunities at this level and ease the financial burden of higher level learning.

- Birkbeck, University of London. 10 per cent discount on course fees. Regular free advice and support sessions for prospective students.
To claim your discount, download the discount form from the Birkbeck website (www.bbk.ac.uk/unions), fill in your personal details and sign. You will need to have your membership verified by a ULR or a member of LearnWithUnite staff.
- University of Wolverhampton. 10 per cent discount on course fees for new students.
To claim your discount, mention that you are a Unite member when you enrol (www.wlv.ac.uk). The university will confirm your membership with the regional Learn with Unite team. ■

YOUR LEARN WITH UNITE TEAM



The team comprises the Head of Lifelong Learning, Regional Learning Managers, learning organisers and national coordinators.

Head of Lifelong Learning

Kenny Barron
020 7611 2626
kenny.barron@unitetheunion.org

ULF National Project Administrators

Deana Vango
020 7611 2626
deana.vango@unitetheunion.org
Ola Badiru
020 3617 2714
ola.badiru@unitetheunion.org

Your Regional Learning Managers

North West

Jane Broome
07745 511871
jane.broome@unitetheunion.org

North East, Yorkshire and Humberside

Gill Pearson
0113 322 3383
gill.pearson@unitetheunion.org

East Midlands/West Midlands

Donna Hendley
01332 548400 (Pride Park, Derby)
0121 553 6051 (West Bromwich)
donna.hendley@unitetheunion.org

South West

Steph Weston
07845 992995
steph.weston@unitetheunion.org

London and Eastern/South East

Dean Briody
020 7611 2620
dean.briody@unitetheunion.org

National Coordinators for the English regions

Equality, Diversity and Community Coordinator

Lesley Stevenson
07718 666590
lesley.stevenson@unitetheunion.org

Data and Reporting Coordinator

Brian Davis
Tel: 020 3617 2715
brian.davis@unitetheunion.org

IT and Communication Coordinator

Jim Ritchie
0113 236 4885
jim.ritchie@unitetheunion.org

Your lead contacts in Northern Ireland, Scotland & Wales

Belfast

Clare Caulfield
07918 673749
clare.caulfield@unitetheunion.org

Glasgow

Pat Egan
0141 375 7010
pat.egan@unitetheunion.org

Cardiff

Sue Da'Casto
029 2002 2759
sue.da'casto@unitetheunion.org



USEFUL RESOURCES

IMPROVING SKILLS

Alison

Free online courses

www.alison.com

Traineeships

Preparing young people for Apprenticeships or jobs

www.gov.uk/government/collections/traineeships-programme

Apprenticeships

Programmes combining training, study and work

www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships

Learn My Way

Free online digital skills

www.learnmyway.com

Learn with Unite

Learning portal with a range of resources including ESOL

www.learnwithunite.org

National Extension College

10 per cent discount for union members on distance learning opportunities

www.nec.ac.uk

The Reading Agency

Publishes Quick Reads for emergent adult readers and runs Reading Ahead

<https://readingagency.org.uk/adults>

Skills Workshop

Free functional skills resources

www.skillsworkshop.org

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (IAG)

National Careers Service

Provides IAG on learning, training and work opportunities

nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Unionlearn

ULR strategies to support learners

www.unionlearn.org.uk/supportinglearners

Floodlight (course search tool)

Covers 40+ UK towns, cities and regions

www.floodlight.co.uk

CAMPAIGNING ORGANISATIONS

Campaign for Learning

Runs Learning At Work Week every May

www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

Learning and Work Institute (formerly NIACE)

Independent policy making and research

www.learningandwork.org.uk

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

British Dyslexia Association

Support and resources for dyslexic learners

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Disability Matters

Free e-learning resource for workers and volunteers with children, young people and young adults

www.disabilitymatters.org.uk

Equality & Diversity Forum

Network of national organisations committed to progressing equalities

www.edf.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Responsible for promoting equality and human rights, producing codes of practice and giving advice

www.equalityhumanrights.com

MindEd

Free educational resource on children and young people's mental health issues, particularly useful for adults who work or volunteer with young people/children

www.mindeed.org.uk

HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

Whatuni.com

Degree guides, rankings and reviews

www.whatuni.com

Openlearn

Free online learning resources from the Open University

www.open.edu/openlearn

Birkbeck

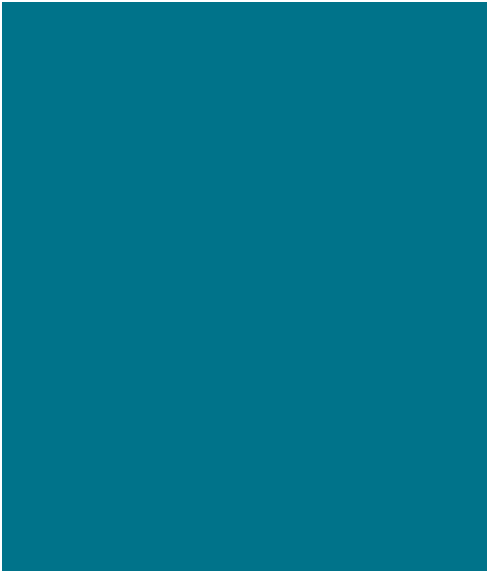
London's specialist provider of evening HE

www.bbk.ac.uk

University of Wolverhampton

West Midlands HE provider

www.wlv.ac.uk



ALL PHOTOS FROM CELEBRATING DIVERSITY THROUGH LEARNING FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT IN BARNSELEY, JANUARY 2016, BY MARK HARVEY.