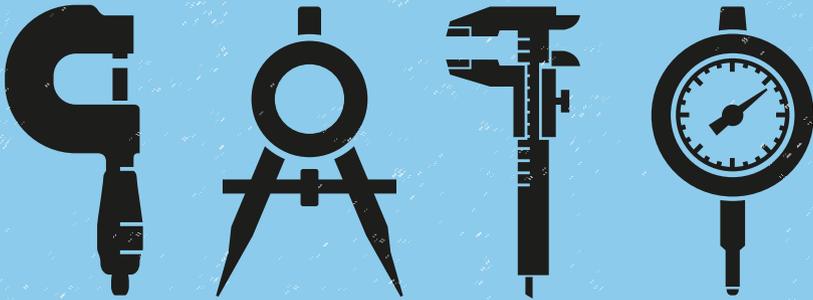


MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF UNION LEARNING



*Facts and figures from the
latest evaluation of the ULF*

Introduction

Union learning has a proven track record of successfully helping learners improve their knowledge and skills and boost their job prospects.

It is especially effective at helping learners with few or no prior qualifications but also supports a range of higher level learning and training.

At the same time, union learning projects help businesses improve their performance, enable unions to better represent their members and make a positive contribution to the economy.

We have produced this booklet to summarise some of the key outcomes and achievements of the Union Learning Fund (ULF) and unionlearn.

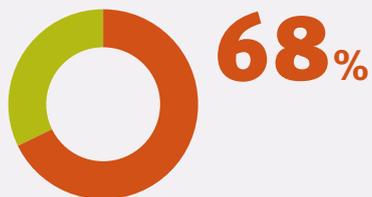
The numbers are all derived from the latest evaluation of the impact of unionlearn and the Union Learning Fund by the Centre for Employment Relations Innovation and Change (CERIC) at the University of Leeds, in collaboration with the Marchmont Observatory at the University of Exeter. The evaluation examined Round 15 (2012/13 to 2014/15) and Round 16 (2015/16) of the ULF and also assessed the support role of unionlearn.

The evaluation worked with the results from two key surveys undertaken at the end of 2015 and early 2016: a survey of 2,550 union learners and a survey of 385 employers, which compared data from similar surveys undertaken for previous evaluations.

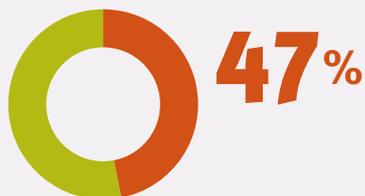
Helping reluctant learners progress at work

Union learning has a proven track record of successful engagement with workers with few or no qualifications.

People with poor exam success in the past are more likely to boost their qualification levels as a result of union learning. Thanks to ULF support:



- more than two-thirds (68 per cent) of learners with no previous qualification gained a qualification.



- just under half (47 per cent) of those starting with Entry Level or Level 1 qualifications gained a qualification at a higher level.

68%

Employers recognise that unions are good at encouraging people who are hesitant about returning to learning. More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of employers say unions are particularly effective at inspiring reluctant learners to engage in training and development.



▶ Nine in ten union learners (91 per cent) are interested in further learning.



▶ Eight in ten union learners (82 per cent) become more confident in their abilities.

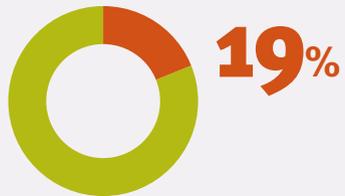


▶ Two thirds of union learners (65 per cent) become better able to organise, mentor and support other people.

Helping people progress at work

Learning through the union helps people acquire the skills they need to work more effectively and move on in their job.

Union learning helps people progress in their careers. Thanks to union learning:



- 19 per cent of learners gain a promotion or increased responsibility.

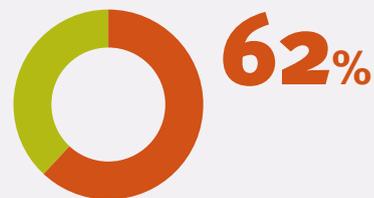


- 11 per cent gain a pay rise.

Union learning helps people develop transferable skills:



- four in five (80 per cent) employees develop skills through union learning that they can transfer to a new job.



- two in three (62 per cent) employees believe that their new skills make them more effective in their current job.

The more people engage in union learning, the more likely they are to progress at work. Compared with people who complete only one episode of union learning, people who complete at least three episodes of union learning are:

3.6x more likely to get a new job with their current employer

2.7x more likely to receive a pay rise



5.7x more likely to gain promotion



3.4x more likely to report that they could do their job more effectively

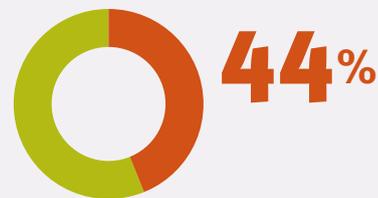
Why employers support union learning

Companies work in partnership with their unions to promote workplace learning because they see the business benefits.

Employers recognise the benefits of developing a workplace learning culture in partnership with their unions:

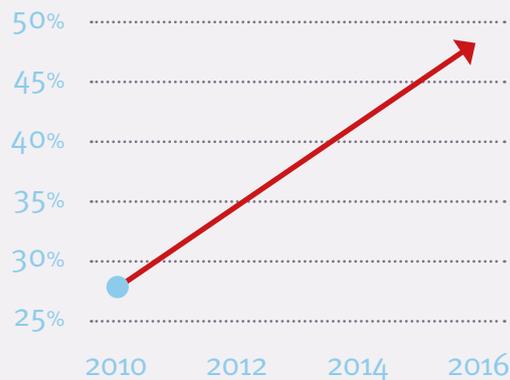


- nearly half of employers (47 per cent) believe that their staff are more committed as a result of their engagement in union-led learning and training.



- 44 per cent say that the ULF leads to improved employment relationships in the organisation.

Just under half of respondents (47 per cent) agreed or significantly agreed that learning activities wouldn't have taken place without external union funding - a large increase on the little over a quarter (28 per cent) who reported that union learning facilitated new training provision in the 2010 survey.



Workplace learning helps businesses boost their performance:

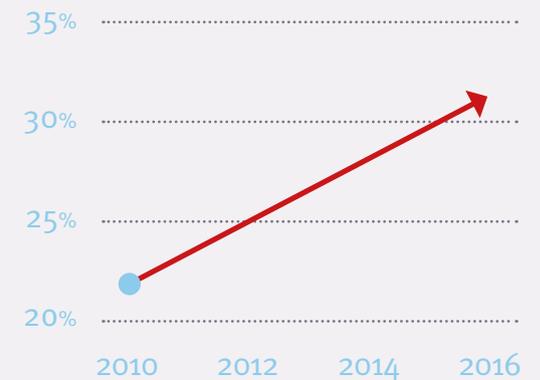


More than three in four (77 per cent) employers say that engagement in union learning has a positive effect in their workplaces.

Around one third of employers report that organisational performance has either increased or significantly increased (32 per cent in total) as a result of union learning initiatives.

Just over three quarters (77 per cent) of employers believe their organisation receives a return on their investment in union learning activity.

Union learning boosts all-round employer investment in training: nearly one-third of employers (31 per cent) report that their expenditure on training and development has increased as a consequence of union learning - significantly higher than the 22 per cent in 2010.



Measuring the economic impact of union learning

The delivery of the Union Learning Fund (ULF) has become more cost effective and delivers significant returns on investment for learners, employers and the Treasury.

An analysis of ULF Round 16 (2015/16) in the evaluation estimates that ULF projects delivered a net contribution to the economy of more than £1.4 billion as a result of a boost to jobs, wages and productivity.

Union learners who improve their skills through securing better qualifications are estimated to gain £754m more from



higher wages and £141m of improved earnings as a result of being more likely to be in employment over the expected duration of their working lives.

LIFETIME BENEFIT TO UNION LEARNERS:

£895m

Improving the skills of their workers through union learning helps employers boost their productivity to the tune of £558m.



TOTAL BENEFIT TO EMPLOYERS:

£558m

Every £1 invested in the Union Learning Fund generates an economic return of £7.60 to individuals and £4.70 to employers.



TOTAL ECONOMIC RETURN:

£12.30 on every £1



Union learning helps generate more money for the Treasury through:

- increased Income Tax on higher individual earnings
- higher National Insurance contributions on increased individual earnings
- increased VAT receipts on consumption resulting from raised incomes
- higher employer National Insurance contributions on employee wages.

Taking into account the delivery costs of ULF, the estimated return to the Exchequer is £3.57 for each £1 spent.

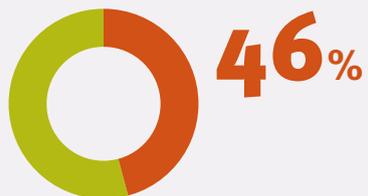
BENEFIT TO THE EXCHEQUER:

£3.57 for each £1 spent on ULF

Reaping the benefits of union learning

Unions that run effective workplace learning projects stand to benefit from higher profiles, greater density and new activists.

Union learning boosts recruitment: nearly half of non-union members engaged in ULF learning go on to join a union.



Many union members who engage in union learning become more active: one-third of all union learners become more active in their union - especially when they engage with successive episodes of union learning.



Compared to people completing only one episode of union learning, employees who completed at least three were:



Taking part in union learning makes learners more likely to take part in other union activities. Of those who say union learning boosts their participation:



Just under three-quarters (73 per cent) report that union learning has led to them becoming more supportive of union policies at work.



Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) are now more active in their union and more likely to attend union meetings.

In one-third of cases, union learners take up union representative roles, with 36 per cent becoming ULRs and 34 per cent union reps.



Conclusions

The evaluation concludes that the Union Learning Fund with the support of unionlearn:

- helps engage large numbers of learners with a wide variety of opportunities and breaks down barriers to learning
- supports inclusive learning that engages those less likely to have formal qualifications and other disadvantaged groups
- incentivises people to progress to further learning and training
- supports skills acquisition for current and future employability
- helps learners improve their attainment of qualifications at all levels
- has improved value for money through effective management.

Union learning boosts career prospects. One in five union learners gain a promotion or increased responsibility and one in ten get a pay rise.

Union learning contributes to a wide range of organisational benefits for companies and the perceived benefits derived from union learning seem to have increased since 2010. There are also positive benefits for unions, as almost half of learners who are non-members join a union.

The significant benefits to the economy include that for every £1 invested in the ULF there is a return to the economy of £12.30.

Lessons learned from the evaluation include recommendations to improve operational aspects of the ULF that are being addressed through a number of initiatives.



Find out more by downloading the full report from:
www.unionlearn.org.uk/publications/evaluation-union-learning-fund-rounds-1516-and-support-role-unionlearn

All unionlearn publications may be made available for dyslexic or visually impaired readers, on request, in an agreed electronic format or in accessible formats such as Braille, audiotape and large print, at no extra cost.

Published by
unionlearn
Congress House
London WC1B 3LS

020 7079 6920
www.unionlearn.org.uk
www.facebook.com/tucunionlearn
Twitter: @unionlearn

June 2017

Design: wave.coop
Print: College Hill Press

