

inclusivelearning

e-bulletin/March 2019

Hello.

Learning can help members develop their skills, but it can do so much more, as this month's e-bulletin shows: it can help make workplaces more inclusive for LGBT colleagues or people with dyslexia, and it can help us reach members far from major metropolitan centres, like Orkney – particularly with the help of dedicated ULRs like Linda Halford.

With three-quarters of UNISON's members being women, many of our ULRs are women championing learning in the workplace. Celebrating International Women's Day today includes recognising how much women help improve access and equality for all learning. #Balanceforbetter



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Martin Russo, Inclusive Learning Project Manager

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TALKING ABOUT THE MENOPAUSE AT WORK

UNISON's Women's Self-Organised Group (SOG) has uploaded a detailed presentation to the union's website that sets out why the menopause is a workplace issue.

Menopause is used to describe the time when women stop having periods and are no longer able to get pregnant naturally. 80 per cent of women register noticeable symptoms, with 45 per cent finding those symptoms difficult to deal with.

Symptoms include hot flushes, headaches, heavy, irregular or painful periods, anxiety and / or depression, urinary problems, joint aches and difficulty sleeping.

Some of the key workplace issues affecting women

going through the menopause are: lack of appropriate gender-sensitive risk assessments; inflexible policies that penalise women because of their symptoms; lack of awareness among managers and colleagues; lack of management training; and negative attitudes or unsympathetic line managers / colleagues.

UNISON branches can help by: running workplace campaigns; negotiating a specific menopause policy; asking for training from their employers; encouraging more women to become workplace reps / health and safety reps; training all stewards – male and female – on the issues.

Download the full presentation from **<https://bit.ly/2SHS7yv>**.

For further information contact: 020 7121 5116



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Dyslexia champs

After taking a two-day course in the autumn, UNISON learning reps Jane Eyre (Blackpool Health Branch) and Carol McGrath (Leeds Local Government Branch) have gained Level 2 qualifications to help them support learners with dyslexia.

Their course was delivered in London last October by Janette Beetham, who founded Right Resources to offer training and support on Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia.

"We looked at what constitutes dyslexia, how people are affected, the role of the Dyslexia Champion in the workplace, the difficulties you could come across, neurodiversity and the positives of being dyslexic," Jane says.

"I thought the course was really helpful – it gives you new insight into dyslexia and how you can help people with dyslexia in your workplace."

After finishing the course, Carol and Jane then had to complete a workbook afterwards, before gaining their Level 2 in Practical Solutions for Dyslexia from the British Dyslexia Association (BDA).



Orkney ULR

Orkney Local Services Branch ULR Linda Halford organised a wide range of workshops attended by more than 70 learners last year, making 2018 her busiest year yet since taking on the learning rep role five years ago.

The subjects covered included retirement, menopause awareness, mental health first aid, dealing with difficult situations and an Agewise workshop on the transition from work to retirement, run by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

It was Linda's then Branch Secretary Karen Kent who suggested she attend the annual conference of unionlearn's Scottish counterpart Scottish Union Learning in 2014.

"Knowing my interest around training, Karen thought I might enjoy it and how right she was: I got hooked – suddenly everything fell into place – and I've never looked back!" Linda says.

As well as supporting members with their own learning, Linda has made continuous progress on her own learning journey over the past five years. She is a qualified digital trainer and has completed UNISON's own lay tutor training.



LGBT training

Seventy people attended a half-day LGBT awareness-raising event organised by Dorset UNISON and delivered by the Intercom Trust advocacy and rights group to mark LGBT History Month in February.

"We wanted to create an education opportunity to raise awareness about how we should be talking about LGBT issues to help promote a culture of openness in the workplaces covered by the branch," explains Branch LGBT Officer Izzy Pochin.

Intercom Trust Chief Executive Andy Hunt led the three-hour session, which included half an hour for lunch provided with the help of a Kickstart grant from Learning and Organising Services.

"It was the largest session Intercom Trust have ever delivered – Andy did a fabulous job, the vast majority of people were really well engaged and we got some really good feedback about how positive, open and interactive the training was," Izzy says.

The branch is now aiming to build an LGBT Self-Organised Group to help develop LGBT representation, visibility and strength.

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