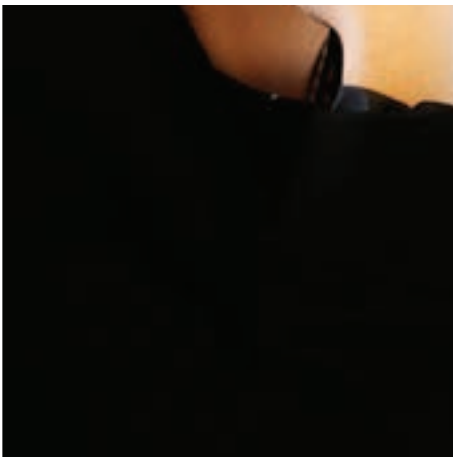


Union
Learning
Fund

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UNISON
the public service union



Learning for everyone

2017

A ULR toolkit for developing
informal learning at work

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To find out more about UNISON and how to join contact UNISONdirect on **0800 0 857 857**

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Lines open from 6am – midnight
Monday to Friday, 9am – 4pm Saturday

Visit our website **www.unison.org.uk**
Follow us on twitter **@unisonlearning**

Design: **www.design-mill.co.uk**
Cover photo: **Sasa Sevic**

UNISON published an earlier version of this toolkit in 2011. This resource has been fully revised and comprehensively updated by Emma Lipscombe and Martin Moriarty.

How to use this toolkit

We have produced this toolkit to help UNISON learning reps set up, organise and deliver informal learning sessions in the workplace that will engage members and potential members in anything from book clubs and ballroom dancing to understanding their payslips and everything in between.

The toolkit is designed to be useful both for experienced learning reps and for newer activists who are looking for suggestions about effective and enjoyable activities they could run with little or no specialist help and little or no financial outlay.

Most of the activities have already been road-tested by UNISON branches up and down the country, so we know they work well.

Members who may not yet play any active role in UNISON are often interested and excited to find out the range of learning opportunities available through the union. And significant numbers who boost their confidence through informal learning go on to become more involved in their branches as a result.

Who is the target audience?
UNISON learning reps who are interested in setting up informal learning opportunities at work.

What materials do you need?
Most informal learning usually requires very little specialist equipment – not much more than a flipchart, paper and pens will usually do. Some activities have been reproduced from other UNISON resources, such as Read Anytime Anywhere and Making Every Penny Count.

What sort of venue do you need?
Many activities require nothing more than a decent-sized room with enough tables and chairs for your participants.

What can you do next?
UNISON’s member learning offer includes workshops that will interest and engage many members who have developed an appetite for learning through the activities in this toolkit. Find out more about running the workshops in your workplace from your Regional Learning and Development Organiser (RLDO) or Learning and Organising Services at UNISON Centre (learningandorganising@unison.co.uk).

How informal learning can work for you

Help boost your members' confidence by running informal learning sessions at work. Yoga sessions, craft courses and book clubs enable learners to try something that interests them, and many of them will progress onto formal qualifications and activists' courses.

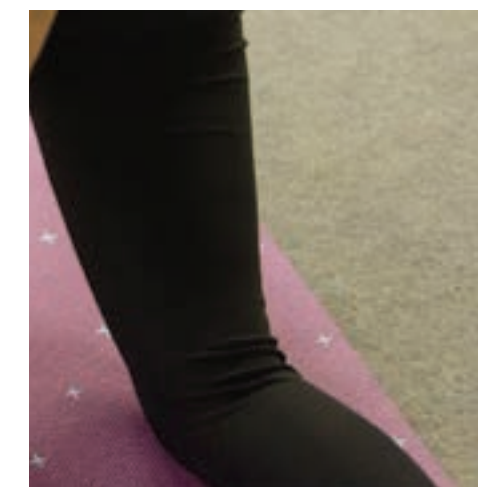
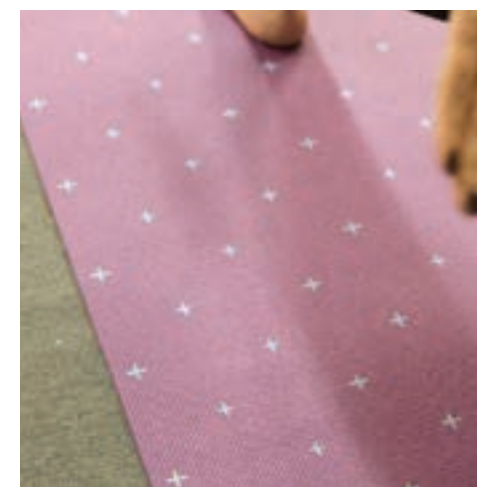
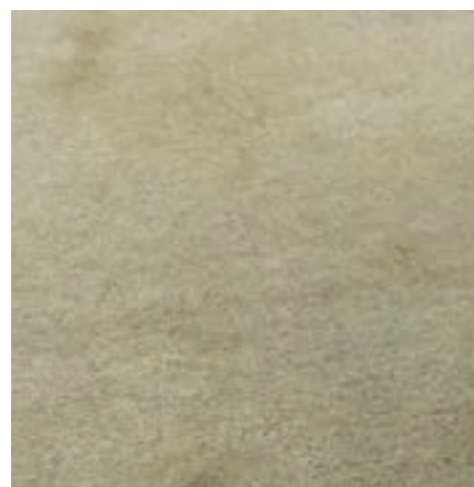
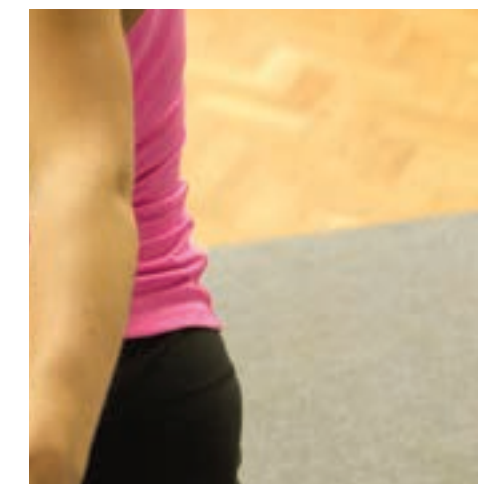
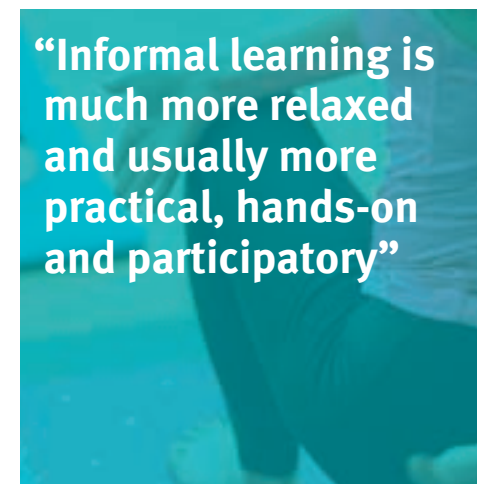
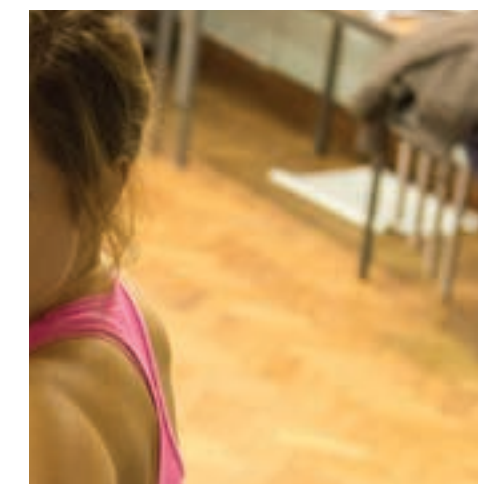
Informal learning is the term we use to describe all the part-time, non-vocational courses, sessions, workshops and tasters that people take part in for their own sake.

Formal learning involves a course with a curriculum and a qualification for everyone who successfully finishes on time. But informal learning is much more relaxed and usually more practical, hands-on and participatory.

Art classes, dance classes, book groups, cookery or craft courses, guided visits to nature reserves, museums or stately homes or tracing your family tree – they're all forms of informal learning.

There are many proven benefits to setting up informal learning sessions during lunchtimes or after work.

- ✦ Informal learning helps members step back into learning in a familiar environment that won't seem competitive or threatening.
- ✦ Returning to learning after many years away from the classroom can feel daunting: a taster, workshop or short course can feel much more manageable.
- ✦ Running tasters, workshops and classes engages members we would not otherwise reach and shows we can offer more than support for problems at work.
- ✦ When undertaking a formal qualification might feel too much to take on, informal learning offers members the chance to try something without committing to hours of study.
- ✦ Informal learning is a great way of helping members boost their confidence, in the company of supportive work colleagues.
- ✦ Many members who re-start their learning journey on an informal course feel strong enough to progress onto more formal qualifications and / or into UNISON's own activist education programme.
- ✦ Informal learning improves workplace morale by providing a route into the kind of workplace training that can help members feel more valued and therefore more productive.



“Informal learning is much more relaxed and usually more practical, hands-on and participatory”

Seven steps to success

Follow our simple seven-point plan and you could be running popular and successful informal learning in your workplace.

1 A learning survey is a great way of engaging your members about what they would like to try, and can open up discussion about learning and the union. Download a sample survey from the Organising Space. Ask your Lifelong Learning Coordinator, Branch Education Coordinator and other ULRs to promote the survey.

2 Discuss informal learning with your employer and show how running short informal sessions (during lunchtimes, for example) can benefit the workplace. Ask your employer to promote your survey and courses too.

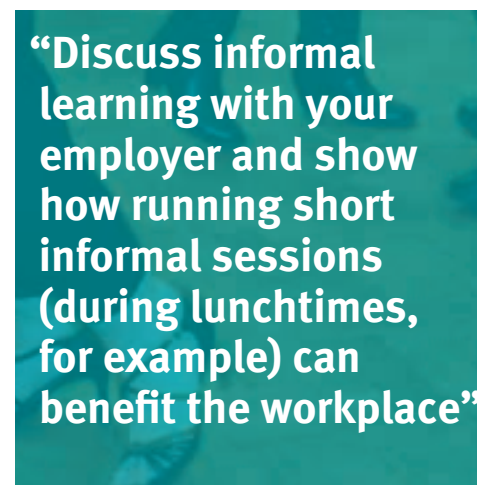
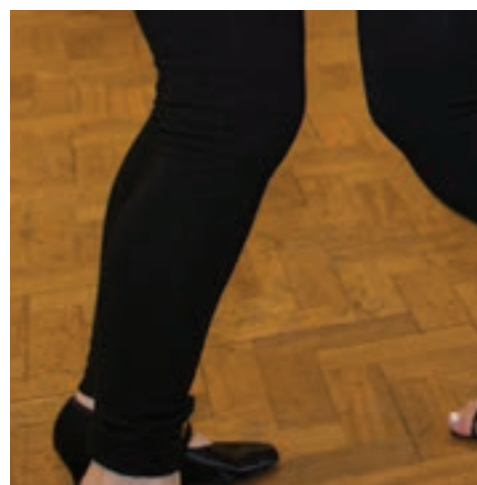
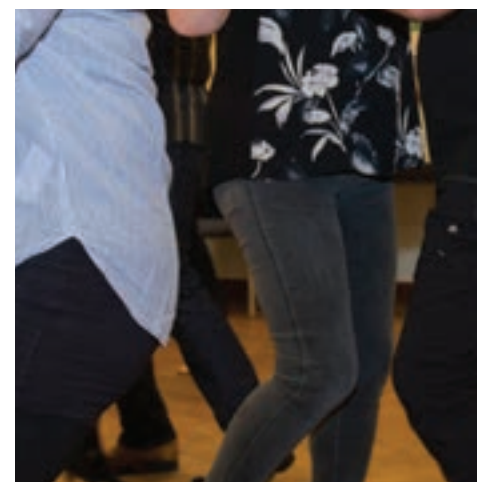
3 When you run sessions that require specialist tutors or facilitators (foreign languages, for example), discuss what you need with local providers such as the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), colleges or adult education centres. Building a relationship with providers can allow more joint work to happen. Find out more on page 18.

4 When you survey your members to see what they are interested in, tap into their talents by asking who would be willing to run a session on their craft skills or hobbies (eg sewing, photography, guitar for beginners).

5 Make the most of Reading Ahead, Quick Reads and other initiatives such as World Book Night. Find out more on page 20.

6 Use UNISON's own Organising Space for ideas and to ask questions. Find out more on page 32.

7 Run sessions that are relevant: lots of members and potential members will be interested in practical advice to help them get on top of their money problems, and if redundancies are on the cards, job skills sessions are likely to prove popular.



“Discuss informal learning with your employer and show how running short informal sessions (during lunchtimes, for example) can benefit the workplace”

PETER EVERARD SMITH

Finding out what your members want

When you put together your learning survey, find out what sessions you can offer that are available regionally or can be funded nationally.

Make sure you offer sessions you would be comfortable running, or know someone who would be able to. Only give people the option of paragliding if you know you could make it happen!

Ask your members if they would like to share their skills and knowledge with other members. Perhaps someone who speaks fluent French could run a class, or someone interested in photography could offer their expertise.

Gaining confidence, becoming active

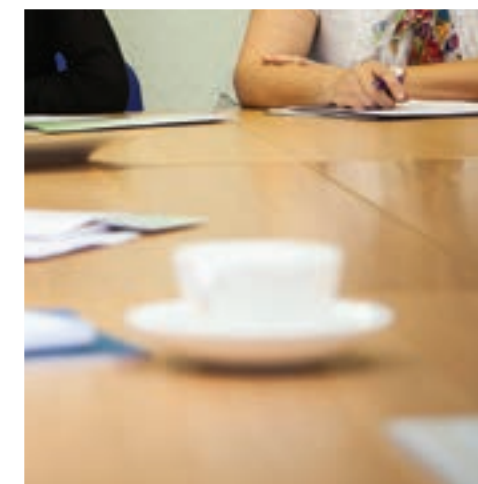
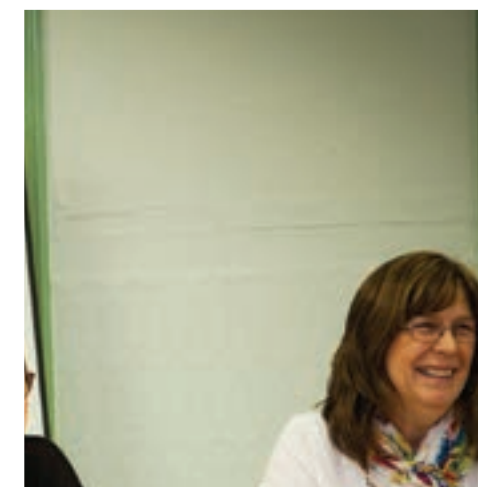
Many members rule themselves out of becoming more active in UNISON because they feel they don't have the confidence. But taking part in an informal learning session, with no pressure, about something they're interested in, can give them just the boost they need to find out more about the union and roles they could enjoy, such as learning rep. That's why your branch should be interested in helping you to promote informal learning.

HOW TO ... SUPPORT ACTIVISTS WITH LEARNING

- 1 Arrange a discussion with stewards and other activists about how learning could help them with their roles in the branch.
- 2 In discussion with activists, identify an issue the branch is currently campaigning on, or about to start work on.
- 3 Think together about how learning could help the campaign: for example, running a maths-based activity on understanding your pay slip could help campaigning for a better pay offer.
- 4 Plan your informal learning session to fit with the branch schedule for the campaign.

TOP TIPS

- 1 Talk to your Branch Education Coordinator / Lifelong Learning Coordinator (or your branch secretary if those roles aren't filled) to discuss promoting informal learning in the workplace. Get in touch with ULRs and other activists and let them know they can get involved.
- 2 Give a presentation on the benefits of informal learning in the workplace at your branch committee, or invite your Regional Learning and Development Organiser (RLDO) to lead the discussion.
- 3 When discussing any aspect of workplace learning with branch committee members, remind them how it can:
 - + boost recruitment;
 - + enhance members' involvement in, and satisfaction with, UNISON;
 - + attract new and different activists;
 - + improve industrial relations.



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Getting support from your branch

Before you run any learning activity, it's useful and important to talk to your Branch Education Coordinator (BEC) or Lifelong Learning Coordinator (LLC) to get their advice, support and input.

Your Branch Education Coordinator helps arrange training courses and education programmes for members, stewards, ULRs, health and safety reps and branch officers. They make sure new stewards and reps understand their roles, organise for all reps to go on appropriate courses and negotiate with the employer on issues relating to learning, including time off.

Your Lifelong Learning Coordinator concentrates on supporting learning and learning reps. They co-ordinate the activity of the ULRs in the branch education team, make sure the branch fully integrates learning work into the rest of its activity and are also closely involved in negotiating about learning with your employer.

In some branches, the BEC and LLC are one and the same person. When two people take on different roles, they always work very closely together.

Planning to promote learning at work

Most members are usually interested in learning opportunities and excited by what is available at work through UNISON. You can use this exercise to plan your branch strategy for engaging members and potential members through learning.

You can run this session at a branch committee or a branch education team meeting to help your branch promote learning to members and potential members. You will need a list of names of employees, which should be available from the branch or the employer and any additional mapping information the branch has available.

1 Share the mapping information available about the area or workplace you want to target first. Prioritise areas where there are particular learning needs or workers who don't normally have access to employer training and / or are non-unionised.

2 Ask everyone to help set out the mapping information as a workplace map, in which you sketch out the different parts of the workplace and make a note of the information currently available about who works there.

3 Divide everyone into pairs, in which one role-plays the ULR or other activist and one role-plays the potential learner. Give everyone five minutes to hold a conversation about learning. The person playing the learner should try to respond realistically.

4 If you have enough time, ask everyone to swap roles and practise the same conversation from the other perspective.

5 Give each pair the time to reflect on which approaches worked best.

6 Feedback to the whole group on what worked best and record the key points on a flipchart.

7 Look back to the mapping information, and agree:

- + when would be a good time to talk to workers (within a set timeframe, eg two weeks)
- + who will aim to talk to which workers
- + when you will meet again to review the completed record sheets and plan the next steps.

Timing:
approx.
30 minutes

Name		
Date spoken to		
Workplace issues		
Possible learning needs		
Follow up needed/ by when		
Links to community organisations?		
Other		
Potential learning champion/ULR?		



Ice-breaker quiz

Use this short quiz about Learning and Organising Services to break the ice at any learning event – and highlight a handful of key stats at the same time.

1 How many members did LAOS support through learning in 2015?

- (a) around 4,000
- (b) around 10,000
- (c) around 12,000

2 How many people took part in the OU–UNISON partnership workshops in 2015?

- (a) 450-plus
- (b) 800-plus
- (c) 1,100-plus

3 How many new stewards did we train in 2015?

- (a) 1,011
- (b) 1,702
- (c) 2,519

Answers 1(c); 2(c); 3(c)

JESS HURO/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Making the case to your employer

Delivering informal learning in the workplace helps engage your members, and promotes a culture of learning that pays off for your employer.

Blackpool Health Branch ULRs Jane Eyre and Bev Herring have arranged a wide range of informal learning opportunities since they signed a learning agreement with Blackpool Victoria Hospital Trust.

Jane and Bev have:

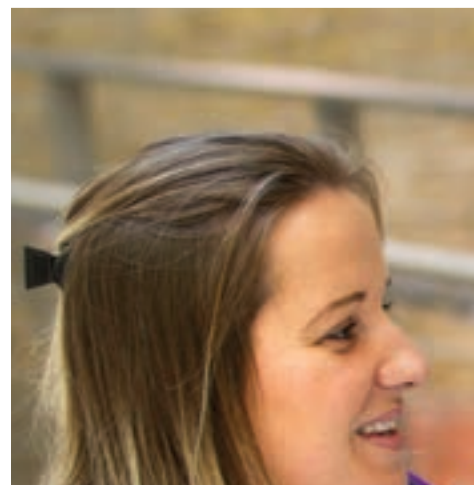
- ✦ arranged 10-week courses in holiday Spanish and British Sign Language (both of them free to UNISON members and both fully booked);
- ✦ organised monthly sets of one-hour Learn My Way sessions to help staff learn their way round tablets and computers;
- ✦ delivered six two-hour sessions on the dos and don'ts of using social media;
- ✦ launched a book club to promote the benefits of reading among staff.

Building on the good work, the duo has convinced the Trust to help improve its employees' maths skills by signing up to the National Numeracy Challenge (NNC) – making it one of a handful to date to commit to the initiative in the NHS.

Working with NNC, Jane and Bev have created separate surveys for staff and managers that both collect their views on the role of maths in their jobs, and allow them to take the challenge online.

The team has also played an active role in helping prepare staff to get the best results out of the redeployment programme at the Trust. With many staff worried by the prospect of being interviewed for their current job or even moved into a new role, support from the team has enabled them to gain the skills and confidence to secure the best outcomes for themselves.

By playing an active role as a ULR, Bev has overcome some of the barriers that had obstructed her own development. "I have always been nervous about talking to a room full of people, but being a ULR has boosted my confidence and helped me get over some of that fear," she says.



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



Informal learning pays off at work

Encouraging staff to take up learning for their own personal enjoyment or satisfaction can help bring many benefits to the workplace:

- ✦ **boosting morale;**
- ✦ **encouraging interaction between staff;**
- ✦ **increasing active participation in UNISON;**
- ✦ **improving industrial relations.**

In addition, informal, non-accredited courses can help many people overcome their own personal resistance to trying something more formal and vocational. Sessions on subjects such as genealogy or digital photography can be a brilliantly unthreatening route back into the world of learning for people who might not have had the happiest days of their lives at school.

Informal learning helps workers gain the confidence to improve their English and maths skills, which will not only help them progress at work but also remove barriers to their active

participation in UNISON. Nearly 10 per cent of those surveyed in 2011 said their lack of confidence in Functional Skills stopped them from becoming more active in the union. Find *Skilled for Work Report 2011* on the Organising Space.

And employers who invest in developing the English and maths skills of their workforce can reap significant benefits, including:

- ✦ **better productivity and performance;**
- ✦ **reduced errors and wastage;**
- ✦ **improved customer relations;**
- ✦ **improved internal communication;**
- ✦ **greater compliance with new working practices;**
- ✦ **health and safety compliance;**
- ✦ **raising of quality standards;**
- ✦ **reduced absenteeism;**
- ✦ **effective staff training;**
- ✦ **increased numbers of staff applying for internal promotion.**

Working with unions to develop literacy, language and numeracy in the workplace, NIACE, 2009

Where to go for funding

While you can run many of the courses and activities in this toolkit for free or at a very low cost, you may need to find some money to run informal learning sessions, such as language classes or digital photography courses. This is your guide to the best approaches.

1 Your branch

Your branch should be your first port of call when you are looking for support in putting on learning activities. They should be able to cover smaller costs like stationery, posters and room hire and may have laptops and projectors you can use. The branch committee may be able to allocate a lump sum to support your work, finance permitting.

2 Your employer

Some ULRs have secured financial support from their employer to put on community education activities, often in the form of match funding whatever their branch is investing. It is always worth contacting your employer to see if they might be willing to support your work.

3 Your region

You can submit a regional pool bid, where your branch submits a request to your Regional Education Committee or Regional Council asking for money to support a particular project: the region then reviews the proposal and makes a decision on it.

4 UNISON Learning and Organising Services

UNISON has secured money from the Union Learning Fund in England and equivalent funds in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to support learning activity in branches. Funding may be available for branch-based activity to organise around learning.

To find out more, please contact your Regional Education Officer or email learningandorganising@unison.co.uk

HELP FOR UNISON MEMBERS

UNISON Open University Awards

Open University (OU) Awards are available to UNISON members undertaking 60 and 30-point OU courses, up to and including undergraduate level, at their own expense. No awards are available for Masters level study or above.

OU Awards are worth:

✚ £200 for 60 point courses

✚ £100 for 30 point courses.

They are made on a first-come, first-served basis, until funds are exhausted, and are available from 1 January and 1 September each year.

UNISON Learning Grants

UNISON Learning Grants of up to £100 are intended to help members who are undertaking study at their own expense, up to and including undergraduate level, on the following types of courses:

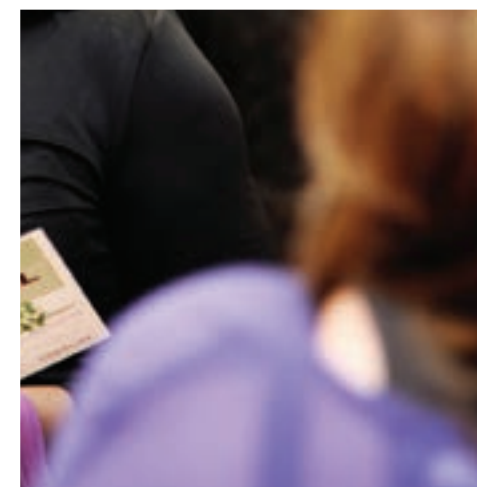
✚ Trade Union and Labour Studies where an applicant has not received a bursary

✚ non-vocational education up to and including undergraduate level, e.g. GCSEs, A Levels, Access courses, leisure/recreational courses

✚ vocational education relevant to public service work up to and including undergraduate level.

UNISON Learning Grant applications are dealt with on a first come, first served basis, until funds are exhausted and are available from 1 January and 1 September each year. Learning grants are not available for Masters level study or above.

To find out more and download an application form, visit:
www.unison.org.uk/get-involved/learning-development/financial-support/



Working with The Open University

Through our long-standing partnership with The Open University (OU), we can help branches run a range of flexible learning, from free online modules to access courses that members may be able to qualify for free. We're also working with the OU to offer one-day regional sessions in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on subjects such as dementia awareness, mental health awareness, autism awareness and challenging behaviour in schools. Contact your Regional Education team to find out more.

OPEN UNIVERSITY ACCESS MODULES

Open University access modules are introductory modules to build your confidence. The courses cost different amounts in each nation but you could be eligible to study for free if you:

- ✚ are a resident in England / Wales / Scotland / Northern Ireland
- ✚ have a household income of less than £25k or are in receipt of qualifying benefits
- ✚ have not completed more than one year on a full-time undergraduate programme at NQF Level 4 or above / SCQF Level 7

Arts and languages access module (YO31) explores a range of subjects including art history; English literature; English language; history; modern languages; and also touches on areas of creative writing and religious studies.

People, work and society access module (YO32) covers a broad range of subject areas, including children and young people; health; law; management; psychology; and social science.

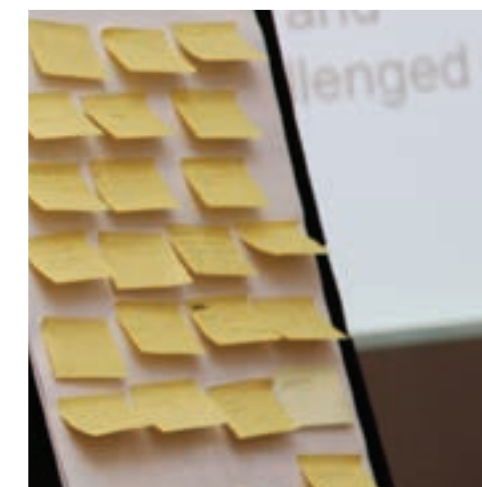
Science, technology and maths access module (YO33) introduces a range of subjects, including science; engineering and design; environment; mathematics; and computing and IT.

Find out more at:

www.open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/access

What is OpenLearn?

OpenLearn provides 800-plus free courses, across a variety of subject areas. Many of the courses are based on OU course materials, while others are written specifically for OpenLearn. You can gain new skills for study or work, or delve into a subject that fascinates you. You can start a course immediately, work at your own pace and share your achievements with friends or employers when you finish with the OU's Statement of Participation. www.open.edu/openlearn/



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New resources from the OU

Adults who want to return to learning can find their best route back into study through the new PEARL website, developed by The Open University (OU) in collaboration with UNISON and other partners. PEARL signposts adults to educational opportunities that will help them refresh or increase their skills and knowledge, with a view to progressing within their chosen career path, or to take a new direction.

The website contains the sophisticated diagnostic tool 'Advise me' to help learners personalise their searches and pinpoint opportunities that are suited to their time, level, preferred learning options and aspirations. Find out more at: www.pearl.ac.uk

PEARL is accompanied by six free online courses for those looking for a new career or progression:

- ✚ Introducing practical healthcare: for healthcare assistants (HCAs) and wider health sector support staff (primarily Bands 1-4)
- ✚ Supporting children's development: for teaching assistants (TAs) and other support staff in schools
- ✚ Caring for adults: for people in unpaid or paid caring roles within the adult social care sector
- ✚ Planning a better future
- ✚ Setting up a small business
- ✚ Taking part in the voluntary sector.

Find out more at: www.open.edu/openlearnworks/spn-courses

What is Future Learn?

Future Learn hosts online distance learning from a range of universities (although it is a private company wholly owned by the OU). It delivers its courses one step at a time, and makes them accessible on mobile, tablet and desktop, so you can fit learning around your life. FutureLearn has 99 partners around the world, including many of the best UK and international universities, as well as institutions with archives of educational material, such as the British Council, the British Library, the British Museum, and the National Film and Television School. www.futurelearn.com/

Working with providers

Most of the sessions in this toolkit can be run by a ULR, branch rep or UNISON staff member. But some informal learning works best when it's provided by an external provider (such as holiday language classes, digital photography sessions, Pilates).

1 Picking the best provider

Most adult education providers are facing – or have already suffered – huge funding cuts, which means we may need to be more creative about how we can work together nowadays. Developing a relationship with any provider can take time, and it's important to find the right person you can develop that relationship with. Find out if your local college has a Trade Union Education Centre, which is often the best place to start.

- ✚ Ask for a dedicated person to deal with the event / sessions.
- ✚ Draw up a document that specifies what the branch is doing and what the provider is bringing (eg, who's responsible for providing any IT equipment). See 'Who does what' sidebar.
- ✚ Ask your tutor to ensure everyone has the chance to take part in an interactive session with peer/small group discussion, rather than simply being spoken to: informal learning works best when it's fun for everyone.

2 Choose the right location

The best place for informal sessions will usually be close to where staff are based, or easily accessible at certain times (eg, close to the canteen at lunchtime). It's always better to run several smaller sessions over a period of time than staging one big event.

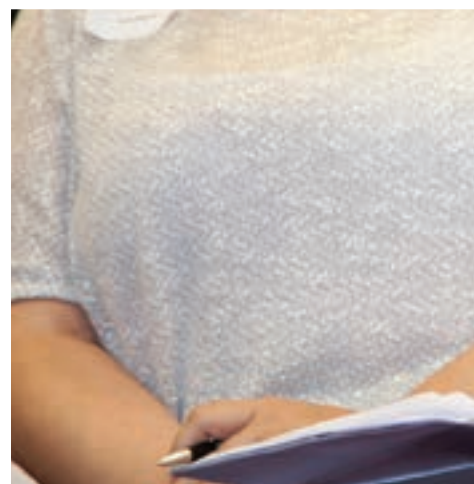
- ✚ Remember to provide for staff on shifts/set hours.
- ✚ Ensure that the location is fit for purpose (ie, has electrical sockets, broadband / wi-fi, enough room, natural light).
- ✚ Providing food for a lunchtime event will enable staff to attend without missing out on a meal. Contact your RLDO or apply for Kickstart funding from Learning and Organising Services in UNISON Centre.

3 You can never advertise too much

- Put together colourful and inviting adverts, flyers, leaflets and posters, ensure the sessions look welcoming and specify that it's a UNISON event.
- ✚ Be specific with times, dates and location.
- ✚ Be clear what's on offer.
- ✚ If the sessions are free, say so! If not, specify the cost.
- ✚ Remind people via a leaflet drop or email alert the week before and then again the day before.

4 Be prepared

- If your session requires IT, make sure someone is on standby to deal with any last-minute technical problems, and always have spare equipment available (eg, extension leads, laptops).
- ✚ Be available and visible on the day.
- ✚ Have UNISON application forms handy.
- ✚ UNISON bags (including free pens and application forms) are always a hit!



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Working with the OU and WEA

Make the most of UNISON's long-standing relationships with The Open University (OU) and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) when organising informal learning.

Both partnerships are founded on our shared goals of extending learning opportunities to people who have been unable to access them. Thousands of UNISON members have attended workshops and seminars delivered by the OU and the WEA, including many of the sessions delivered as part of the member learning offer, such as *Your skills your future* and *Making the most of the internet*.

The best approach is to contact UNISON Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) first, as we will then be able to put you in touch with the right person at the OU and / or WEA. Email: learningandorganising@unison.org.uk. Alternatively, speak to your Regional Learning and Development Organiser (RLDO), who will be able to identify the best contact.

- ✚ Find out more about the UNISON / OU partnership: www.open.ac.uk/choose/unison/
- ✚ Find out more about the WEA: www.wea.org.uk

Working out who does what

It's always good to be clear on who's responsible for what.

1 THE ULR:

- ✚ acts as main contact between learners and course tutor / provider;
- ✚ ensures learners know about UNISON's involvement;
- ✚ ensures everyone has the chance to take part in an interactive session with peer/ small group discussion, rather than simply being spoken to;
- ✚ encourages learners to get involved in other branch activity;
- ✚ distributes evaluation forms at the end of the session and collects them when they are completed;
- ✚ keeps an updated list of names of learners for future reference.

2 THE TUTOR / PROVIDER DEALS WITH:

- ✚ all administration regarding the organising of courses;
- ✚ any course payments and payment queries.

3 YOUR LEARNERS:

- ✚ contact their ULR if they're interested in attending a course;
- ✚ confirm their place in advance, if necessary by paying any course fees in full before the deadline;
- ✚ inform their ULR if circumstances change and they can't make a course they have signed up for.

Working with The Reading Agency

Encourage people to read more with the Reading Ahead challenge and Quick Reads, or by starting a book club.

HOW TO ... RUN READING AHEAD

- 1 Start with your branch education committee or ULR team: get everyone excited about Reading Ahead.
 - 2 Run a launch event to raise the profile of the scheme and get everyone interested in taking part. Invite your employers to take part and see how they can help promote it to all staff. Think about inviting a local author to help raise the profile of the launch.
 - 3 Talk to your local library and see what help they can offer – and how you can help them in return by demonstrating the value of the service they provide.
 - 4 Order your campaign resources from The Reading Agency. There are promotional packs, mugs, pens, tote bags, wristbands, notepads and keyrings as well.
 - 5 Use social media, online forums and workplace intranets to remind everyone of the scheme and encourage participants to keep going. Tweet using the hashtag #ReadingAhead and the handle @readingagency
 - 6 Organise a celebration event when you finish. Invite a high-profile guest speaker to hand out certificates to completers. Take some good photographs for your branch newsletter.
- Get more ideas from UNISON's ULR toolkit, Read Anytime Anywhere.**

CASE STUDY

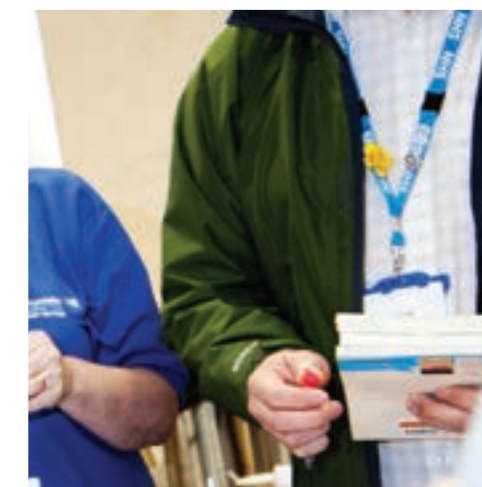
UNISON South Tyneside Health Branch and Bridges to Learning launched the Reading Ahead challenge with a special event featuring local author Ann Cleeves at South Tyneside District Hospital in January 2016.

"We were thrilled when Ann agreed to come along," says UNISON learning rep Hazel Kjebekk, who is also the Bridges to Learning project worker at the hospital.

"I'm sure her enthusiasm for the written word will inspire more people to read for pleasure, which is a gateway to opportunities in many areas of life."

The branch joined forces with Jarrow Library to provide books for Trust staff who took part in the challenge, which involves reading and reviewing six titles in six months – books, magazines, poetry, or online articles.

"This is a brilliant project and I'm delighted to be involved," Ann said.



SASA SEVIC



SASA SEVIC

What's what

Reading Ahead is the initiative in which participants pledge to read six different things in six months (books, poems, magazines, website articles) and complete a reading diary to reflect on what they got out of each title. <https://readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/reading-ahead/>

Quick Reads are the short books aimed at engaging adult readers. A new set of titles is published every February, and always include a range of fiction and non-fiction options. <https://readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/quick-reads/>

World Book Night is the scheme that enables ULRs and other volunteers to apply to distribute multiple copies of lists of books to help encourage more people to read more and read more widely. <http://worldbooknight.org>

All three campaigns are run by the Reading Agency.

Using our toolkit to get the best results

Running reading schemes, organising book groups and promoting Quick Reads in the workplace – you can do it all with the help of our specialist toolkit, Read Anytime Anywhere.

Read Anytime Anywhere is a full-colour 28-page booklet produced by Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) that sets out how to get the best results from running reading schemes, organising book groups and promoting Quick Reads in the workplace.

The toolkit features case studies of UNISON branches that have run successful programmes in their workplaces, with a focus on Reading Ahead, the annual programme where participants commit to completing six reads and reviewing them in a reading diary.

It also includes detailed step-by-step advice on how to run Reading Ahead launch and celebration events, where to go for funding and resources, and best practice for workplace book groups.

The toolkit also includes practical suggestions for ice-breaking activities at reading-related sessions, including story cubes, author anagrams and opening lines from famous novels.

LAOS bulk buys Reading Ahead resources and Quick Reads titles to help branches that want to take part in the schemes.



Read Anytime Anywhere is online at:
https://issuu.com/thedesignmill/docs/unison_ulr_literacy

The Reading Agency's Reading Well programme offers insight and support about mental health issues and dementia care. The three Reading Well lists currently available cover common adult mental health conditions, young people's mental health and people with dementia and their carers. In addition, Reading Well Mood-boosting Books is a national promotion of uplifting novels, non-fiction and poetry as recommended by readers.

✚ Find out more: readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/reading-well/



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

How to set up a book group at work

✚ **Decide on a minimum number of people you need to take part. Make face-to-face contact with people you think might be interested. Ask them if they know anyone who would like to join too.**

✚ **Book a room that's convenient and accessible. Organise refreshments to make it easier for people to take part at lunchtime or straight after work and ask your employer if they can help cover the costs of laying on the sandwiches.**

✚ **Publicise the first meeting of the group by putting up a poster and adding details on the branch website.**

✚ **Open your first meeting by discussing everyone's current attitudes to reading. Do they read on holiday, occasionally**

or all the time? Is there anything they find off-putting such as jargon, long words, or particular genres? Do they prefer fiction or non-fiction?

✚ **Agree how you will run the group – how often you will meet, how you will choose the book, etc. Get more ideas from UNISON's ULR toolkit, Read Anytime Anywhere.**

... or start a creative writing group

Creative writing can be another great way to build people's confidence in their own stories and improve their writing skills in a supportive environment.

Find out if some of your members would be interested in taking part, and identify someone who would make a good facilitator.

Promoting learning with your local library

Libraries are always interested in working with new partners and they provide a wide range of resources and run many interesting activities completely free of charge.

Wirral Local Government Branch joined Wirral Libraries and Wirral Lifelong Learning Service to launch the Reading Ahead challenge at Birkenhead library in November 2015.

Headlined by best-selling author Andy McNab, the event not only provided a springboard for the challenge but also encouraged four new people to take on the learning rep role.

“We had fantastic feedback from the launch event, which was very uplifting: I was able to showcase Reading Ahead and we got four new ULRs as a result, so it spawned a lot of interest,” explains UNISON learning rep and Wirral librarian Diane Moore.

“Andy McNab is someone who started with low skills and look what he’s achieved, he’s become a best-selling author, so he was a really good role model, particularly as we had a lot of young men at the event.”

Running Reading Ahead in partnership with the library service makes the campaign much easier to run and more effective, Diane says.

“It’s much better if you can have a multi-pronged approach – our partners, Lifelong Learning and UNISON, can pinpoint people that I don’t see working in a library,” she points out. For example, Wirral Lifelong Learning Service have been able to promote Reading Ahead at the English and maths classes it runs in the library for local residents, while the branch has been spreading the word among its own membership at the same time.

“We had fantastic feedback from the launch event, which was very uplifting”



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Working together

Your local library service can help you promote informal learning initiatives in a range of different ways.

- ✦ Librarians can recommend books to help complement any courses you are running, from books on local history to guides to car maintenance.
- ✦ Libraries provide a range of materials to help your language learners – DVDs, audio CDs, phrasebooks and electronic resources.
- ✦ Librarians can help learners find answers to queries arising from any courses or adult learning they’re undertaking, and can help find books of interest to members looking to learn about a particular subject.
- ✦ Larger libraries have access to many local and family history resources, archive material and parish records which can help you run genealogy courses: expert staff can guide you through the wealth of material.
- ✦ Many libraries run ICT taster sessions and courses for beginners free of charge so that people gain the confidence and skills they need to use the library’s computers.
- ✦ Libraries have good links with local authors who would be happy to be speak at your workplace event. They also run other reading-related events throughout the year you could cross-promote.
- ✦ Almost all libraries run reading groups, where people can come together to discuss books they have read.

Find out more

Speak to your nearest UNISON Local Government branch to find out if there is a ULR or steward in your local library who can help introduce you to the right person to start discussing your planned partnership with.

✦ Love Your Libraries is UNISON’s long-running campaign to ensure library services and staff are protected and invested in for the benefit of their local communities. Like the campaign page on Facebook to stay up to date: www.facebook.com/loveyourlibraries/

✦ UNISON also supports Voices For The Library, which provides a platform for the many public library campaigns that have sprung up across the country and celebrates the importance of public libraries and what they bring to our communities. www.voicesforthelibrary.org.uk

Boosting members' employability skills

Many of us take our skills for granted, which can mean potential employers don't recognise what we genuinely have to offer. This is an exercise you can run to help people identify transferable skills they can highlight when applying for jobs.

HOW TO ... IDENTIFY YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

1 Ask your participants to think of five skills that they use everyday at work, at home or in the community. Remind them that they may not think of them as skills because they are so used to using them.

2 You can help any participants who are not sure where to start by suggesting they think of the skills they needed for:

- ✚ something they have achieved over the past year;
- ✚ something they found challenging and / or rewarding recently;
- ✚ something new they have started in the past 12 months.

3 Divide your group into pairs. Ask one person to describe some of their work tasks and the other to think about the skills that are required to carry them out. Then swap and repeat.

4 If you have time you can repeat the pairs exercise with domestic responsibilities and union, community or voluntary responsibilities.

5 Ask the pairs to have a short discussion about any skills they have identified working in a pair that they hadn't thought of by themselves.

- ✚ You can signpost participants to the online version of the Your skills, your future course, which is available as an e-note on Learning.UNISON learning.unison.org.uk/course/view.php?id=10.

PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT

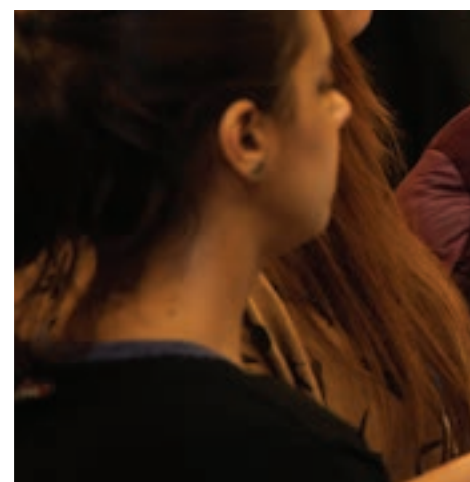
Unionlearn has produced a new interactive card game, Value My Skills cards, to help workers identify their transferable skills.

The cards are designed to help workers think about the skills they've already developed when they want to apply for a new job.

Order your pack from:
svy.mk/2lFkbFS



"Identify transferable skills they can highlight when applying for jobs"



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Improve your chances of moving on at work...

We are running four workshops for members that can help boost their chances of moving on at work. Email learningandorganising@unison.co.uk or contact your RLDO to find out when they are running near you.

- ✚ **Your skills, your future** helps participants explore the skills they have, how to make the most of them and how to develop new skills.
- ✚ **Making the most of the Internet** runs in two sessions: the first covers searching the internet, using favourites and email and attachments; the second includes tips for staying safe online, computer spring cleaning and using the internet to save money.
- ✚ **Facing change together** looks at practical ways UNISON members can help and support each other during times of change or uncertainty.
- ✚ **Power to be you** offers UNISON members the chance to boost their self-esteem, act more assertively in their daily lives and practice speaking with confidence.

More help with *Moving on at work*

The new UNISON ULR toolkit, *Moving on: Helping UNISON members facing change at work*, features full details on how to run a range of sessions to boost people's employability skills, plus lots of tips about everything from writing a great CV, using LinkedIn and preparing for job interviews.

Contact your Regional Learning and Development Organiser (RLDO) or Learning and Organising Services at UNISON Centre to enquire about stock of the *Moving on* toolkit.

Working with National Numeracy

National Numeracy is an independent charity that aims to improve numeracy in the UK. You can use the National Numeracy Challenge to show your learners how they can get to grips with everyday maths.

The ULR team at Blackpool Victoria Hospital Trust has helped persuade the Trust to sign up to the National Numeracy Challenge (NNC) to help improve people's maths skills, which makes the union-employer partnership one of only a handful to date in the NHS to commit to the initiative.

The team recognises the vital importance of all staff having good maths skills not only to help them carry out their everyday roles in the hospital (eg, drug calculation and administration) but also to help prepare them for formal qualifications, further training or Apprenticeships.

Working with NNC, the team has created separate surveys for NHS support staff at the Trust and for managers that both collect their views on the role of maths in their jobs, and allow them to take the Challenge Online (see sidebar).

The Challenge Online is a free web-based tool designed to help adults boost their numeracy skills, but full reporting access can also be offered to employers through a unique access code to monitor individuals' learning.

In addition, NNC is working with the ULRs and the Trust to run the Numeracy Review, which is an assessment process that identifies staff attitudes to maths and audits numeracy

skills levels in the workplace as a basis for developing strategies for change.

"A lot of ULRs find that it's really difficult to convince management that there is an issue with numeracy," explains NNC National Relationship Manager Sally Hilton. "And among staff, there is a lot of maths anxiety out there, which means people are less likely to come forward and ask for help."

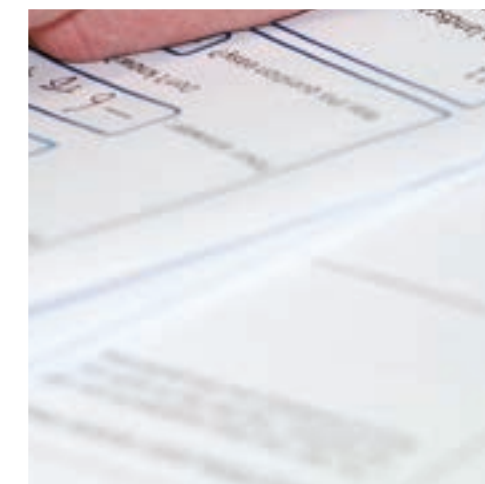
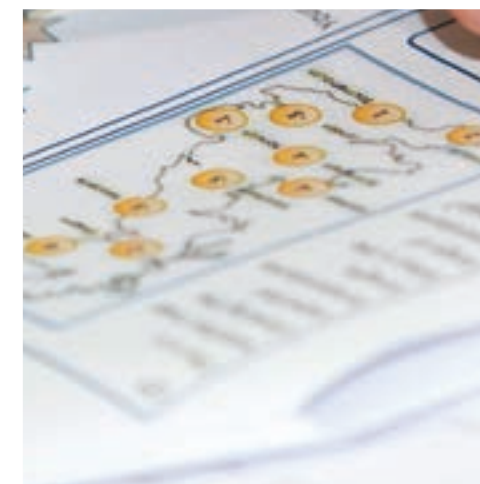
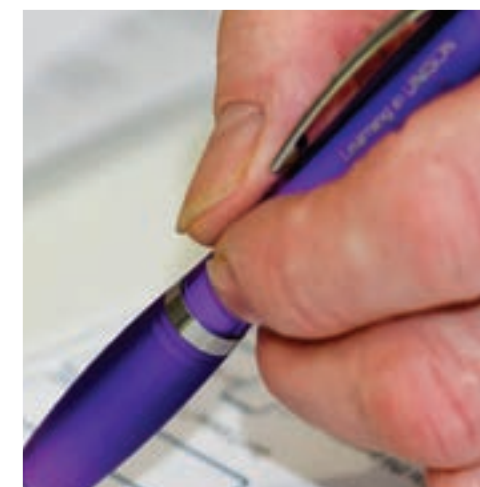
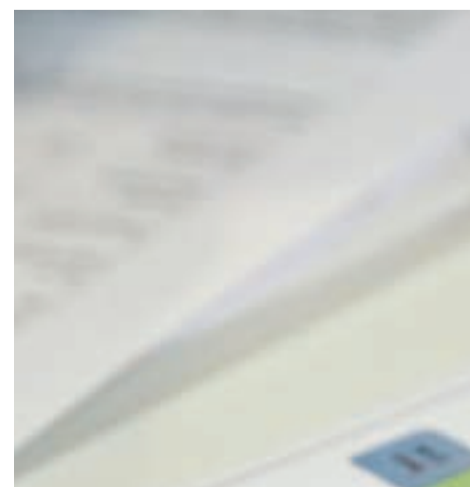
The Numeracy Review can help address both issues, explains Sally, who accompanied lead ULR Jane Eyre to a meeting with the Trust's HR team to outline the benefits of the approach.

"I can do the same with UNISON branches in other organisations – attend meetings with management or HR teams to discuss the benefits of numeracy and explore the potential to secure funding from the employers," she says.

You can contact National Numeracy for more information and costings.

Email: enquiries@nationalnumeracy.org.uk

The Inclusive Learning team can help you set up the Numeracy Review. Email: learningandorganisingervices@unison.co.uk



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

What is the Challenge Online?

The Challenge Online is a free web-based tool designed by National Numeracy to help adults boost their numeracy skills. It is a free, confidential and simple to use website, designed to assess your everyday maths skills and give you the tools to learn in manageable steps, building confidence along the way.

This is how The Challenge Online works.

✚ You start by taking the 'Challenge Check-Up', a selection of questions that helps you find out the overall level you are currently working at. It usually takes about 20 minutes, but you can take as long as you need. You can log out and come back to it too.

✚ You can then see where you are at. After you've finished the Challenge Check-Up, you see what level you worked at, your score, and you are also given a target to work towards. You will then see your learning plan, which shows you the areas and topics you need to work on.

✚ You can then get down to improving your maths skills. The Challenge Online will direct you to the right learning resources for you, so you can take your time, visit the resources and learn some everyday maths online at your own pace.

✚ When you're ready, it's time to retake! When you feel ready, retake the Challenge Check-Up to see if you have reached your target and print out your Challenge Certificate.

Helping with money matters

ULRs can offer awareness sessions to other activists and run sessions for members and potential members on budgeting, understanding payslips and payday lending. They will all help improve people's maths skills.

1 Distribute the payslip check activity sheet.
Make sure everyone has a calculator or calculator app on their phone / tablet / laptop.

2 Take everyone through the various definitions of each item on the sample payslip.

3 Ask participants to work out the answers to questions 1 to 3.

4 Show participants the UNISON calculators they can use to work out if Universal Credit will leave them better or worse off and HMRC's tax code calculator.

There is a longer version of this activity in the Making every penny count toolkit and the Budgeting and money management workbook that accompanies it. The toolkit contains many different activities you can try with members that will help them gain skills and confidence in everyday money matters (for example, drawing up their own household budget) and improve their maths at the same time. You can download your copy from the Organising Space.



Answers

Correct answers in bold

1 Based on the payslip tax period, which month is John being paid for?

a) January b) March **c) May**

2 What is the total amount of deductions paid by John in this pay period?

a) £204.77 **b) £208.77** c) £205.47

3 What is John's annual gross salary?

a) £13,000 b) £14,000 **c) £15,000**

Employee name	Employee number	National Insurance number	Tax code	Tax period
John Brown	1062	YH 558877D	710L	02
Payment	Gross pay	Deduction	Amount	Bal/YTD
Basic pay	£1250.00 (monthly)	Tax paid	£66.67	£133.34
		NI	£69.40	£138.80
		Pension	£60.00	£120.00
		UNISON subscription	£9.70	£19.40
		Charitable contribution	£3.00	
Net amount payable £1,041.23				



Find out more

Your branch There for You (TfY) officer can work with you to promote the financial support services offered by TfY (formerly UNISON Welfare):

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/help-with-problems-at-home/there-for-you/

UNISON has a directory of credit unions across the country, organised by region, on the UNISON website: www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/credit-unions/

Citizens Advice provides a wide range of support about debt and money on the dedicated section of its website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/

Finding what you need on our learning portals

There are lots of resources for ULRs on learning.unison.org.uk and the Organising Space.

Learning.unison.org.uk is UNISON's online area that hosts our e-notes, which are short online modules for activists and members on a variety of subjects, with more being added all the time.

Introduction to the Care Certificate e-note is at: learning.unison.org.uk/course/view.php?id=35

Thinking of becoming a ULR? e-note is at: learning.unison.org.uk/course/view.php?id=34

Anyone can access our e-notes by creating an account and logging in.

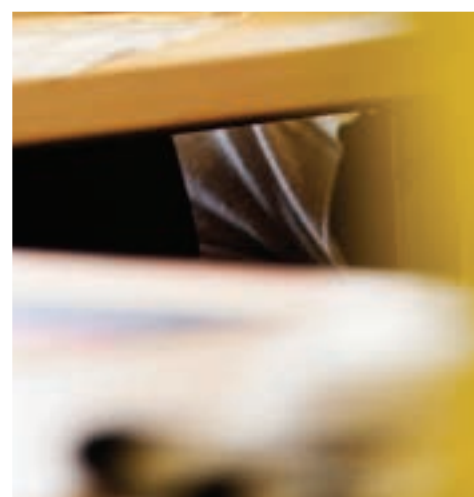
The Organising Space is UNISON's secure social learning microsite, where ULRs can connect with other activists and with UNISON staff. You can find it at organisingspace.unison.org.uk.

To access the Organising Space, you will need an account at my.UNISON (visit www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/ to register).

The Organising Space has two sections:

- ✚ the Communities, where you can ask questions, keep updated and network with other activists from across the country. There is a chat called 'Organising through Learning' that's dedicated to discussing issues specific to trade union learning.

- ✚ the Resources section, where you can find useful websites, newsletters, surveys, posters, and learning activities arranged under several headings. There's a tile called 'Learning and Development' where resources can be found that are particularly useful for ULRs.



The Organising Space is a great resource

"The Space is a great resource, especially for newcomers who can browse and pick up loads of information and ideas," says Four Seasons Huntercombe Branch Secretary Steve Tunstall in the West Midlands.

The Organising Space enables UNISON activists to:

- ✚ share ideas, documents and useful information;
- ✚ keep in touch with each other on what's happening in their workplaces/local areas;
- ✚ meet colleagues working on similar elements of the workplace learning agenda;
- ✚ keep up to date with national policies and initiatives that impact on union learning.

Activists looking for ideas and inspiration can logon to the forum and simply ask for help from friendly staff and reps from all over the country who use the site: they're always happy to share their experiences.

New resources are added all the time, so it's worth checking back often!

You will find that discussions are already taking place on a wide range of subjects. Don't feel intimidated or restricted by them: if you have a question about something new that isn't covered elsewhere, simply add a new comment and find out what other users have to say. There's no such thing as a stupid question!

You can connect with activists who undertake all sorts of different roles, from across the whole range of service groups that UNISON represents, and all over the UK. It's a great opportunity both to share your own ideas and to learn from others' experiences.



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Harnessing the power of social media

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube enable you and your branch to build a more interactive relationship with your members, potential members and supporters. While it takes time to maintain a social media presence, the potential rewards are huge, since social media postings have the potential to go 'viral', spreading from one user to another incredibly quickly.

1 Find the UNISON video called 'Stars in our schools' on the UNISON channel on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/n8aTeQ7eedA>

2 Run the video using a computer with an internet connection (and a projector, if available) at a branch, branch committee or ULR meeting.

3 Discuss the impact of the video, using some of the following questions:

- + Do you think the video has the potential to reach more people than a leaflet or a letter to the local newspaper?
- + How could you signpost more of your members and potential members to the video using other social media?
- + Could you work with your local school to run an event or campaign in the future?
- + Could you make a video on a similar theme in your branch?
- + What theme would you choose? How could you explore the theme? Would you film a series of interviews? Would you interview workers or service users or both? Could you film any activities that help make your point?

4 Decide how you will follow up the activity. Can you put together a planning group? What specialist equipment and knowledge and skills will you need? When do you aim to finish your film and upload it? How will you let people know?



PAUL BOX/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

What's what

f Facebook is currently the biggest social networking site, and many unions, branches and campaigns have set up Facebook pages and groups so they can quickly alert people with important news and calls to action.

- + Find out how to set up and / or manage your branch Facebook page: www.facebook.com/help/?page=904#!/help/?section=using
- + Find out how to set up a Facebook group: www.facebook.com/help/167970719931213
- + Like UNISON's main Facebook page to follow what the union is up to: www.facebook.com/unisontheunion/
- + Let us know what your branch is up to by posting on our Facebook page
- + Like UNISON Learning to keep up to date with the world of union learning: www.facebook.com/unisonlearning/
- + Look for and like our self-organised groups, regions and branches.

t Twitter acts as a platform for people to make short announcements (or 'tweets'), which often use hyperlinks to websites, YouTube videos, Facebook posts or articles. Users choose their handle (eg @unisonlearning) when they join, and use hashtags (eg, #StarsInOurSchools) to help other users follow conversations about particular issues. Unlike Facebook, users can follow each other without needing approval.

- + BBC WebWise introduction to Twitter: www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/guides/about-twitter
- + Find out how to get started: <https://support.twitter.com/articles/215585>
- + Follow UNISON: @unisontweets
- + Tweet about your branch activities using our @unisonlearning handle so we can see what you're doing
- + Find and follow our self-organised groups, regions and branches.

Instagram is the social networking app that allows users to share pictures and videos with their contacts. It's now owned by Facebook.

- + Find out about Instagram: www.instagram.com/about/faq/
- + Follow UNISON: @UNISON
- + Follow UNISON Learning: @unisonlearning
- + Tag us into your Instagram posts by using our @unisonlearning handle

YouTube allows you to upload videos you've created onto its site. Once the files are uploaded, you can share them via email, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and embed them on your site or blog.

- + Find out how: www.youtube.com/t/about_youtube
- + Subscribe to UNISON videos: <https://youtu.be/n8aTeQ7eedA>

Investigating the past

You don't have to be an expert historian to encourage debate and discussion about some of the flashpoints in the growth of the trade union movement through the industrial era. Armed with some relevant documents easily available from online resources, you can run a historical session that will get people thinking in a new way about the past and the present.

1 Introduce the Grunwick dispute to your participants. For everyone too young to remember, this was when the mainly Asian women at the Grunwick film processing lab in north-west London went on strike to demand dignity at work in 1976, and won the support of unions all over the country. Research your intro from the online links below.

2 You could watch one of the videos about the strike that are available online (see sidebar) or circulate print-outs of some of the famous images from the dispute (search Google Images or similar sites using the search term 'Grunwick strike'). If you show the videos, remember to invite people to think about the point of view of the documentary-makers.

3 Lead a discussion about the issues raised by the strike, such as dignity at work, the evolution of self-organisation in unions such as UNISON, the importance of solidarity with minority communities.

4 Ask participants to identify what has changed in the 40 years since the dispute – what has changed for the better and what has changed for the worse?



DAVID MANSSELL/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Researching with YouTube

- ✚ Short profile of Grunwick strike leader Jayaben Desai: Jayaben Desai – Hidden Herstories (Sons of Malcolm TV, 2014), <https://youtu.be/anxCrBMN8A>
- ✚ Short documentary about the Grunwick dispute: Remembering the Grunwick Strike (Novara Media 2016), <https://youtu.be/olrr5e2mHzI>

If you screen either of these short films, be aware that they are not made by UNISON, and may include viewpoints we wouldn't agree with. But that can give you an opportunity to promote critical thinking by asking members to discuss, for example, the different world views of the various participants.



Researching on the web

Striking Women, an online resource developed by Dr Sundari Anitha from the University of Lincoln and Professor Ruth Pearson from the University of Leeds in 2013: www.striking-women.org/module/striking-out/grunwick-dispute

The Grunwick Dispute: 40 years on by John Callow, Director of Archives at the Marx Memorial Library: www.lwbooks.co.uk/blog/grunwick40

Biting lions: remembering the Grunwick strike 40 years on by Sujata Aurora, Willesden community campaigner: www.redpepper.org.uk/biting-lions-remembering-the-grunwick-strike-40-years-on/

The Working Class Movement Library website includes a range of historical resources would ULRs could explore before organising discussions on historical events. There are several online articles on Grunwick. www.wcml.org.uk/

Developing a local Apprenticeship strategy

With the government committed to creating 3 million new Apprenticeships by 2020 and public sector organisations now obliged to offer Apprenticeship opportunities within their workforce, local authorities and health sector employers will be hiring more apprentices in the next few years. You can run this activity to help your branch provide the best support for apprentices in the workplace.

1 Ask everyone what they know about Apprenticeships and any questions they have – make a note of these points on a flipchart.

2 Introduce the key elements of high quality Apprenticeships using the TUC's Apprenticeships Toolkit and UNISON guide (see sidebar).

3 Distribute four flipcharts around the room, each one headed by one of these themes:

- + negotiation issues
- + mentoring and support
- + equality issues
- + keeping track.

4 Divide the participants into four groups and give each group a flipchart to start on, then give everyone the chance to add their comments to other flipcharts. Check back to the guidance to make sure that the key points are all covered.

5 Using the flipcharts, agree as a whole group which points you will include as your draft branch strategy (this will need to be approved by the full branch committee), and set out key actions to take forward.

KEY ISSUES FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

+ **Employment:** apprentices should be directly employed.

+ **Contract:** apprentices should have contracts of employment for at least the duration of their training period.

+ **Access to the union:** the branch should negotiate with the employer to ensure it has the chance to talk about what the union has to offer young people.

+ **Mentoring:** negotiate a clear system for supervision, support and mentoring, ideally with UNISON involvement, with a clear role for ULRs.

+ **Pay:** decent pay rates are essential to completion rates.

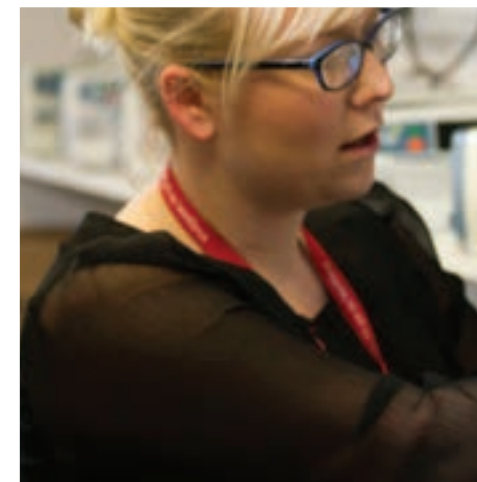
+ **Equality and diversity:** Apprenticeships should be accessible to the widest possible demographic.

+ **Training:** Apprenticeship programmes must give participants enough time to study off the job. The minimum hours of off-the-job training (and all other statutory requirements) are set out in the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England.

+ Although the principles are the same, Apprenticeship schemes operate under different funding and regulatory arrangements in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

+ Download UNISON's guide to negotiating a model Apprenticeship policy from: www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/10/Apprenticeship-policy-1.pdf

+ Order your copy of the new TUC Apprenticeships Toolkit from: www.tuc.org.uk/publications/apprenticeships-toolkit-4



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

“Apprentices should have contracts of employment for at least the duration of their training period”

Great deal on membership for apprentices

Apprentices can join UNISON for just £10 per year.

Tackling stress at work

In order to manage, prevent and reduce stress, we have to be able to identify what's causing it. Help your members learn to identify the four common types of stress and try some proven methods for tackling the problem.

1 Working with the whole group of your participants, share the four common types of stress that Dr Karl Albrecht identifies in his book *Stress and the Manager* (1979):

- ✦ time stress (when you worry about time, or the lack of it);
- ✦ anticipatory stress (when you worry about a specific event in the future or experience an overall sense of dread about the future);
- ✦ situational stress (in a scary situation that you have no control over);
- ✦ encounter stress (when you worry about interacting with people – very common when your patients or clients are ill or deeply upset).

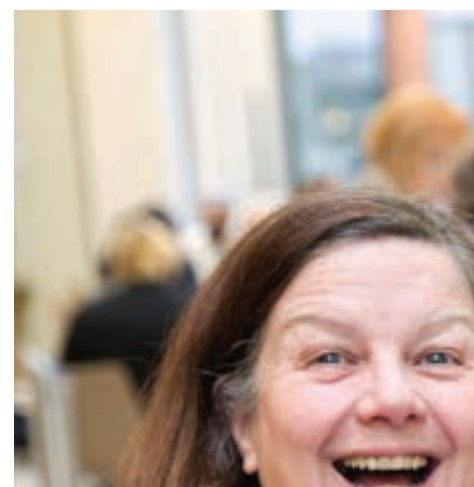
2 Stick up four large Post-It notes labelled with the four different types of stress. Ask participants to pick one of the headers which they identify with, and share an example from that heading. Encourage the group to come up with examples from each heading.

3 With your participants working in pairs, ask them to think about whether their stress triggers are related to an area of their life; work, home or social / community. Do they respond differently in different areas of their life? Take general feedback.

4 Now your participants have identified how they experience stress and what triggers their stress, ask them to think what they could do to relax and unwind, and what techniques they currently use to help reduce their stress. Invite them to think about it on their own, then discuss in pairs.

5 Before you finish, emphasise that while everyone experiences different physical and emotional symptoms of stress, it's important to understand how you respond to each trigger. When you can recognise the type of stress you're experiencing, you can take steps to manage it more effectively.

6 Mental health issues, including stress, anxiety and depression, are the reason for one-in-five visits to a GP. It is important to make an appointment with your GP to discuss some physical effects of stress, such as high blood pressure.



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Ten top tips for staying strong

- 1** Start every journey 10 minutes early so you are not rushing and have a few minutes to relax before your next meeting / task.
- 2** Think yourself calm: take a few deep breaths and simply repeat, 'I feel calmer and calmer.'
- 3** Clear out clutter: physical disarray adds to the tension in our life so feel calmer by de-cluttering.
- 4** Get back to nature: go for a walk, sit by water, walk barefoot in the grass.
- 5** Talk it out: sharing your feelings and problems may help.
- 6** Be realistic about what is achievable and what is a waste of time. Then devote your time and energy to achievable tasks.
- 7** Take some time out: sometimes you may just need time and space for your thoughts to work themselves out. Go somewhere quiet and just be.
- 8** Laugh: watch a funny film, remember a funny moment.
- 9** Smile: a smile relaxes all the major facial muscles. It sets off the emotional chain reaction that invariably helps you feel good.
- 10** Celebrate the good things: give yourself a pat on the back when something goes well.

Member workshops

Staying strong is a stress management workshop produced by UNISON. It is designed to explore the ways stress can affect people and look at how members and potential members can work with their branch to help reduce workplace stress.

ULRs with tutor training experience can run the workshop in their workplace, or invite a tutor to deliver it. To find out more, talk to your Regional Learning and Development Organiser or email LAOS via learningandorganising@unison.org.uk.

Resources

You can find a wide range of very useful free resources to help run informal learning in the workplace. Here are some suggestions to help you get started.

ADULT BASIC SKILLS RESOURCE CENTRE

The Adult Basic Skills Resource Centre offers a range of resources designed to help people improve their maths and English and also provides advice on how to put together a CV.
www.skillsworkshop.org

ALISON

Advance Learning Interactive Systems Online (ALISON) is a free online learning resource for basic and essential workplace skills that offers a range of interactive multimedia training courses – including IT, English language and skills, health and safety. While all courses are free, certificates are charged – but you can receive 20 per cent off the cost of your certificates if you use this link:
www.alison.com/?ref=2761315

BBC

BBC Skillswise website provides help with English, maths and job skills. BBC WebWise offers help with digital skills and iWonder pulls together useful resources, such as the interactive test on our attitudes to money. The BBC has stopped updating its Learning website, but it remains packed with potential resources for adult learners.
www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/0/
www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/0/
www.bbc.co.uk/iwonder
www.bbc.co.uk/learning/

ESOL NEXUS FOR LEARNERS

Free website from the British Council with videos, listening activities, texts and grammar exercises to help English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners improve their English at every level.
<https://esol.britishcouncil.org/>

EXCELLENCE GATEWAY

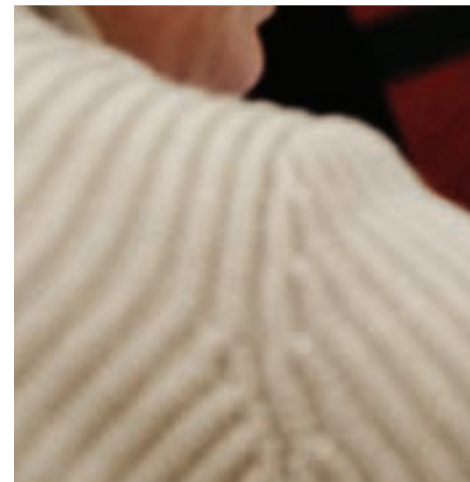
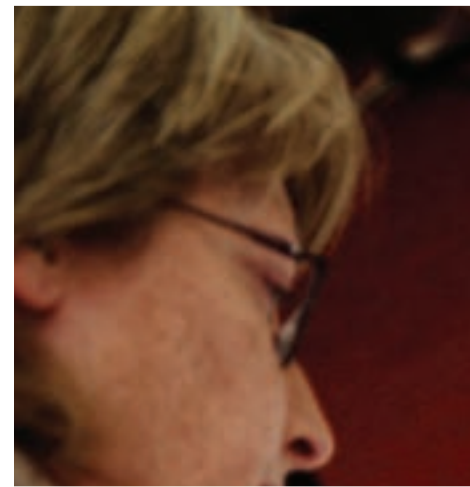
Education and Training Foundation portal with more than 7,000 resources, covering a broad range of topics and including guidance, effective practice, teaching materials, research and CPD materials. Includes what are now legacy resources, such as Move on or ReadWritePlus.
www.excellencegateway.org.uk/

MATHS4US

Maths4Us is a joint initiative between unionlearn, NIACE and the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) to raise awareness of the importance of maths. Promotes Maths Champions in workplaces.
maths4us.org

TED TALKS

TED talks are short discussions from experts on a range of subjects that you can access online via your computer, tablet, smartphone and smart TV.
www.ted.com/



UNIONLEARN USE-IT APP

A free online assessment tool for English, maths and IT.
www.unionlearn.org.uk/use-it

UNISON resources

DYSLEXIA: IN OUR OWN WORDS

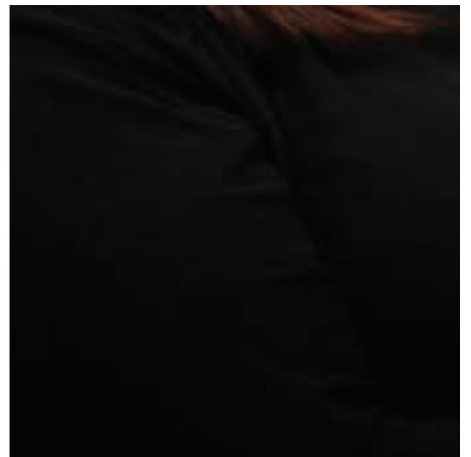
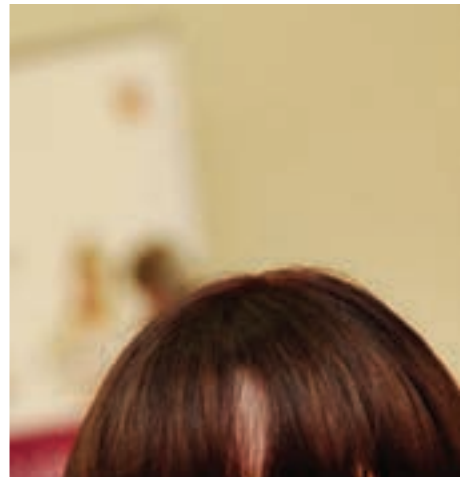
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