

A photograph of two women in a learning centre. The woman on the left, with brown hair, is leaning over a desk and smiling. The woman on the right, with dark hair and glasses, is sitting at the desk, smiling and resting her chin on her hand. They are both looking at a computer screen. The woman on the left is wearing a grey cardigan and a purple lanyard. The woman on the right is wearing a beige sweater. A keyboard and mouse are visible on the desk in the foreground.

unionlearn
from the TUC

Setting up a learning centre

A practical guide that provides you with ideas and the resources you need to set up your own centre

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Introduction

A learning centre is a huge asset to any workplace learning campaign. It's both an advertisement for learning and a resource that makes it much easier for all staff to get involved.

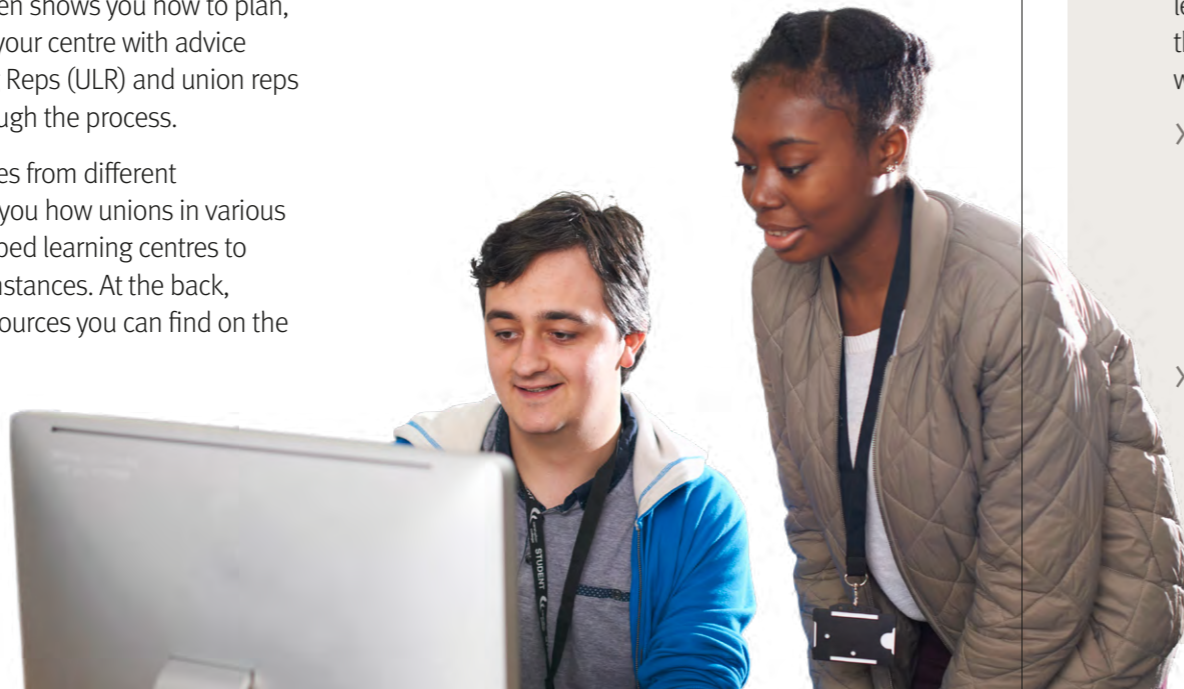
Unions have played a major role in developing and promoting models for learning centres. Along the way they have developed guidelines and good practices that can be adapted to suit different workplaces.

This booklet captures these ideas and provides you with the practical help you need to set up your own learning centre.

It looks at the benefits of a learning centre and helps you through the key decisions you will need to take to set up a centre that best suits your workplace. It then shows you how to plan, set up and manage your centre with advice from Union Learning Reps (ULR) and union reps who have been through the process.

There are case studies from different workplaces to show you how unions in various sectors have developed learning centres to suit their own circumstances. At the back, there are links to resources you can find on the unionlearn website.

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The case for a learning centre

A learning centre is a dedicated facility where people can come to learn at a time that suits them in a comfortable and supportive environment.

Learning centres offer learning in many formats. Almost all provide on-line learning through computers or other devices. Many offer other forms of computer-based learning packages. Some centres also run face to face courses or provide some form of blended learning where tutors support online learners.

Why have a learning centre?

Learning centres play a key role in supporting workplace learning. They break down barriers to learning and offer flexibility in the way learning is provided. They also help to develop the culture that puts learning at the heart of a workplace. Learning centres:

- › **are easy to access** and make it much easier for staff to take up learning. They can drop in to learn while they are at work and arrange their learning around other commitments. They will learn in familiar surroundings in a safe and supportive environment.
- › break down barriers and offer a safe, friendly and familiar place to learn with support from trusted reps. Nervous learners can turn up



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with a friend. They can easily complete taster sessions and short courses and then discuss their next steps with their ULR.

- › **are flexible** and can offer learning online or other self-managed packages, through face-to-face courses or through blended learning. Courses can be standard packages or be customised. They can link to workplace needs like apprenticeships or Continuing Professional Development (CPD), provide career development opportunities or offer learning for personal interest.



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- › **improve participation** and are a visible advertisement for learning and a focal point for promotions and campaigns. Learning centre visits engage staff. They can be part of staff inductions, be linked to staff development processes, learning needs analysis and discussions with ULRs. Successful learners can be followed up immediately and the next course discussed and arranged.
- › **provide shared benefits and a shared commitment.** Learning centres show a commitment to learning from both the employer and the union; they also bring benefits to both. They raise the profile of the union, engage members, provide recruitment opportunities and strengthen the union's workplace presence. Employers

get all the benefits of learning: improved skills, higher participation, self-confidence and higher staff morale.

There is no single model for a learning centre. The perfect one is the one that suits your circumstances, delivers for your members and takes your learning campaign to the next level.

Use the information and case studies in the following pages to put together the model that works for you.

Things to think about

Before you approach management with a formal proposal you need to be clear about what you want – and what is practical and possible. Do some research to find out what best suits your workplace or learning campaign. Don't restrict the discussions to the ULR team. Involve other union reps in the process.

It's a good idea to do a new learning survey. This will give you an up to date idea of what people want to learn and the likely level of demand.

Test out the ground with management. Are they open to the idea and how do they see a learning centre working? Can you get support for the idea before formal discussions start?

Remember that ULRs in other workplaces will have gone through this process so ask your union or unionlearn for some contacts so you can talk through the issues with them. These contacts will also be useful if you want to take management on a fact-finding visit to a centre.

A list of union-led learning centres can be found on the unionlearn website. Your learning centre should be added to the directory to ensure that you receive regular support and information from unionlearn. Registration will help publicise the centre's programme and facilities. See unionlearn.org.uk/learning-centres

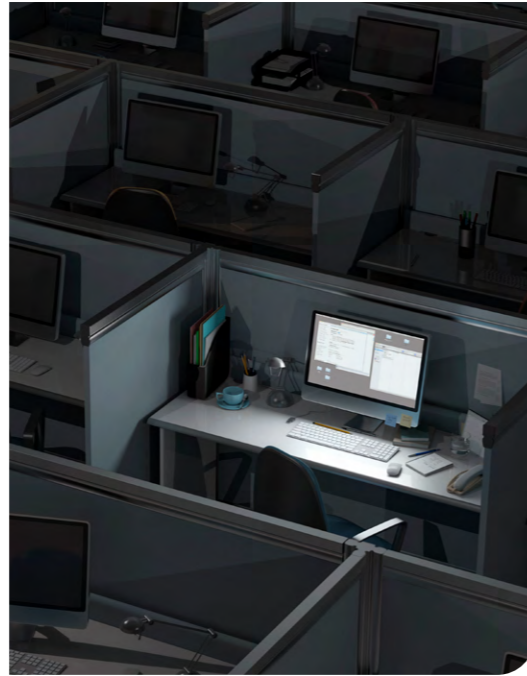
“A sustainable learning centre is one that regularly attracts enough users to meet its purpose.”

You will need to consider the following:

Sustainability and size

A sustainable learning centre is one that regularly attracts enough users to meet its purpose. Large, empty learning centres soon get the attention of people who want to use the space and the equipment for something else. Be clear about the purpose of the centre and the potential number of users, and plan accordingly.

Not all workplaces can support and sustain a large learning centre. Those with less than three hundred employees are probably better suited to smaller, flexible learning spaces.



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“If it’s difficult to find and hard to get into, or it has no natural light, don’t be surprised if few learners use it.”

Use and users

The number of potential users also depends on the purpose of the centre. Is it for union-led learning only? Will it be used as a joint centre with management for vocational learning and training? Will it be used as a drop-in centre for people to use the web for their own user-led learning? Will it be used by friends and family and agency staff/contractors or the local community?

Widening the use of the centre increases the potential usage but also requires more planning, more resources and more management.

Location and layout

The centre’s location will have a major impact on the number of users. If you put your centre out of the way, if it’s difficult to find and hard to get into, or it has no natural light, don’t

be surprised if few learners use it. The ideal location is close to the front of the building in a place where people regularly pass, so that the centre advertises itself.

Think about the space you will need for equipment and learning stations. You also need to think about break-out rooms, a centre management space and accessibility. Scout out some possible locations so you have somewhere definite in mind before meeting with management.

Opening hours and access

Centre hours and access will depend on its uses, work patterns and how the centre is managed. Centres used for vocational learning and training courses need to be planned and managed carefully to avoid clashes.

You will need to think about core opening times and how they link to any shift patterns, especially if there is a night shift. Will the centre have a coordinator, and will they be full- or part-time? If not, how will users get in – will there be a key code? What security needs to be in place if people have access when the centre is empty?

Provision and delivery

What kind of courses are you planning to run and how will they be delivered? Will they be online and self-managed, or will you be running face-to-face learning or blended learning? Will the centre be linked to existing union provision or courses? Might the centre be linked to work-based learning around inductions, apprenticeships, CPD and other initiatives? Are you working with external providers and if so, how do they fit in with the centre?

Equipment

It’s a good idea to think about the equipment you might need. Computers, printers, furniture, and smart boards. You might want to look at a budget before drawing up a proposal. Check with the employer who would cover the cost of equipment, electricity, lighting and internet/Wi-Fi access.

Linking it together

How will the centre link in with other learning structures and initiatives? Is there a learning agreement and should the centre be part of it? Is there a learning committee and will it coordinate the work of the centre? If there isn’t do you need to set one up? How will the centre be linked with other union structures in the workplace?

Negotiating an agreement

Once you have done your research, it's time to get an agreement. If you already have a learning agreement think about how the learning centre fits in with it; if you don't, think about negotiating one. For more information on negotiating a learning agreement look at the publication *Skills at work – a guide for negotiators*.

It's likely that ULRs will do most of the work putting together the negotiating brief but union reps also need to be involved in the process. Any agreement will impact on other workplace issues, so all reps need to be happy with the proposal.

Experienced reps will have a lot to contribute to the negotiations, so work with them to agree the strategy and conduct the negotiations. Your full-time organiser or learning project worker may also want an input.

Putting together the brief

Your initial proposal is a starting point and you need to give management a clear idea of what you are proposing. Don't make your document too long but cover the key points. They should include:

- › **An overview.** Set out what a learning centre will add to the workplace and benefits it will bring to the organisation and the staff.

Try to be specific. Outline the types of learning you want the centre to provide – functional skills, CPD, vocational learning, personal development – and how it would be delivered. Give them a vision of what learning could look like with the centre in place and how it could contribute to developing a vibrant learning culture.

- › **Outline specification.** Put together some information about what's needed to get the centre up and running without being too specific at this stage. Give an idea of the space needed and any potential locations. Set out the equipment that might be needed; computers, laptops, printers, furniture, learning aids etc. Think about how internet access will be provided and how it fits with any company policies. Put together an illustrative budget showing both set up and maintenance costs. Highlight any possible contributions from the union.
- › **Operation.** Summarise how the centre will work. You don't need to go into too much detail but put forward some ideas on the main issues, such as opening times and options for managing access, if you are proposing to have a coordinator set out some ideas for the role and the amount of time they will spend onsite. Set out the role that ULRs will play in the centre's operation.



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Moving forward

Your brief has set the agenda so it's up to management to respond. A blank rejection is unlikely if you have done some groundwork, but you may need to compromise to get things up and running. Joint visits to other sites with learning centres can be useful to help you reach agreement. Arrange for the management side to talk to their counterparts so that they have a chance to raise their issues.

Some centres are run as trial projects, are smaller in scope or restricted in what they can offer. In most cases any start is a good start, but only you can decide if the compromise is acceptable.

Once you have agreement, make sure it's understood and written down. You need to be clear about each other's commitments and to have a document as a back-up. This can be added to an existing learning agreement or be a stand-alone document.

Now you are ready to put together a project plan.

- › **Funding.** There are a number of potential sources of funding that are worth considering. This should be discussed with your union, learning committee or union learning fund (ULF) project team. You may wish to explore some of the sources listed on the unionlearn website at [unionlearn.org.uk/identifying-funders](https://www.unionlearn.org.uk/identifying-funders)
- › **Management.** Make suggestions on how the centre will be managed and overseen. The most popular way is to link it to the learning committee or set one up specifically for the centre. Learning committees contain senior managers and union reps and can look at all aspects of the centre's performance, as well as deciding strategy and priorities. Centre coordinators usually report to the learning committee.



Usdaw, Boots Supply Chain Learning Centre, Nottingham

“Learning at Boots in Nottingham goes back a long way, as you can see from the pictures on the wall,” says Usdaw ULR coordinator Dawn Johnson. The pictures Dawn is talking about show workplace learning going back to the early twentieth century and covering subjects which could easily be running today.

Boots had its own college back then, so the current Supply Chain learning centre is carrying on that tradition. It’s equipped with a suite of 12 desktop computers, additional laptops and tablets, a range of learning packages and break-out rooms. There are also refreshment facilities, a library and an office for the Usdaw ULRs who run the centre.

The centre’s core courses are around English, maths and digital skills. “We do run other courses like the distance learning packages, one-off courses where there is enough interest and campaigns like Reading Ahead,” says

“It’s the ULR team that is the heart and soul of the centre. They coordinate the work, organise promotions and manage the learning fund.”

Dawn “but most of the demand is for functional skills. We always have a waiting list.”

The centre is managed through a joint learning committee. The company makes a sizable contribution to the centre; funding some of the equipment, putting money into the learning fund and providing paid time off for learners through a matched funding arrangement. But it’s the ULR team that is the heart and soul of the centre. They coordinate the work, organise promotions and manage the learning fund. »

Putting it together

Establishing a learning centre usually involves a mixture of building work, technology, process planning and marketing. It can get complicated, especially if you are working to a deadline. And with different people often responsible for different parts of the work, you need to make sure that there is regular communication and progress checks.

The best way to keep things on track is run it as a project. You will need a project plan and someone to oversee it, usually an experienced ULR or the centre coordinator. The plan should cover:

- › **Location and layout.** Make sure your location meets guidelines for disabled access. Put together a layout plan that delivers the methods of learning you want. Ensure services are in the right place. Put together a list of the furniture you will need and make sure it meets the necessary fire and safety standards.
- › **IT specification.** Identify the hardware, software and broadband specifications you need for your proposed delivery of courses. Make sure they meet health and safety and disability standards. How will broadband be provided? If it’s through a company network, check the rules and security requirements. Can you install the software you need?



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Are there restrictions on the sites that can be accessed? How will service and access problems be dealt with and how quickly?

- › **Building works.** Identify the building works, service installation and decoration necessary to get the space ready for installation. Put together a schedule of works, making sure that the sequencing is correct. You don't want to ruin the decoration because you've forgotten to put the power points in the right place.
- › **Centre processes.** Make sure you have the basic processes in place to run the centre. Workplaces are generally covered by the employer's health and safety policy and should be included in risk assessments. Make sure that learner data collection meets

GDPR guidelines. You will also need some rules for centre users, especially around access if it to be used when the centre is not staffed. You will need a job description if you have a coordinator. See the next section for more information.

- › **Learning.** Identify the courses or learning you intend to run in the first months that the centre will be open. What you need to do will depend on how established your learning project is. If it's just starting you may need to identify providers, run surveys and recruit learners. If you are planning to enhance an existing project think about what's new and how it will be marketed.

» Having your cake and eating it at the BFAWU Learning Centre, Barnsley

Learning centres take a lot of time and effort to set up. This applies equally to community-based centres and those in workplaces, so it is important to celebrate a new learning centre with a suitable launch event.

It's no surprise that the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU) know how to throw a party (and bake some outstanding cakes!). So, when they opened the doors on their new learning services team office and learning centre in Barnsley, it was guaranteed to be a grand affair.

The team pulled out all the stops to ensure the centre opened on time. This was more than just an office move. BFAWU Learning Services Project Manager Lisa Greenfield and her team of project workers picked up their brushes, painted the rooms, put up new bookshelves and generally pulled together to make the new learning centre a bright and inviting space.

This gave the team a real sense of pride and ownership in the unions latest resource.

“The team pulled out all the stops to ensure the centre opened on time. This was more than just an office move.”

To ensure maximum publicity the team promoted the event to local unions and providers. On the day itself the centre was officially opened by former BFAWU General Secretary Ronnie Draper, who cut the red ribbon in front of the local media. Representatives from unionlearn, Barnsley Trades Council, Chesterfield College and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) also attended the event.

The union provided refreshments and showcased some of the courses and learning opportunities available in the new centre to members and non-members alike. »

» Lisa said: “Moving to this new centre was really important to us, and we wanted to ensure that the launch event showcased the excellent facilities, and the learning opportunities.”

“We invited local learning providers that we work with along, as well as colleagues from local unions and the trades council to spread the word about this fantastic new resource. Our project administrator, Julie Oakley, pulled together a press release and managed to encourage the local paper to come along and cover the event, resulting in an article and more people hearing about the new centre.”

Since it opened, the centre has been very busy running a range of English, maths and IT courses alongside various Level 2 qualifications.

- › **Centre launch.** This is your chance to get everyone to come to the centre. The best way is to organise a schedule of short visits, with time off for staff to attend. Don't forget the night shift. If senior managers or union officers are to open the centre, get the date agreed early on, as diaries are booked months in advance. Put together activities to promote and market the centre. For example, events in the canteen, a contest to name the centre and planned tours on the day.

Keeping the project on track

Use the learning committee to oversee the project. It can review progress and provide guidance if there are problems. Put together a timetable with the launch date as the end of the project and plan the activities accordingly.

There will be some key dates where several activities come together so plan your meetings around these dates. Highlight potential problems early on and contact the senior union or management person to help-out if necessary.

Managing the space

The best centres have processes to ensure that users get an excellent service and an effective joint management committee that sets out a strategy for the centre and regularly evaluates progress.

Centre procedures

- › **Centre rules.** Every centre needs to have clear rules for users, whether it's for safeguarding the equipment or making sure that the centre's internet policy conforms with the wider company policy. Most centres require users to read and sign the policy as part of their induction.
- › **Policies and procedures.** It's good practice to display the centre's policies and procedures. You should ensure that you consult your employer, as many of these policies and procedures will already exist. You can find some examples of policies and procedures on the union learning Climbing Frame website.
- › **Safeguarding.** If you support learners or apprentices under the age of 19 or vulnerable adults you need to have a safeguarding policy. An example of a safeguarding policy can be found on the Climbing Frame website. For further



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- information or advice on safeguarding contact your union learning team or unionlearn.
- › **Induction.** A good induction process will help users get the most out of the centre and make sure they come back. The induction can cover a range of things, but should include centre rules, a digital skills check, using learning packages, opening times and access, and where to get help.
- › **Managing courses.** Some centres have processes for informing learners of course start dates, clearing attendance with line managers, contacting learners after absence and checking on progress.

»» Communication Workers Union, Royal Mail Learning Centre, Swindon

The Royal Mail learning centre in Swindon has been up and running for 10 years. “It was set up as a joint initiative between the union and management after the Royal Mail sorting offices at Reading and Oxford closed,” says Communication Workers Union (CWU) Regional Learning Secretary and lead ULR Sandra Absalom. “Members from Reading and Oxford were transferred to Swindon and we thought it was a good way to bring people together.”

The centre is situated in the middle of the building. “It’s easy to access and very visible,” says Sandra, “so everyone knows about it. We’ve got 12 computers which we use to run a range of distance learning courses in English and maths. We offer a range of other accredited Level 2 courses through the CWU’s own learning portal, Left Click, and run CWU reps courses here.”

It can also function as a classroom, to offer a constantly changing menu of short courses. “We survey members on what they want and then find a provider,” says Sandra. We have

run everything from digital skills to writing courses and playing the guitar. If I can’t run something here, I signpost members to other providers. Most learning is free, but we have to charge for some courses. I have a small learning fund which I can use to subsidise these courses.”

There are fixed opening hours which cover all shifts and people can drop in to study before or after work, or in their breaks. “Security is a big issue, as we have millions of letters and packages,” says Sandra. “This means we can’t have a key code entry system or allow family and friends into the centre. I coordinate the centre and I’m here to support learners when the centre is open.”

The centre is jointly funded by the CWU and Royal Mail. CWU provides the computers, photocopier and lots of free learning. Royal Mail pays for internet provision, allowing use of the Royal Mail network in times when demand is high. They also provide the room. »»

»» “There is no formal learning partnership, but we work together quite closely,” says Sandra. “For example, we have offered a range of learning to help members faced with redundancy like CV writing and job search, and we have worked together on issues like mental health.” Managers also publicise the centre and its courses through team briefings.

“I think it’s important that we try to put learning and the centre at the heart of the workplace, and by working together we can make it part of the culture,” says Sandra. “For example, we ran an event to celebrate diversity and asked members to bring different dishes into the canteen. People remember these events and it gives them a positive view of the centre. They are more likely to find out what we offer and start learning. And after all, that’s why we’re here.”



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- › **Learner records.** Most centres keep some form of records to help keep in touch with learners, inform them of new courses and help their progression. Some centres use the Climbing Frame website (see <https://climbingframe.unionlearn.org.uk/home>) to help learners set goals and track their progress. Digital records must meet data protection guidelines.
- › **Quality standards.** Some centres use the Matrix standard to assure the service they give to learners. Matrix is the national quality standard for information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work (see unionlearn.org.uk/matrix-standard). It can help centres and ULRs review, evaluate and develop their service and encourage the take up of learning.

- › **Maintenance.** Schedules and processes for maintenance help centres to ensure the quality of service to users. Schedules can be daily, for example resetting computers or cleaning; weekly, for example security scans or stationery audits; or monthly, for example checking white boards.

The committee should meet regularly enough to ensure that the centre coordinator gets the support they need. Most committees need to meet often in the early days of the centre but find they can meet less regularly once it's up and running.

Have a regular agenda that is sent out well in advance, and highlight any activities that will need active support from a senior manager or union reps.

The learning committee

A joint learning committee is the best mechanism for overseeing the management of a learning centre. Done properly, it brings together ULRs, union reps and management, and establishes the foundation for a long-term strategy for the centre. Make sure that the committee contains a senior manager and a senior union rep, so that decisions can be taken within the committee.

“Have a regular agenda that is sent out well in advance, and highlight any activities that will need active support from a senior manager or union reps.”

Keeping it going

Getting your centre up and running is just the start; you now have to keep it going once the initial rush has been satisfied. This will set you different challenges and you may need different skills and approaches to be successful. It won't happen by accident. It needs a long-term strategy to put your centre at the heart of the learning campaign in the workplace. So, to be successful you should think ahead and plan your activities to:

- › **attract new learners.** Make sure people know about the centre and what it offers. The centre should be part of the organisation's induction and all new starters should visit the centre, talk to a ULR and find out what's on offer. It helps to have a set of core courses that meet an identified need – functional skills, key workplace skills and other popular subjects. Tools such as unionlearn's Skillcheck or mid-life reviews can help people to identify their learning needs.
- › **promote the centre effectively.** Use celebrations, promotions and success stories to highlight the impact the centre makes. Use successful learners to promote the centre to their colleagues. Make sure any new courses and initiatives are launched effectively and use workplace briefings to make sure everyone knows what's on offer.
- › **manage learner progression.** For most centres, the hard part is getting new learners started. So, once they are using the centre make sure they are encouraged to carry on. A good learner record system will tell you what people are learning and when their course is finishing. Review the course with them and find out what they want to do next
- › **widen the user base.** Analyse users to identify any gaps in the groups of people using the centre. You can analyse users by grade, shift, gender, part-time and agency. Once you've identified the gaps, find out why they're not using the centre and determine any actions you can take to encourage those learners to join.
- › **network.** Build your contacts of other centre staff, ULRs, useful organisations and providers. Attending union, unionlearn and employer events will help to build your network of learning, support and information.
- › **link to wider learning campaigns.** Learning centres are ideally placed to help deliver wider learning campaigns in the workplace. Many centres have been linked to workplace and union campaigns around mental health, deaf awareness, dementia friends, designated charities and digital skills. This is a good way to attract new

POA, HMP Nottingham Learning Centre

The Nottingham POA learning centre was officially opened by the Sheriff of Nottingham in March 2014. It came from an initiative by the local branch which was supported by both the POA and the prison governor.

“We are based in the Visitors Centre outside the prison,” says Centre Manager Nicky Volley. “The prison works department carried out the necessary refit to the allocated rooms and provided furniture. The ICT equipment, wages for staff, stationery and Wi-Fi are all provided by POA Learning.”

The centre has a computer suite, with eight PCs and a prison service terminal for staff to access the closed network. It also doubles as a classroom for delivery of courses, with a small break-out room available for confidential one-to-ones. Learning is provided through distance learning, customised packages and face-to-face courses. The centre also offers Dyslexia screening and support.

“We have three groups of learners”, says Nicky, “staff and agencies who work at the prison, the local community and members of other unions. Courses

such as functional skills and distance learning are open to everybody, but we also provide courses for specific groups of learners and we have a strong partnership with Direct, Help and Advice who provide support to enable people to get back into work.”

The work with prison staff is growing. “We are always looking to develop new initiatives and now support entry level training for prison officers and functional skills support for apprentices” says Nicky. “We also provide resilience training to help staff cope with the pressures of prison work and work with staff under the success profiles framework to help them apply for jobs or develop their careers.

All learners have an induction at the centre and are offered a discussion about where they want to go next after completing a course. A visit to the centre is also included in inductions for new staff.

The centre is Matrix-accredited and Nicky is very clear about the benefits it brings. “It is a benchmark for excellence, so it helps us to guarantee

“It is a benchmark for excellence, so it helps us to guarantee that our users get the best service we can provide. And it keeps us up to date and on our toes”

that our users get the best service we can provide. And it keeps us up to date and on our toes,” she says.

Whatever they are doing, it appears to be working well. Learner numbers are constantly rising, having more than tripled over the last year, and the centre has expanded and developed the range of learning and support it offers.

Nicky and her colleague Alan Cook work closely with other POA centres and offer shadowing and other development opportunities as well holding quarterly team meetings for staff from other centres. “We get together every quarter to share good practice, learn from each other and update our skills,” says Nicky,



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users. You can keep up to date with new developments and ideas by signing up to the unionlearn website.

- › **be part of the workplace learning processes.** The centre should be integrated into the processes and systems that deliver learning. How do the courses link to a development review or appraisal system? Is your centre used for new staff inductions. Do team leaders and managers know how to refer staff to the centre? Is your centre linked to any initiatives such as Investors in People or quality management?



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- › **create a buzz.** The most successful centres offer more than just learning. They have an identity and an atmosphere that keeps people coming back. There is no formula for this – it's unique to each workplace and set of reps. Competitions, social events and clubs around courses like ESOL and photography are some of the ways that centres have created their own identity. Some have their own Facebook page with photos, feedback and marketing materials.
- › **celebrate success.** Events that celebrate learning success can help promote the value of the learning centre. Certificate ceremonies, case studies and news articles are ways to celebrate achievements and publicise the impact of the learning centre. Unions and unionlearn can help you create

and publicise your centre's achievements. Stories should be promoted via websites, newsletters, magazines and events.

- › **evaluate your performance and impact.** Get users' feedback on the centre and look for their ideas on where improvements can be made. You'll have to do this if you are part of a quality system like Matrix or Investors in People, but it makes sense to do it anyway.

Find out more

These websites will give you more information on some of the issues discussed in this booklet.

Unionlearn

The unionlearn website keeps you up to date with all the new developments in union-led learning and provides a range of useful resources. See unionlearn.org.uk

Skillcheck

Skillcheck is a tried and trusted tool you can use to engage with learners and assess their level of skills in English, maths and ICT. It can be used on computers in a learning centre or accessed on tablets and mobile phones. See unionlearn.org.uk/skillcheck

Climbing Frame

The union learning Climbing Frame can be used to store information when you meet with learners, to create an individual record for them. You can help learners to set goals, plan actions and record achievements. The Climbing Frame also provides a wealth of information, advice and links to hundreds of useful learning websites and resources. The website also includes a 'my notes' area, an events section and a discussion forum. It can be used on computers, tablets or through the free

Climbing Frame app. To register to access the Climbing Frame visit <https://climbingframe.unionlearn.org.uk>

Careerzone

Unionlearn has developed a section of its website that focuses on careers information. Careerzone includes a careers directory, careers videos and a place where you can view careers by pay, conditions and employment. The section on the website also contains lots of useful careers information, information about the gender pay gap, links to useful websites and a Careerometer where you can easily select and compare a variety of careers. Visit unionlearn.org.uk/careerzone

Career Kickstart Reviews

Career Kickstart Reviews have been developed to help support young people in the workplace and get them thinking about their futures. Career Kickstart Reviews are an opportunity to identify transferable skills, set goals, think about potential career pathways, build confidence and consider progression opportunities. To access a guide for union learning reps on Career Kickstart Reviews visit unionlearn.org.uk/publications/career-kickstart-reviews-guide-union-learning-reps

Mid-life review

The Mid-life review is a series of tools that ULRs can use to support the development of older workers. It can help such members to consider new careers, upgrade their skills or cope with redundancy and organisational change. Go to unionlearn.org.uk/supporting-midlife-development

Value My Skills

The Value My Skills online tool helps identify transferable skills. Available in 10 languages, the tool guides users through steps with clear instructions to identify and rate their skills, keep reflection notes, design an action plan and record progress. For more information visit unionlearn.org.uk/supporting-midlife-development

Unionlearn directory

Unionlearn provides a directory of all union learning centres setting out who can use the centre and the types of learning available. Make sure your centre is on the list or add it if it's new. You could also use the directory to find local centres that you can visit for ideas and chats with other ULRs. Visit unionlearn.org.uk/learning-centres

Matrix


You can find a guide to the Matrix standard and how unions use it on the unionlearn website (see unionlearn.org.uk/matrix-standard). For more detailed information and details on how to get started with accreditation, visit the Matrix website at <http://matrixstandard.com>


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