

UNISON LEARNING **in** LONDON

KEEPING UNISON STEWARDS AND ACTIVISTS INFORMED IN GREATER LONDON EDITION 4 • SPRING 2009

Welcome to UNISON LEARNING in LONDON



For me personally the value of learning and personal development cannot be underestimated for our members as individuals and also as union representatives.

As Branch Secretary from the Valuation Tribunals – a national branch based in Bolton – I know it is not always possible to travel to London to attend training and how easy it is for activists not based in London to feel excluded from the many training opportunities the region provides.

In many cases the Regional Education Team are able to arrange for you to attend various training courses at a location accessible to you. Contact them to find out more.

Here's looking forward to more members than ever before being able to access and benefit from union learning.

With best wishes
Lynn Bentley,
Regional Publicity Officer

USING LEARNING TO ORGANISE & RECRUIT!

The region recently applied and received money from 'Learning, Equality and Diversity in UNISON' to support an organising project within Private Contractors who provide cleaning and catering services in Higher Education (HE).

Private Contractors in HE have many migrant workers and tend to have little in the way of staff development. The broad principles behind the project are that 'learning' is a powerful organising tool in any workplace and that 'learning' is a motivating factor for migrant workers to become members.

The key objectives of the project are to:

- Provide direct opportunities for members to improve language skills;
- Work with employers to improve provision of 'skills for life' and finally,
- Developing tools to support local Union Learning Reps (ULRs) to play a broader organising role within employers and workplace.

The long term aim of the project is to provide tools for members to become active and organise around learning within their own workplaces, bridging the gaps of language and knowledge to allow full engagement with branch activity.

Opportunities exist for many more branches to get involved in this type of activity and the wider skills development, why not contact Richard Soer on 0207 535 6568 or r.soer@unison.co.uk to find out more?



Veolia continues to work in partnership with UNISON to promote and encourage its workers to take part in ESOL training. This training has now been running over a number of years and workers have benefited from improvements to both their working and personal lives.

JOINT BRANCH ASSESSMENT PROCESS



The new joint Branch Assessment Process is a new initiative launched in January this year to give branches, together with their Regional Organiser, the opportunity to review core organisational measures

and agree simple practical steps aimed at building UNISON's strength, particularly our capacity to support members at work.

Core measures under review include – numbers and training of stewards and workplace representatives, member participation in branch work and use of branch resources. The process will enable branches to focus on areas of strength and look at any areas for improvement as well as to consider and plan a branch development and training programme for the coming year to address these.

The Regional Education Team will be assisting with this process by providing Regional Organisers with a list of key indicators which can be used as a template for further discussion around future branch development and also by providing a number of branch based education and training courses available on request. Contact your Regional Organiser to find out more about branch assessment or the Education Team about branch based training.

HOW BRANCH DEVELOPMENT TRAINING CAN HELP:–

Branch Development should be a priority for all branches and all Branch Education Officers and activists are encouraged to raise this at their Branch Committee for further discussion.

The region can provide briefings and activity based materials to enable branches to assess and plan how your branch can develop. To find out more contact the Education Team or your Regional Organiser.

APPRENTICESHIP TASK FORCE SCHEME

The London Apprenticeship Taskforce was set up by the Government specifically to respond to the decline in recruiting apprentices in London, and to identify ways in which to reverse this trend, with particular emphasis on an increased engagement of the public sector.

The Taskforce comprises of 2 Government Ministers, employer organisations, provider bodies, the 2012 olympic bodies, other related organisations and trade unions. Les Perkins, UNISON's Regional Education Officer is a member of the Taskforce.

The Taskforce has established a number of service/sector specific sub groups to identify

how that sector can increase the scope and number of apprenticeships for both young people and adults. Jane Doolan, Branch Secretary Islington UNISON is the TU Representative on the local authority sub group and Les Perkins is on the NHS sub group. [Les Perkins said](#)

“

trade unions in general, and UNISON in particular have a long and proud history of promoting and supporting apprenticeships and we know that we bring a wealth of experience and commitment to this issue.

”

Branches can obtain more information on the scheme by contacting [Amanda Mayers/ Les Perkins](#).

PROCUREMENT TRAINING



Procurement, or compulsory competitive tendering as it is also known, has been identified as a priority by the union as increasingly the Government's marketisation agenda, has meant the break-up of public services and could see the transfer of thousands more jobs to private companies and the community and voluntary sector.

This could lead to the break-up of national bargaining frameworks and potentially undermine the terms and conditions of many UNISON members, including their pension benefits.

UNISON has developed a new two day training course for branch activists to understand the stages of procurement, give clarity on UNISON and the employers perspectives, assist in influencing decisions made in the procurement process, and make sure members' interests are effectively represented.

Branches are asked to consider and discuss with their Regional Organiser, how, as a branch, they are going to deal with procurement and to agree which activists will initially attend the training.

QCF (QUALIFICATION CREDIT FRAMEWORK)

A new credit system has been introduced for UNISON members attending UNISON and TUC education and training courses.

The new system – QCF – will provide a new framework which depending on the type of course can lead to a recognised diploma. There are 3 levels in this new system, **awards, certificates and diplomas.**

Awards

To achieve an award you must obtain 6 credits. 3 credits will be awarded for attendance at a two/three day course, so representatives attending UNISON's introductory organising stewards course followed by handling grievance and disciplinaries would achieve an award i.e. 6 credits.

Certificates

To achieve a certificate you must obtain at least 18 credits meaning representatives

would need to attend about 6 courses from our short course programme.

Diploma

To achieve a diploma representatives must achieve 48 credits which can only be done by completing mandatory units that are only available on the TUC's 36 week course programme.

Reps attending either TUC or UNISON courses provided by TUC Study Centres will be allocated a unique individual reference



number/code that will be updated as and when you attend further courses. This will help to ensure you receive the appropriate award or certificate if attending courses at different locations. For further information on QCF please contact the Education Team.

LONDON REGION'S SUCCESS @ THE GO AWARDS!



We are delighted, and proud to report, that at the annual skills for life gala celebrations and GO awards hosted by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) on 18th March several UNISON members were awarded GO Awards.

The GO Awards recognise and celebrate the success of organisations and individuals who have demonstrated a true commitment to skills for life in the workplace and have made a significant contribution to embedding skills for life.



The winners (all participants of the 5 year LDA funded project to embed Skills for Life in London Local Authorities which ended in April 2008) were:

Julia Poynter LB Waltham Forest and Oreleo DuCran LB Newham – Union learning representative GO assessor award

This award recognises union learning representatives who have followed a course of study as GO awards assessors. They have



both successfully achieved a qualification certified by Open College Network, which will enable them to support workplace Skills for Life and assess future GO award action plans.

Also shortlisted for other awards were:

Oreleo DuCran, Unison, LB Newham – GO union learning representative award (sponsored by UNISON)

Bob Golder, LB Sutton – GO leadership award

A VOICE FOR ALL IN WALTHAM FOREST & NEWHAM – UNION LEARNING FUND UPDATE

The Government sponsored 'skills pledge' is another wonderful opportunity for all branches that have yet to engage with employers around learning and development to do so. The signing of the skills pledge is a public declaration by the employer to ensure that everyone they employ has the opportunity to attain a level 2 qualification which equates to a GCSE at grade A-C.

Whilst in itself this potentially opens up tremendous personal development opportunities, critically it gives us as a union the chance to develop a further organising

strategy around this very positive agenda which is why regionally we bid for money from the National Union Learning Fund (ULF) Learning, Equality and Diversity in UNISON (LEDU) project to develop an organising model that all branches could use if they so wished.

The pilot project will take place in Waltham Forest & Newham and will involve.

- Our learning reps visiting agreed departments to carry out a paper based learning survey entitled 'Our Skills Pledge To You – A Voice For All' that will seek to establish what development opportunities individuals had received as well as their own personal

development aspirations. The survey will sample approximately 400 people from a cross section of grades and jobs. We hope to commence the survey in May.

- When the survey process has been compiled the College of North East London will carry out an analysis of the findings and produce a report that will be unveiled at a regional conference in the late autumn.

This project will put UNISON and our learning reps at the heart of the skills pledge process and enable us to do what we do best – talk to people to find out their real learning and development issues in the workplace.

NEW TRAINING PROGRAMME JULY – DECEMBER 2009 AVAILABLE NOW!

The new education and training programme for activists in London for July – December 2009 will be available shortly. It includes a wide range of courses for activists at all levels including introductory courses for stewards and safety reps, a range of other courses on local negotiating and casework; health and safety; equal opportunities; organising the branch; and lifelong learning.

A copy of the programme will be sent to every steward with InFocus, the monthly activist magazine, however additional copies can be ordered by contacting – **Amanda Mayers** on 0207 535 6561 or a.mayers@unison.co.uk. It can also be found at www.unison.org.uk/london.



The information in this newsletter is available in alternative formats. Please contact Karen Westwood tel 0207 535 6608 or email k.westwood@unison.co.uk

WHO'S WHO IN EDUCATION

Les Perkins – Regional Officer – For all Return2Learn and other education issues
Tel: 0207 535 6566
Email: l.perkins@unison.co.uk

Richard Soer – Regional Learning & Development Organiser – For all life long learning issues
Tel: 0207 535 6568
Email: r.soer@unison.co.uk

Alice Dawnay – Area Organiser
Tel: 0207 535 6554
Email: a.dawnay@unison.co.uk

Amanda Mayers – Administrator – For information on all education training courses and all administrative matters relating to regional education.
Tel: 0207 535 6561
Email: a.mayers@unison.co.uk

Mary Babalola – Clerk
Tel: 0207 535 6645
Email: m.babalola@unison.co.uk



Greater London UNISON
1st floor, Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1B 3LS
Email: greaterlondonregion@unison.co.uk
Telephone: 0845 355 0845 • Fax: 020 7535 2105
Membership department: 020 7535 2135 • Textphone: 020 7535 2140