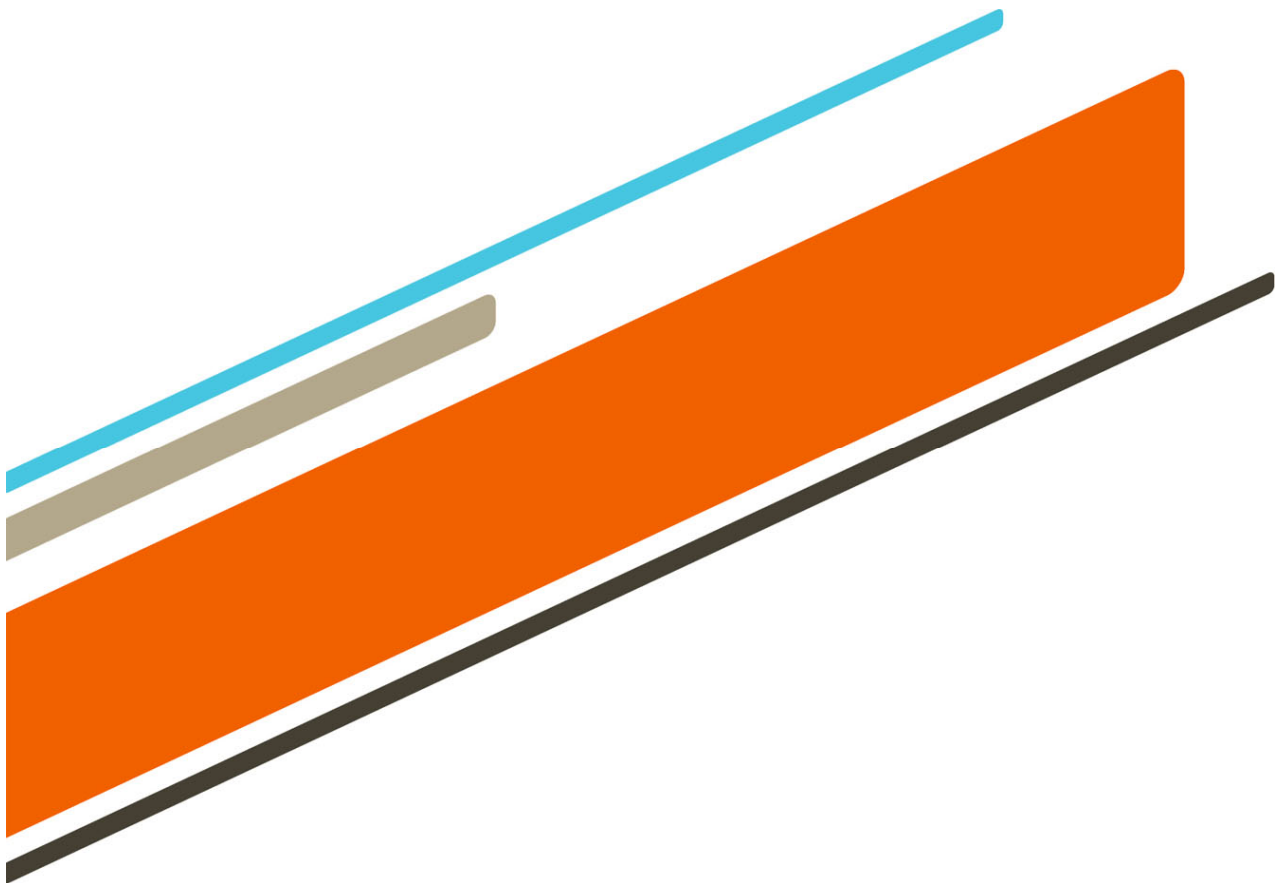


# **Train to Gain Protocol: Trades Union Congress and the Learning and Skills Council**

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# Train to Gain Protocol: Trades Union Congress and the Learning and Skills Council

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) are strategic partners equally committed to maximising the contribution each organisation makes to promoting learning and skills and raising the demand for skills development among young people, adults and employers.

The LSC's Train to Gain is a new way of working with employers which offers them access to a full range of flexible, high quality training solutions to their skills needs through an independent and impartial brokerage system. Train to Gain will also be a key mechanism for employees to access training via the workplace, including paid time off to learn. All employers benefiting from Train to Gain funding commit to releasing their employees to undertake training during paid time.

Employers with fewer than 50 employees will receive a contribution to the wage costs of employees who achieve qualifications.

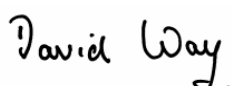
This protocol sets out clear parameters at a national level for the relationship between Train to Gain and Trade Unions, setting a platform for the development of additional regional activity.



It has been developed by national and regional LSC office colleagues with TUC representatives and builds upon the successful contribution of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) to the Employer Training Pilots.

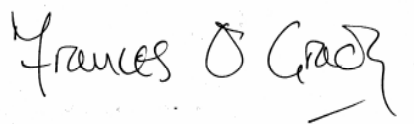
**Signed by LSC**

**David Way**



**Signed by TUC**

**Frances O'Grady**




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## Train to Gain

Train to Gain is critically important because if businesses are to be successful they need to compete, and to compete they need to train their employees.

Train to Gain builds on the successful Employer Training Pilots. Launched in April 2006, it covered the whole of England by the end of August 2006.

The Train to Gain service will:


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- A decorative graphic on the left side consisting of a light blue diagonal line above a tan parallelogram.
- Improve the performance of businesses
  - Raise the skill levels of the workforce
  - Develop the capacity of training providers to meet the needs of businesses
  - Change the way that training is delivered
  - Raise the standards and quality of training
  - Provide a national skills brokerage network, the main focus of which will be to support businesses that have not used training before

The core Train to Gain service will comprise support from a Skills Broker, working to consistent national standards, to improve the performance of businesses by raising the skill levels of the workforce.

- The Service will offer independent and impartial advice, match training needs with training providers and ensure that training is delivered to meet businesses' needs

- Where appropriate to the needs of the employer this training could include publicly funded Skills for Life and first full level 2 qualifications, which will be undertaken during paid working time
- Other training such as short courses or access to Higher Education will be co-funded by the employer and the LSC and will be completed both inside and outside of paid working time
- Both the training and skills advice offered will be impartial, flexible, responsive and available at a time and place to suit businesses
- Skills Brokers may also refer employers to Investors in People or other relevant organisation improvement services

Other more flexible elements of the Train to Gain Service may include:


- LSC support for higher level learning programmes, including a focus on level 3
  - Support for leadership and management training
  - Support for foundation degrees
  - Specialist and bespoke training packages requested by employers
  - Access to recruitment solutions including Jobcentre Plus
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## Working together

Train to Gain is foremost an independent and impartial service designed to assist employers increase the skills and productivity of their workforces.

The LSC and TUC have common goals for upskilling employees and enabling them to progress. The Employer Training Pilots demonstrated that the presence of unions and ULRs at a workplace bring real benefits to both the delivery and impact of workplace learning. The LSC recognises that unions can be of particular benefit in positively influencing employees and employers in their approach to training and employee development.

There are many sectors where unions are very active and influential in promoting learning and where these sectors map to Train to Gain priorities a particularly high value will be placed on this relationship by brokers and the regional LSC. In these sectors additional operational co-operation will be required and this protocol sets the cornerstone for further development.



The Joint Working Protocol signed between LSC and TUC in March 2005 recognises that each organisation is an important strategic partner at a national, regional and local level. Furthermore, both organisations should raise awareness of each other's priorities and strategic direction through joint events, meetings and regular briefings.

Unionlearn is established under the auspices of the TUC. It includes the former TUC Learning Services in England as well as the TUC Education Service which covers the United Kingdom.

Unionlearn provides a new strategic framework and support for the contribution unions make to workforce development and lifelong learning; raises awareness of the value of learning and the contribution that unions can make; develops capacity-building in relation to both unions and providers; and provides coordination, dissemination, evaluation and quality assurance in relation to union learning activities.

At a regional level, involving the TUC, unionlearn and other specific unions will be beneficial to the delivery of Train to Gain as unions have valuable experience of engaging both employers and employees into learning.

There are several agreed actions at national and regional levels regarding Train to Gain and the specific role of the TUC, unionlearn and trades unions (details overleaf).

Although each region across England will shape Train to Gain to match local priorities and small regional differences in the delivery models of Train to Gain may exist, in essence the service offered and employer experience will be the same.


It is expected that the LSC and unionlearn in each TUC region will develop their working relationships beyond these agreed actions.

## Agreed actions:

### TUC will:

- Brief all relevant unionlearn staff on Train to Gain
- Provide information on Train to Gain to Union Learning Representatives and the wider union movement – produce an explanatory guide on Train to Gain for ULRs and relevant union members in conjunction with LSC
- Publicise Train to Gain on the TUC and unionlearn websites
- Monitor and review Train to Gain activity where there is union involvement
- Ensure new ULRs undertaking TUC training will be briefed about Train to Gain
- Work with local/regional LSCs to maximise the impact of Train to Gain

### LSC will:

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- Encourage Skills Brokers to work with unions to co-ordinate employer engagement activity and ensure employees are supported in accessing training opportunities
  - Ensure that Skills Brokers receive sufficient training and information on trades unions, the role of ULRs, collective agreements, workplace learning agreements and unionlearn during their induction training
  - Support unionlearn production of explanatory guides for ULRs
  - Promote the beneficial impact of ULRs in the workplace
  - Work with local/regional unionlearn personnel to maximise Train to Gain impact
  - Continue to work with the TUC and unionlearn nationally in the further development of Train to Gain
  - Organise additional awareness raising and/or training for Skills Brokers on union learning and the role of ULRs, to be facilitated by regional LSCs and delivered by unionlearn Regional Managers using a national template

- Develop procedures for Skills Brokers, unionlearn and unions to make referrals to each other and other day to day working arrangements

### **LSC will ensure that Skills Brokers:**

- Identify if there is a recognised trades union at employers
  - Identify whether there are any workplace learning agreements or relevant collective agreements in place
  - In workplaces where ULRs are present brokers should notify the employer that they are arranging to meet and work with ULRs and the appropriate senior union representatives responsible for negotiating with management
  - Where workplaces are unionised but there are no ULRs present the broker, should inform their regional LSC who will liaise with unionlearn, who will work with the relevant union and offer to help establish ULRs in the workplace
  - Share more specific information about an employer's engagement on an LSC programme only with the employer's permission
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