



NEWSLETTER

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The TUC Hub In The North West A Union Learning Fund Digital Divide Project

Because we need to reach people who don't get a fair shake when it comes to the sharing out of the training and education pie, we have to think of making sure the right message get across to them.

The government have set a target of universal access to the internet by 2005 arguing that a more co-ordinated approach to access is required and at the centre of that approach should be the idea of a citizen's right to access digital services, rights not only to connectivity but also to content.

The benefits of access both to individuals and the wider economy are now widely accepted, however, the gap between those at the higher and lower ends of socio-economic groups accessing the internet at home is quite striking and therefore the digital divide is still growing.

While the government's target of universal access by 2005 seems to be based on access to public terminals and not a requirement for access in every home, the advent of digital television and other devices will make universal access in the home a possibility within this decade. However, improving access to modern information and communication technologies including the Internet will not in itself ensure universal usage or even a wider understanding of the benefits to be gained from such access.

We in the TUC have developed Digital Divide Projects in the North West region through the Union Learning Fund. The projects are aimed at raising awareness of new technologies and the opportunities they bring for trade union members, their families and friends and to work with individual unions to develop a programme of learning opportunities aimed at ensuring members have the skills and confidence to use those new technologies.

Over 60% of all jobs and 90% of new jobs in the UK now require some sort of involvement with ICTs and this has led the governments ICT Strategy Unit to argue that knowledge of these new technologies now represents a new basic skill, taking its place alongside literacy and numeracy.

We from the TUC Learning Services would like to take this opportunity to thank Ufl for promoting and publishing the great work done through our affiliates unions Stockport College, Warrington Collegiate Institute, Knowsley Community Colleges the North West TUC Learning Services and the TUC Hub.

Dave Eva
North West TUC Learning Services
Co-ordinator

If you would like to know more about the Trade Union Sector please contact TUHub hubsupport@tuc.org.uk or visit www.learningservices.org.uk/tradeunionhub*



engage encourage entry e-learning equality e-skills for life





Mary leads the way in learning

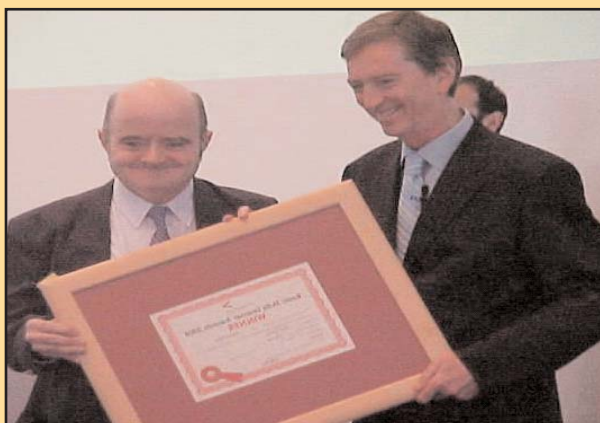
Mary Kennedy will be leading by example when she helps to run a new Learning Centre at Carlisle's biggest employer. For its only a few years since she returned to learning herself.

For the past 6 years Mary, 54, has been full-time USDAW co-ordinator at Cavaghan and Gray Ltd, the Northern Foods subsidiary which produces products such as potato topped pies, quiches, recipe dishes, crispbakes and party foods, mainly for Marks and Spencer.

Now she will be heavily involved with the Learning Centre at the company's Brunel House headquarters, showing the 1,600 employees just what can be achieved from engaging with the trade union agenda.

Mary left school with no qualifications and it was only 6 years ago, when working as a quality auditor and Shop Steward, that she went on a basic IT course. "I was useless at school," she says. "But now I've started learning you can't stop me."

Patrick Derby receives an award at Littlewoods Croal Mill Usdaw Union Learning Centre



Patrick Derby, 53 years old, has worked at Shaw Mill for the past 35 years in the Receiving Bay - unloading wagons.

Patrick had no formal qualification. Since leaving school Patrick had never thought about education at all. It was only when the centre had an open day that the Learning Representatives approached him and asked him whether he wanted to improve his Essential Skills.

He went along to see the tutor in the Essential Skill class, who gave him an assessment, and from then on he has attended the Littlewoods Croal Learning Centre every week without fail, even when he was on holiday he would come to the centre.

The company also gave him one hour a week paid time to attend the centre to do the course.

Patrick has a hearing impairment but did not let that stand in the way of his determination to achieve his course.

Change in Life

At work Patrick is now more confident in filling in his daily log sheet, which was difficult for him to do before. He also asks questions now, which he never did before.

Winning

He was on cloud nine when he was told about winning the award, he then went and told all his work colleagues. The site manager was passing in the staff restaurant and went up to him and congratulated him. It also gave the Learning Representatives a great buzz and made it worthwhile doing the job when they saw a positive result as with Patrick.

Plans for the Future

Patrick enjoys coming into our Learning Centre and when he completes the course he is currently doing at the moment he will no doubt ask what's next. He is hoping to take another exam next year.

At the Presentation awards at the Bridgewater Halls in Manchester, Patrick's sister said that Patrick had done very well with his learning and getting the award, and the family were very proud of what Paddy (Patrick) had done and she would like to thank on behalf of the family both Shaun and Hema and all the other Learning Representatives for supporting Patrick through his learning. He even got Gordon Burns' autograph!

Relevant Information:

Patrick on winning this award has opened a lot of people's eyes within the workplace. People who would before say that they were too old or too stupid to learn and some that had bad experiences at school are now coming to the centre for information and guidance and saying that Patrick has led the way. It just shows the guts and determination shown by Patrick. No matter if you are young, old, black white, or disabled, there are no barriers that can't be broken when it comes to learning.

You get out what you are prepared to put in, and it just shows with the success of Patrick Derby, a student that Littlewoods Croal NPC, Bolton are so proud of.

Shaun Bird - Union Learning Representative for Usdaw



“ People ask why I want to start learning at my age, I say why not ? ”

Now Mary has achieved an ICA diploma in IT and passed the European Computer “Driving Licence.” She has also done evening classes in numeracy and literacy, and hopes to be trained in managing the Learning Centre.

It was working to improve her own literacy and numeracy skills that gave her the idea for a Learning Centre at Cavaghan and Gray. “ I know there are a lot of people here who have skills needs, and I thought the USDAW led Learning Centre would be an excellent thing for both them and the company,” she says.

The firm provided a room at its Brunel House HQ, and has paid for 8 PCs for the learners. But **Skills for Life** and computer know-how will not be the only subjects on offer. Already the union has sent out a questionnaire asking staff what other subjects they might like to learn - and topics such as Spanish, digital camera operation and even flower arranging are under consideration.

“ People ask why I want to start learning at my age, “ Mary says. “ I say ‘Why not ?’ “.

Contact: Patricia Preston, Cavaghan and Gray, 01228 518200, learningcentre@cavaghan-and-gray.co.uk.
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TUC Learning Centre unveiled at Stockport College



Peter Roberts
Principle of Stockport College

Lord Pendry unveiled a brand new Trade Union learning centre at Stockport College on Friday 8th October.

The event began with speeches from Peter Roberts (Principal), Lord Pendry and Dave Eva (TUC NW Regional Coordinator).

The centre is named the Pauline Ortiz Trade Union Learning Centre and is aimed at raising awareness of new technologies and the opportunities they bring for trade union members, their families, friends and potential members, by providing the facilities to develop the skills and confidence needed.

The TUC North West is leading several projects across the North West through the Union Learning Fund, working towards meeting the government's targets for universal Internet access by 2005.

Dave Eva said: "With over 60% of all jobs and 90% of new jobs in the UK now requiring some involvement with I.T, it has never been more important to learn new technology skills. We believe every citizen should have a right to access digital services and we hope the new centre at Stockport College, together with our other projects, will bring us closer to overcoming the digital divide in the North West.

The development of the workforce is one of the government's key strategies for modernising Industry to be more competitive throughout the global market. It is vital that unions play a key role in this process both in developing their understanding and ability to guide that process and to ensure their members gain the right skills to develop both themselves and the organisation.

Union Learning Representatives, will be vital to the project because of their unique position in the workplace. Union Learning Reps are perfectly placed to encourage both their bosses and their colleagues to take learning at work seriously.

In the last twelve months, with their role now backed by the law, learning reps are going from strength to strength and bringing learning to those parts of the workforce who traditionally missed out.

The centre will deliver **learndirect** courses through the Trade Union Hub. This will ensure a blended learning approach that will combine tutor-led delivery with flexible on-line courses to ensure accessibility to workers working different shifts.



Lord Pendry

North West Skills for Life Calendar 2005

This calendar aims to give you a central information point on events both locally and in the region. If you would like your event publicised through this calendar, in the newsletter or on the website, please contact our Project Executive, Erica Evans on 01925 661869 or email eevans@ufi.com

You will also find further information on the links below to a variety of Skills for Life training and events.

www.readwriteplus.gov.uk

Events Calendar 2004 for Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit available in the North West newsletter. Follow the North West link.

www.lsc.gov.uk/sflqi/.default.html

Professional Development information can be obtained by looking at the LSC's Quality Initiative website.

www.nwmdp.org/train.htm

Skills for Life Professional Development training currently available in the North West

Event	Date	Venue	For more information....
Best Practice in Initial Assessment (2 day course)	11.01.05 08.02.05	Holiday Inn, Smallbrook, Birmingham Sheffield (TBC)	www.ento.co.uk/products/event_details.php?id=9
ESOL Citizenship Learning Materials Familiarisation Workshops 2005	21.01.05 31.01.05 17.02.05	Blackburn (C1187B) Liverpool (C1187C) Manchester (C1187A)	Application forms may be downloaded from the NIACE website www.niace.org.uk or by contacting: Jasbinder Kaur in the NIACE Conferences and Courses team email: jasbinder.kaur@niace.org.uk tel: 0116 2044265
Workplace Basic Skills Network Annual Conference: 'Embedding Skills for Life in the Workplace'	03/04.02.05	Chelsea Village, London	j.collins@lancaster.ac.uk or call: 01524 594282
Embedding and Integrating Literacy, Language and Numeracy	09 .02.05	Hilton Hotel Leeds	This is an event organised by NIACE Email: gurjit.kaur@niace.org.uk
Moving into Maths - Motivating Teachers and Learners	22.02.05	Tower Thistle Hotel Central London	Jenny Wedgbury , NRDC, Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL t 020 7612 6521 e j.wedgbury@ioe.ac.uk

Lancaster University and Staff Learning.. a successful partnership

The Staff Learning Centre at Lancaster University is the result of a successful partnership between the University and the four campus unions: AUT, Amicus, Unison and TGWU. For the first two years it was funded through the Union Learning Fund. At the end of the start up funding, the University agreed to fund it as part of a general staff development programme. It was the first learning centre of its kind to be opened at a University, and has been open for 2 ½ years. During that time, with the support of Union Learning Reps, it has become an invaluable part of Staff Development at the University, and has been used as an example that other Universities have followed. It was created to provide learning opportunities for all staff across the campus - particularly those groups who had traditionally felt excluded from training and development or access to computer facilities.

The centre offers training to all University employees - whether on an individual basis, or as a result of working with departments. Through the TU Hub, learndirect courses, one to one and group tutorials, drop-in workshops its library of multimedia learning materials and a qualified staff of IT trainers and Skills for Life tutors, the centre provides individually tailored support to staff from all sectors. It offers a variety of subjects, including IT Skills for Life, English for speakers of other languages and personal development skills. Every learner using the centre is given an Individual Learning Plan in order to ensure that each person maximises their learning opportunities. There is even free tea and coffee to help learners feel welcome and relaxed.

Staff and union reps at the University have had to work hard to promote a culture of learning - and despite the centre's relatively young age, it has become a valuable part of the institution. It has managed to reach non-traditional learners who might otherwise never have thought about going back to college. Staff at the centre say that it is extremely rewarding to help people develop not only their skills but also their self-esteem and confidence. The centre hopes, with the support of the unions and the University management, to provide this service for many years to come.

Copyright: TUC Learning services North West (<http://www.learningservices.org.uk/national/learning-3915-f0.cfm>)

Littlewoods/Usdaw Learning Centre – finding the best fit

Clothing distribution workers at the Littlewoods site in Shaw, near Oldham, are accessing a wide range of courses at their learning centre.



The retail industry has never developed a strong tradition of training and developing shopfloor staff, but things have begun to change since shopworkers' union Usdaw began promoting lifelong learning partnerships in the sector.

One of the first sites to benefit was the Littlewoods distribution centre at Shaw, near Oldham, where the company supplied and refurbished the premises and money from the government's Union Learning Fund covered the running costs.

Originally established to offer tutor-supported courses, the Learning Centre at Shaw became a self-supporting learndirect centre in 2002 and is run by two Union Learning Reps who act as the support workers.

A team of six Union Learning Representatives on the morning shift and two on the afternoon shift recruit their colleagues and enrol them on the **learndirect** courses (a further five ULRs are set to get trained to increase capacity).

Before the centre opened, the workers (around half of whom are women) were only trained in picking, packing and distributing garments: they had no access to any wider learning opportunities onsite, but they definitely had wider learning needs. A survey by the local Usdaw branch pinpointed a range of courses their members were keen on, with computers coming top of the list (smaller numbers identified sign language and management skills).

Set up in 2001 through the ULF with additional money from the company and the local Chamber of Commerce, the centre launched with a successful Lifelong Learning Awareness Day, which pulled in large numbers of workers trying out a range of taster sessions.

With the help of tutors from Hopwood Hall College, Rochdale, the centre had secured 96 enrolments on tutor-led courses in its first year.

The problem was that the shift system at the site precluded many union members from attending tutor-led courses at set times on a regular basis, which is why the centre decided to offer **learndirect** provision as well.

With the flexibility to drop in and study at times that suited them and even log on from home, learners began using the centre in significantly greater numbers, with a total of 392 enrolments (both on tutor-led and **learndirect** courses) out of a workforce of around 1,200. It was so successful that it was named Best Workplace Learning Centre by the Trade Union Hub.

When they enrol, learners are given some practice on the computers and then invited back in again a few days later to help them get started, once all the necessary paper work has been completed and they've received resources they need such as the Surf direct CD.

Nowadays, many learners are now studying on their own computers at home using online tutor support, which is reducing **learndirect** numbers in the centre itself.

In the longer term, there could be problems with sustaining demand, according to support worker Mandy Owen. "An outside college can enrol school leavers and adult returners from its local community, whereas our catchment area here remains the same year in, year out, other than a few new employees," she points out.

"The people that wanted to learn have now completed that learning and there is now a need to explore new avenues to entice them in." To that end, the centre is currently looking into plans to extend non-vocational learning opportunities to include courses such as car maintenance, Spanish and British Sign Language delivered by outside providers.

On the financial front, the centre aims to use a combination of **learndirect** revenues, company contributions and some ULF funding to safeguard its future (it will be part of a new Usdaw ULF project involving companies in home shopping, distribution and food manufacture in the North West).

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Don't forget the **Big E** website

The **Big E** website is a resource available for YOU as a main source of information and advice on all aspects of engaging learners.

And **REMEMBER** when you register on the site you will be given access to an exclusive set of documents to help you engage 'hard to reach' learners.

Your feedback on the content of this site is vital to its success! Please let us know what you think, by emailing your comments to info@bige.org.uk

www.bige.org.uk

CMS Learning Centre - hitting the learning headlines

The national white-collar branch of print union GPMU is helping members brush up their literacy and numeracy, and extend their computer skills through its Manchester learning centre.

Recruited in new media, data processing and print and paper company offices across the country, members of the CMS branch of print union GPMU tend to have relatively high qualifications in general, and good ICT skills in particular.

But knowing their way round the programmes they use at work can mean their computing repertoire is narrow and strictly job-related, and many CMS members have numeracy and literacy skills which have got rusty through under-use. It was to help their members brush up their **Skills for Life** and broaden their ICT knowledge and skills that the CMS branch opened its learning centre in its Manchester offices in 2002 with money from the government's Union Learning Fund.

But the centre doesn't only encourage the union's current and retired members to take advantage of its facilities: it also welcomes potential members and the community as a whole since it's a UK Online centre as well as a **learnirect** facility. The union's strategy is to encourage every CMS chapel (office branch) to elect a union learning representative (ULR), who can identify and support their members' learning needs in the workplace. The learning centre can then offer the ULRs support by helping them establish workplace learning venues and negotiate with employers about provision; conduct training needs analyses; and take on **learnirect** administration.

Learning centre staff deliver **learnirect** ICT courses onsite one day a week to 45 learners doing 79 courses, with the company giving CMS members (all white-collar staff) four hours in work's time which they have to match with four hours of their own (most put in more).

The centre is currently discussing with management and ULRs how to extend the scheme to include blue-collar workers - less straightforward because of the company's shift system and production requirements. The plan is to open learning centres on both sites, so long as the company helps out with connectivity costs and provides facility time for the eight ULRs to support their colleagues. The centre has also begun working towards securing the Matrix standard for information, advice and guidance, and has joined the local IAG Partnership.

The only drawback of housing the centre in the union's offices, sited in the heart of what used to be the print district of the city, is that it's not easily accessible for most CMS workplaces. But the centre is overcoming the problem with the help of a £34,000 grant from the Lap Top Initiative to establish a wireless outreach network. The money pays for 16 laptops to promote **learnirect** provision in a range of local workplaces, which the centre hopes will lead to the establishment of workplace learning venues which it can then support.

The CMS centre is positive about the support on offer from the Trade Union Hub (although it helped that the former centre manager had had ICT experience which helped him troubleshoot broadband problems). With a question-mark over the long-term sustainability of relying on **learnirect** funding alone, the centre is actively investigating additional ways of safeguarding its financial future, including supporting learning venues for other unions, including PCS and Usdaw.

For further information contact Clive Rimmer Email: crimmer@cmslearning.org.uk

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