

Climbing Frame Newsletter

Special points of interest:

- ◆ If you haven't already and would like to express an interest in the Climbing Frame please email:

climbingframe@tuc.org.uk

- ◆ To find out more about the Climbing Frame log on to:

[www.unionlearn.org.uk/
climbingframe](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/climbingframe)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Web-based Climbing Frame Project	2
How will the Web-based Climbing Frame work?	2
How can I get involved in the Climbing Frame Trials?	3
Frequently Asked Questions	3
Events	4
In the next edition...	4
Contact Us	4

Welcome & Happy New Year!

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the first edition of the Climbing Frame Newsletter. This quarterly Newsletter has been designed to keep you up to date with the exciting developments which are taking place with the Climbing Frame.

In this edition, you will find out about the Web-based Climbing Frame Project, see what work has been carried out and get an idea as to how it works. You can also find out information about how to take part in the Climbing Frame trials which are taking place in January and February.

Here's to a fantastic 2010!

Best wishes

The Climbing Frame Team



What is the Climbing Frame?

So, for those of you that may not have heard of it, what exactly is the union learning Climbing Frame?

The Climbing Frame is a free tool for Union Learning Reps (ULRs) to help them in their role of supporting learners. It allows ULRs to create pathways for learning and action plans for individuals that can be reviewed and updated as they progress on their learning journey. The Climbing Frame provides up-to-date information and advice for ULRs about a broad

range of learning opportunities in the 'Learning Themes' section. Unions have the option to create their own Learning Themes which can include content about their sector of work and include information of specific interest to their members.

ULRs can also keep ongoing records of who they have worked with and where they are heading in the 'Learner Management' section. ULRs can produce a 'Climbing Frame' of actions and print off action plans for their learners. They can also

create reports which show basic statistics about who they have been working with. Since 2008 an installable version of the Climbing Frame has been available to ULRs. Due to some technical and access issues some ULRs have not been able to make full use of the Climbing Frame. It was decided that the way forward would be to create a fully online Climbing Frame, what we are calling the Web-based Climbing Frame.

Web-based Climbing Frame Project

“Overall we have managed to meet 95% of the improvements users asked for.”



Here are some draft examples of Climbing Frame web page designs to give you a feel for the new website.



What is it?
It is a Union Learning Fund (ULF) project which was developed in order to produce a new version of the Climbing Frame. The project is being managed by Prospect and involves the unions PCS and Usdaw, the three unions which were involved with the original Climbing Frame.

Why develop a web-based version?

The feedback received from the installable Climbing Frame showed that users liked the tool and had a number of ideas for developing it further. It was recognised that many of ideas would really improve the way in which the Climbing Frame worked. Also when the idea for Climbing Frame originated the use of the Internet was not very widespread, like it is now and so moving to a fully online version is the way forward.

So what is new?

The web-based version

of the Climbing Frame will be much easier to access and use, especially from work based computers which are part of an employers network. It is not Flash based therefore is fully compliant with disability legislation. A number of new and useful Learning Themes have been developed, the content is in a “Wikipedia” style format and having a search function will make information easier to find. We have also used the opportunity to make improvements to the Learner Management area and the way in which information is collected and presented.

What about the blockbuster Climbing Frame grid?

Feedback showed that users like the grid and wanted to keep it, so we have. It is better than before though as it can be expanded beyond the current 5 lines and allows learners to keep a permanent visual record

of their progress. Overall we have managed to meet 95% of the improvements users asked for.

When can I use the new version?

We are trialing the first version of the Web-based Climbing Frame in January and February 2010. The aim of the trials is to get users feedback on how the new version works and to identify and fix any ‘bugs’ that are in the new areas of software. You can take part in these trials (please see page 3). After the trials have taken place the new version will be piloted and will be fully available to all ULRs from July 2010. We will be looking at ways in which users can be involved in the pilot work and will be letting you know more about this in the next edition of this newsletter.

How will the Web-based Climbing Frame work?

The current version of Climbing Frame is downloaded onto a ULRs computer or laptop. The new version will operate as an actual website and accessed just like any other website such as Amazon, Facebook and Hotmail. Compatibility to operating systems will no longer be a problem. All ULRs need to access the Climbing Frame is an internet connection and an email address. ULRs will register on the website and then be given a password to set

up and access their own Climbing Frame. They will register their learners in a similar way that they do now. Each learner will have their own files and activity records. If required ULRs can give learners access to their own files so they can manage their own learning. Each learner will have their own action plan and achievement record which they will be able to print off and/or export. They can then make use of this information for

example for their CV or with their personal development plan. ULRs will have access to a wider range of Learning Themes than before and will be able to set favourites. The Learning Themes themselves will be set out in a new ‘Wikipedia’ style format and ULRs will be able to search both within and across the Learning Themes. This will make it much easier to find information.

How can I get involved in the Climbing Frame Trials?

We will be running a series of trials for the first version of the Web-based Climbing Frame. The aim of the trials is to find out where the faults are (if any) and how it can be further improved. We want as many people as possible to take part. The trials will take place in January and early February. You can access the trials in two ways; come to one of the Supporting Learners Regional Events that are taking place across the

country (see the Events section on Page 4 for the event dates). At these events you will be briefed on how the trials work and get an information pack on how to test out the system and report back.

Or you can access the e-trial. You can then download all the information you need to take part. Find out more on the Climbing Frame section of the unionlearn website.

All you need to take part

in the trials is a computer with an internet connection. You won't have to put real people on the system just play around with it and let us know what you think.

You can keep up to date with developments with the Climbing Frame via the unionlearn website. Go to:

www.unionlearn.org.uk/climbingframe



Frequently Asked Questions

Will the Web-based Climbing Frame have a new logo?

Yes, the Web-based Climbing Frame will have a new logo but the name 'Climbing Frame' will remain. We are looking to refresh the Climbing Frame brand and introduce some new publications and promotional items too. Find out more about this in future editions of this newsletter.

How can I register for the Web-based Climbing Frame?

Once the website is launched you can register via the new website. Until then you can express an interest in the Climbing Frame by emailing: climbingframe@tuc.org.uk

As it is on the Internet will the Climbing Frame be harder to use than before?

No, if anything the Climbing Frame will be easier to use than the previous version as access issues should not be a problem. Also we have strived to add features to the Climbing

Frame which will make it even easier to use, such as the search function and quick click options.

Will there still be training provided on the Climbing Frame?

Yes, the Climbing Frame will continue to be part of the initial 5-day course which ULRs undertake and there is also the popular 2-day Climbing Frame course run by TUC Education.

What happens if I have already undertaken the Climbing Frame Course?

For those of you that have already been on the Climbing Frame course there is no need for you to go on the course again, we will be producing some useful guides which show how the new Web-based Climbing Frame works.

Unionlearn will help existing users with any questions they may have and also help with any information they would like transferred from the current and onto the new

system.

Is the Climbing Frame a tool which is compulsory for ULRs to use?

No, the Climbing Frame is not compulsory, it is simply a free tool that unionlearn is offering for ULRs to help make their supporting learners role easier.

Will the online Climbing Frame still have the Learning Themes section?

Yes, the online Climbing Frame will still have the Learning Themes section with lots of useful information for ULRs. We will be introducing some new Learning Themes, to provide even more useful information for ULRs and some new features to help make the Climbing Frame even easier to use.

If I need help with the Climbing Frame or have any questions who can I contact?

Please contact the Climbing Frame team by emailing:

climbingframe@tuc.org.uk

“We will be introducing some new Learning Themes to provide even more useful information for ULRs, and some new features to help make the Climbing Frame even easier to use.”

Events

Supporting Learners Regional Events

Free events are taking place across the country showcasing the tools, services and publications available to ULRs from unionlearn to help them in their role of supporting learners. This is also where you can find out more information about being involved in the Climbing Frame trials. The dates for the events are:

City	Date	Location
Leeds	13 January 2010	Wheeler Hall
London	22 January 2010	Congress House
Bristol	28 January 2010	Ramada Bristol City Hotel
Liverpool	2 February 2010	Devonshire House Hotel
Birmingham	3 February 2010	Birmingham Voluntary Services Centre
Newcastle	9 February 2010	The Assembly Rooms



For more information about these events and to book a place, please visit:
www.unionlearn.org.uk/events

In the next edition...

- ◆ Find out more about the progress being made with the Web-based Climbing Frame project
- ◆ Get an update on the feedback from the Climbing Frame trials
- ◆ Hear about the planned Climbing Frame pilot projects
- ◆ See the new Climbing Frame logo!

The next edition will be available in April 2010

Contact Us

Unionlearn
Congress House
Great Russell Street
London
WC1B 3LS

Phone: 020 7079 6920
Fax: 020 7079 6921
E-mail: unionlearn@tuc.org.uk
Website: www.unionlearn.org.uk

If you would like more information about the Climbing Frame please visit:

www.unionlearn.org.uk/climbingframe

or email

climbingframe@tuc.org.uk

We welcome your emails and feedback

unionlearn
with the TUC