

TUC Education Update



11 May 2017

TUC Education Update

Welcome to the May edition of TUC Education Update, which we aim to mail three times a year to union education officers, TUC course co-ordinators and tutors, and everyone with an interest in union education and training, with news and views from TUC Education. The Update is also available as an e-bulletin, register via the TUC *unionlearn* website at www.unionlearn.org.uk/register or www.unionlearn.org.uk/changedetails

Over 7,000 people have subscribed to the Update, receiving up to date news as soon as it is published.

NEW – TUC Online Health and Safety Reps 1 course

Next month will see the launch of the new TUC online Health and Safety Reps 1 course. This innovative course includes new and updated guidance, practical tips for the real world, insights from TUC experts and health and safety reps, as well as engaging content with video, quizzes and interactions.



It also includes online versions of all the resources needed to complete health and safety training.

The course is freely available online, can be accessed as soon a rep takes office, at a time and place most convenient using a smart phone, tablet or PC.

The course has been developed with reps of varying experience in mind. While the material will be completely new to brand new reps, it is also suitable for experienced safety reps - who perhaps just need a refresher or an update on a particular topic – but don't need to go through a whole programme again.

To access the course from June, register at www.tuceducation.org.uk

eNotes

eNotes are a great resource to help reps keep up to date on key workplace issues. These short online self-contained elearning modules are a mixture of text, video and quizzes. They last between 20 and 45 minutes and can be returned to as many times as you like.

There are more than 30 eNotes available including

- Health and safety and organising
- Mental health in the workplace
- Language support for workers
- Working with figures

- Work-related upper limb disorders
- A Living Wage
- Domestic violence
- Mentoring – a guide for union representatives
- Building a stronger workplace union
- Facility time
- Bargaining for Skills
- Equality Law
- Supporting learners
- Vulnerable employment
- Union learning reps - Introduction

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have worked with TUC Education to produce one of our latest eNotes about Religion or belief. The eNote looks at why it is important for reps to be aware of the types of issues which can arise in the workplace, and how best to deal with them.

TUC and EHRC also worked together on one of our more established eNotes about Pregnancy and maternity discrimination. This eNote highlights some of the issues which pregnant workers and new mothers encounter in the workplace, with practical examples for union reps on how they can support colleagues.

If you, or someone you know, has an interest in equalities at work; discrimination; harassment or hate crimes – have a look at our eNote for additional information and support.

To access eNotes and more, register at www.tuceducation.org.uk/login, then select eNotes.

Mental Health Awareness Week 8 – 14 May



Every other year the TUC conducts a health and safety representatives' survey. It is designed to provide the TUC and its affiliated unions with valuable information to help shape safety campaigning and organisation.

Stress stands out more than ever as the chief health and safety concern, identified as a top-five hazard by 70% of safety representatives in the survey. It is still the most common concern in all sizes of workplaces and within every region/country of the UK.

The HSE estimates the cost of injuries and ill health from current working conditions to be £14.2bn, but of course the human cost is much greater.



The Mental health in the workplace eNote raises awareness of the impact of mental health issues in the workplace and how union reps can support members affected by issues associated with mental health.

The eNote:

- describes common mental health illnesses and help reps recognise when colleagues may have mental health issues
- summarises the law and mental health in the workplace
- helps reps support and represent members with mental health problems

Take a look at:

www.tuceducation/enotesUnionlearn

Supporting Learners Events 2017

This year unionlearn has been delivering a series of Supporting Learners conferences across the country in Hull, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Newcastle, Penrith and Plymouth.

The events showcased all the tools and support unionlearn has to offer to reps. TUC Education Update spoke to unionlearn's Kirsi Kekki and Jane Warwick about this year's events.

What were the highlights of this year's events?

Jane: Well, that is hard to say. It's always great to meet so many enthusiastic reps. I'm always astonished when I hear about all the amazing things they have achieved in engaging learners in the workplace!

So much happened throughout the events: we launched an eNote; we had ♥unions week; we had the #literacyworks week and the Apprentice week. We also talked about the new TUC Education offer to reps.

Where did this year's attendees come from?

Kirsi: There was a really good range of unions and workplaces represented at the events. For instance, in Plymouth Andy Harding, Ivan Judd and Kevin Watts from the POA gave a really interesting and engaging presentation on the work they do in prison service learning centres.

They do some brilliant stuff on maths and English amongst other things.

Jane: I agree. Hearing from Tony Norbury and Norman Hunter about Merseylearn's delivery model was thought provoking. The way they look at local workplace and union issues and entwine them with wider regional learning and skills priorities is a fresh way of looking at things.

Their different reading initiatives raise awareness of literacy skills, such as Moved To Read in partnership with Liverpool City Of Readers which engages staff and external customers.

What are the current immediate concerns for Union Learning Reps (ULRs)?

Kirsi: We have done these events before but there is always something new that needs highlighting, such as the upcoming apprentice levy and its impact on union learning reps' work.

The discussions in workshops were pretty varied and public sector unions were particularly keen to discuss how their workplace will be affected by potentially a big number of apprentices in the future. It is definitely a union issue.

Jane: During this series of events the new Apprenticeships – know your rights eNote was launched. This important eNote can be accessed from www.tuceducation.org.uk/enotes

What was interesting to me was how reps attending the Supporting Mid-Life Development workshops were keen to explore opportunities for older apprentices.

Another discussion topic was who could physically do their current job when they are 65. Or would they want to? That in itself raises a question because if you answer no, it's really important that you have a Mid-life Development review to explore your opportunities.

With an increased number of attendees plus additional venues this year, popularity is definitely on the increase.

Kirsi and Jane are looking forward to meeting even more of you in the future. If you'd like to attend next year, keep an eye on the website at www.unionlearn.org.uk/events for dates and venues to avoid disappointment.

Union Professionals' courses 2017

The TUC's programme for Union Professionals this year includes two new courses:

An introduction to trade union history

This course is aimed at helping union staff and officers who have limited background knowledge of the movement to understand the origins and development of trades unionism in Britain. As the title suggests, it is very much an introductory level course but will provide links to other sources of information and further reading on this fascinating subject. As with all TUC Union Professionals' courses it can be offered as a bespoke course for individual unions on request to Martin Hegarty, TUC Education Officer mhegarty@tuc.org.uk

Managing budgets

The ability to manage budgets is an essential skill for union officers and managers. It can be invaluable in managing projects large or small, and can help to get the most out of the resources available. Designed for union professionals who are, or are likely to be, responsible for managing a budget in connection with their trade union work. The

course will help you to set, manage and plan budgets.

The course looks at:

- The principles of managing a budget
- How to prepare a budget
- Simple techniques to keep you in control
- Avoiding overspend
- Predicting expenditure

Further information including dates, venue and course costs on these and all TUC Union Professionals' courses are available on the TUC Education website

Making the case for learning

We all know that unions and union learning reps do a brilliant job of changing lives through learning and helping colleagues to improve their skills at work.

Keith Hatch is Unionlearn's Projects support and communications officer (PSCO). His role is to help promote the value of learning and spread the message that learning and skills are core union aims. Here, Keith gives an example of the impact of union-led learning with one of our many success stories.

In 2014 Malathi Nagarajan won the Trade Union Education Excellence Award at the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (CONEL).

Malathi was commended for producing an outstanding research project, and it was noted that her presentation to the class was a rehearsal for a presentation to some very senior and strategic managers at work and the standard was of the highest quality, over and above what was required.

This is a massive achievement for someone who was able to speak very little English when she

came to the UK and got a job as a hospital cleaner, and was, in part thanks to the initial support she received via trade union learning.

Malathi signed up to TUC Education's Equalities diploma, and in class she shared that back home, she was used to cleaning the household rugs by hanging them up outside and beating the dust out. On her first day at work here, when she was handed a vacuum cleaner, she'd never seen one before and when it was turned on, she was so afraid that she burst into tears!

Malathi hates injustice and became a union rep when she saw that there was no one to stick up for the cleaners. There began her education journey. At the beginning of the Equalities diploma, the initial assessment identified that she desperately needed help with her literacy.

CoNEL's trade union education department arranged for a literacy colleague to work with her for a few months. Her tutor was astounded by the quality of work that Malathi was consistently churning out by the end of the course. Her project was amazing, and actually a dry run of a very high level negotiation that she was about to enter into with management.

The nomination and award wasn't the end of Malathi's learning journey and last year she was successful with an application to study health and safety at university.

There are many other success stories out there in workplaces. If you have one you'd like to share, then contact Keith.

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Welcome

TUC Education has a new Campaign and Projects Support Officer. Holly Anderson joined the team in Congress House this week and replaces Anna Fitzjohn who left in November. Welcome aboard Holly!

Domestic Violence event for Trade Union reps and members



On Saturday April 29th 2017 the Nottingham Trade Union Education Centre, part of Central College Nottingham, hosted a one day course for trade unionists on the issue of Domestic Violence.

The event was designed and organised by TUC tutor Helen Nolan and was open to reps and members of any TUC-affiliated unions. On a bank holiday weekend, it was heartening to see 27 people attend, including members of half a dozen trade unions. A special mention should go to the young woman from Community who travelled all the way from Glasgow to take part.

As well as activities designed by Helen, participants heard from Marsha Brown and Gill Court from Nottingham Women's Aid and from the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner Paddy Tipping. A particular highlight mentioned by many people in their evaluations was the passionate and informative session by Dr Lyndsey Harris, a leading criminologist from the University of Nottingham who explained the inadequacies of the Criminal Justice System in connection with domestic violence and abuse.

The feedback from participants was extremely positive as they left with increased awareness of domestic violence and abuse and, very

importantly, much greater confidence in taking up the issues at work and within their unions.



If you have an interest in how to deal with domestic violence issues in the workplace, have a look at our eNote at www.tuceducation.org.uk/enotes

Cancer in the Workplace

Although medical advances in the treatment of cancer mean that survival rates are increasing, there is still much to be done to raise awareness of what it can be like to be living and working with the disease.

In partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support we have developed a "Cancer in the Workplace" eNote, providing advice for reps who need to support members living with cancer. Have a look at www.tuceducation.org.uk/enotes then select Cancer in the workplace from the selection of eNotes.



There are also a number of national events run by different organisations, which aim to raise awareness of the needs of people with cancer. These can be good opportunities to promote awareness of cancer in the workplace.

- Sun Awareness month (May)
- Carers' week (June)
- National Men's Health week (June)
- Childhood cancer awareness (September)
- Breast cancer awareness (October)
- Lung cancer awareness (November)
- Pancreatic cancer awareness (November)

Coming soon

eNotes: Trade Union Act 2016; Sexual Harassment; Equality Audit

Online courses: TUC Health and Safety 1; TUC Union Learning Reps 1; TUC Union Learning Reps 2

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