

Suffolk

Common Ground



Working with Trade Unions to Promote Learning

Autumn/Winter 03/04

Pulling together



Exciting new projects have taken shape as TULL and the LSC for Suffolk support union learning initiatives across the county. Several unions are working with staff, employers and local training providers to bring opportunities to people in the workplace and beyond.

“Unions can have a unique and important role in creating and supporting learning opportunities. We welcome the involvement and positive approach being taken by the unions and employers involved in these projects and are seeing significant results and productive partnerships created. Major steps forward are being taken as barriers to learning are overcome,” said Richard Crook, from Trade Union Learning Link Suffolk.

In this edition of Common Ground we look at some of these projects. For more information please contact TULL or the individual trade union.

Engaging gears through learning

Steve Walker runs the Suffolk learning project for the GMB union. An engineer by trade, Steve sees parallels between his new work promoting learning and his previous employment. Here is an extract from an article Steve wrote on the subject.

Engaging adults back into learning can be seen to share some of the same principles as the movement of gears and cogs in an engine. The movement should be in harmony with its other working parts to make it turn and move efficiently and positively.

The role of the Union Learning Rep (ULR) is the driving force behind the gears that give all the vital things that are needed if we are to get back to learning in the workplace:

- **G**aining confidence and trust are vital as the first point of call as many adults have had bad experiences with learning when they were young.
- **E**ducation can cover a multitude of learning opportunities and this must have a purpose and goal.
- **A**dvising and supporting those thinking of or progressing on the learning ladder is a key part a ULR can play.
- **R**esources and rewards are available for many to achieve and unlock everyone’s full potential, funding is available through a variety of routes.
- **S**uccess and Sustain, these two elements are the hard work the new learner has put into getting back into learning.

A new project is agreed at Crown Artist Brush Ltd. L to R: Ray Cleverland Shop steward, Steve Walker GMB Union Project Worker, Brenda Duncan Shop Steward, Sue Parnell Senior Shop Steward and new Learning Rep, Richard Llewellyn General Manager, Jane Knights HR Manager



To contact Steve Walker or to receive the full text of the article ring him on 01603 625260, mobile 07905 635023 or email him at: stevewalker27@yahoo.co.uk



Learning + Skills Council
Suffolk





Project Worker, Neil Collby

Suffolk PinK

Suffolk PinK - 'Partnership in Knowledge' is the exciting new project launched by the Communication Workers Union.

CWU represent members working for several employers, but mainly British Telecom and Royal Mail. Members have a wide range of learning aspirations and the employers have a wide range of premises, so we are finding solutions which match the situations at the workplace.

It is easier to set up projects based in urban locations, but there are specific issues within Suffolk which has a widely dispersed membership, coupled with travel and transport difficulties. For this reason, CWU applied to the local LSC for funding of a Suffolk based project worker.

"I will build on the work done last year by my CWU colleague Mark Hughes. He undertook a short project which raised the awareness of the learning agenda among our branches as well as the employers," says Suffolk Project Worker, Neil Colby.

"The CWU is committed to implementing the learning agenda for as many of our members as we can. We are looking to use laptop computers to set up ad hoc

facilities for members working in other locations, such as at small Royal Mail delivery offices in more remote locations. Also, many BT field engineers work from home and do not have a headquarters building as such. Being locally based, I will be able to set up temporary learning centres in these places."

The CWU has found that there is widespread enthusiasm about taking up learning opportunities, but we need to be adaptable in response. That is why we are trying to offer variety of flexible learning options – to leave our members 'in the PinK!'

**Peter Amphlett
CWU Project Worker for
the Eastern Region**

UNISON launch major drive in health sector

Staff at hospitals and NHS Health Trusts in the county will get a new boost to their learning opportunities when UNISON begins a major Union Learning Representative and Advisor recruitment and training exercise. The project, supported by the LSC, will focus on larger establishments and should bring advice to hundreds of members of staff. It will also promote the take-up of NHS Learning Accounts within the NHS Trusts and private contractors, particularly among staff least likely to take up training opportunities. A parallel and complementary project is taking place in Norfolk.

Union learning in the social care sector

This project has been set up to support the development of Lifelong Learning Advisers/Union Learning Representatives in the social care sector in Suffolk. It builds on the longstanding partnership between the County Council, UNISON, WEA, district councils and private learning providers. It aims to offer learning opportunities to staff who have the least qualifications. The project links with existing schemes such as pre-employment training and pathways into professional qualifications. The project involves working in the private and voluntary sectors of social care across the county. It is envisaged that 'Return to Learn' courses and training for learning advisers will take place before next March.

Contact Marion Maxwell or Michelle Kirk at UNISON on 0870 889 0373 for more details.

T&G takes road to success

Working with several different employers and focusing on non-traditional learners, this project aims to make learning opportunities available to a range of staff, particularly those who have missed out in the past. The project is also making links with the successful First Group Buses Project, which is running in Suffolk.

The starting point for the project has been the recruitment of Union Learning Reps in participating workplaces. Some Union Learning Reps have been trained and are carrying out learning needs analyses and bringing in learning providers in order to start offering the courses required. The project also offers opportunities to family members. Sectors covered include food processing, manufacturing, transport and shipping and the public sector.

If you would like to know more or to get involved contact Kenny Barron TGWU at KENT@kbarron.fsbusiness.co.uk or ring 07879843910.



Learning Link

Stuart Sharman has recently been appointed Suffolk project worker for the new Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers Union (USDAW). We asked him how it's going.

“The Suffolk USDAW lifelong learning project has now been running for 3 months. Our aim is to encourage employers to see the benefits and advantages of lifelong learning, the positive effects both for the employer and the employee, and to create a network of ULRs who will encourage their ‘workmates’ to take up the learning opportunities which are open to them.

There have been some initial problems as there always are with new projects, but using the experience which has been gained from the Norfolk project, we have overcome most of the issues which we faced. At the moment we are working with the Ipswich and Norwich Co-op Society, Tesco and Palmer and Harvey. We hope to create the kind of success which has been achieved by our sister project in Norfolk. Early signs are that employers and employees are very interested and welcome the chance to enter into the project.

Anyone who would like to know more about the project can contact me on 07986 131698, or 01284 775700.”



Congratulations! Certificates are presented to the first learners from the T&G/ employer learning project at Ipswich Buses who have successfully completed their courses. L to R: Irene Wragg Union Learning Rep, Malcolm Robson Managing Director, Joycelyn Davies Training Matters, A Garnham Driver, Terry Deighton Driver, Cliff Eastern Supervisor

Taking Advice

Trade Union Learning Link has recently become a member of the local Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) Network. Local learning projects are working with IAG. We asked Martin Peel, the Project Manager about what's on offer in Suffolk and why local trades unions should take up membership.

Adults aged 20+ can now obtain FREE and impartial information, advice and guidance about learning opportunities and career choices. With LSC funding, Suffolk's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Partnership offers this Service through a range of member organisations across the county. Other members of the Partnership help by referring adults to the service and by providing more specialised services of their own to which IAG advisers may refer their clients.

Over 80 organisations belong to Suffolk's IAG Partnership. Membership is FREE and the Partnership is keen to offer its support and the benefits of membership to more trades unions and union learning reps. The benefits can include:

- A Network Directory, full of useful contacts and information
- A regular IAG Newsletter and access to the partners' section of the IAG Website
- Free training that ranges from local meetings to an Open College Network course in Information Skills and an NVQ course in Advice and Guidance
- Help to research an answer or source of further help about courses and careers for a particular member
- Inputs into local meetings, training and events for learning reps organised by trades unions
- Help to establish a 'multi-agency' response by Partnership members to events such as major redundancies
- Information about 'Matrix', the national quality standard for organisations providing IAG services.

**To find out more about IAG services and the benefits of Partnership membership contact: Suffolk IAG, Mitre House, 4 Bond Street, Ipswich IP4 1JE
Phone: 01473 295400
Fax: 01473 216170
Email: info@iag.suffolkcc.gov.uk
Web: www.suffolkiag.org.uk**

Stuart Sharman, project worker for USDAW



The Big Read Workshop

Union Learning Reps from different unions and workplaces in Norfolk and Suffolk took part in this one and a half day event, which was a great success. The course included sessions on The BBC Big Read, how libraries can contribute to workplace learning, dyslexia awareness and practical discussions about how to involve those in the workplace in reading through less formal routes than courses provide.

Participants welcomed the style of the workshop. "This is a really good way to learn as we are all relaxed and able to take the opportunity to get to talk with other learning reps and hear about what they are doing," said Tony Moss from Ipswich Buses. There was a clear message that more workshops of a similar style would be welcomed.



National Tests – a chance to get qualified

In recognition of the significance of the new national tests for literacy and numeracy which have recently been introduced, TULL ran a workshop in Ipswich to explain the new tests and how they will work, for Union Learning Reps in Suffolk. Teresa Goldson Hunt and Liz Currell of Training Matters explained how the tests can be used and how they can benefit learners in the workplace. Those who came along found it extremely useful to find out about the tests and how they can be introduced to benefit members.

Learning Lift Off, a project involving five trades unions, TULL and Norfolk County Services works predominantly in Norfolk but has some work sites in Suffolk. Here members of the Steering Group collect an award at the National Training Awards ceremony at the Guildhall in Cambridge.

Jocelyn Davies, the County Programme Co-ordinator for Training Matters (Suffolk County Council) explained that "When the tests were first introduced some providers and learners were concerned it would be scary, because of the exams and their past experiences of failure. But it's settled down and learners' experiences have been very positive. It's been a good step back into learning. Taking the test isn't so threatening as it's in a familiar and user friendly environment and it is great for people to get a City and Guilds

or other certificate."

One successful student said "I feel really pleased with myself for getting a qualification and it was okay doing the test." Jocelyn adds, "All the people involved with the tests are aware that it is important for people to succeed. We are careful not to put people in for the tests until they are ready and likely to pass."

If you would like to find out more or to attend a future workshop please contact TULL.



**UCATT
EASTERN**

UCATT, the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians have opened a new regional office in Newmarket.

You can contact them at Goodwin House, Goodwin Business Park, Willie Smith Road, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7SQ. Tel: 01638 565830

ULR Network up and running

Supported by TULL, the LSC for Suffolk, trades unions and the TUC the Suffolk Union Learning Reps Network is up and running. Workshops and network meetings have taken place.

For more information contact Richard Crook at TULL.

Training for ULRs JANUARY TO MARCH 2004

Union Learning Representatives are trained either by their own unions or by the TUC or by a mixture of both. Dates for the next TUC courses are:

Course Title	Length	Venue	Start & End Date & Day
Union Learning Reps (ULR)	5 days	Bury St Edmunds	12.01.04 to 9.02.04
Union Learning Reps (ULR)	5 days	Ipswich	13.01.04 to 10.02.04
Union Learning Reps (ULR)	5 days	Newmarket	12.01.04 to 9.02.04
Union Learning Reps (ULR)	5 days	Bury St Edmunds	02.03.04 to 30.03.04
Union Learning Reps (ULR)	5 days	Ipswich	01.03.04 to 29.03.04
Union Learning Reps (ULR)	5 days	Newmarket	02.03.04 to 30.03.04
ULR Basic Skills module	3 days	Bury St Edmunds	28.01.04 to 30.01.04
ULR Basic Skills module	3 days	Ipswich	10.03.04 to 12.03.04
ULR Working with employers	3 days	Bury St Edmunds	04.02.04 to 06.02.04

Trade Union Learning Link

All of these projects in Suffolk have been developed with the help of Trade Union Learning Link, Suffolk (TULL). In most cases TULL is a partner and will be represented on the Steering Committee. It may act as the link to the Learning and Skills Council for Suffolk and offer practical help and advice.

Richard Crook, Project Manager

**Trade Union Learning Link
Learning and Skills Council
for Suffolk
Fellow Maltings
42 Fellow Street
Ipswich IP2 8SJ**

Tel/Fax:
01328 855357
Email: richard.crook
@lsc.gov.uk

