

Access to learning in the workplace

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Why is access to learning an issue for trade unions?

- Learning is absolutely central to **union values**:

Pay and working conditions, health and safety, equalities, workplace morale, access to training, industrial relations

- Equality of opportunity
- Economic benefits
- Health benefits
- Social benefits

The '**unique position**' of trade unions to deliver essential skills:

- Trusted role
- Direct access to employers
- Access to funding
- Embedded in collective bargaining and negotiated agreements

Widening Access

Trade union learning and 'the right to access'

Widening participation

Two streams to our approach:

- peer to peer
- Collectivism (collective bargaining)

Peer to Peer

Union Learning Representative (ULR)

Assessing the needs of the individual (and collective)

Representation/advocacy role

On-going Learner support

Reducing complex barriers

- addressing inequality of opportunity
- negotiating with the employer to reduce cost/time barriers

Collective Bargaining

Bargaining for skills

Developing/changing policy

Fair Work

Workplace practices and culture equally important – effective use of policy

Collective bargaining can deliver something close to a 'right' to access

Impact of union led essential skills

20 years of union led essential skills learning

- 23,000+ directly funded learners
- Over 15,000 of these gaining qualifications in Essential Skills
- Around 92,000 working adults supported into learning
- 185 union led projects funded by Welsh Government
- Engaged with over 1,200 employers
- Establishing learning programmes directly in nearly 2,900 workplaces.



It's giving us a very good sense of team work -
working altogether.

Flexible funding models

Learner driven model

- prove it works/its needed
- Economies of scale
- Broker and negotiate

How do you keep the learner voice in any funding model?

- Unions are democratic
- Bottom up approach
- Business case

The balance of needs?

- Individual
- Employer
- Government
- Current and future economic
- Social

Questions

Is there anything we learn from the union model that could be adapted to the community learning and the wider adult learning sector?

1. In your groups, discuss how you could develop the two themes of the union access model outside of the workplace:

- Peer to peer/advocacy
- Collective bargaining

2. What are the important factors that exist in a workplace model that would need to be implemented to truly develop a 'right to access'?