

unionlearn

Strategic plan for
unionlearn 2006-2009

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Section one

Mission Statement

Our belief is that the life chances of all people can be transformed through access to learning, throughout their working lives.

Such learning opportunities must be available to the entire workforce, regardless of their employment status or educational background.

Everyone should have fair and equal treatment to develop his or her potential, free from all discrimination.

We believe that people's learning and skills can best be delivered collectively, with trade unions.

Our purpose is to help unions open up a wide range of learning opportunities for their members.

This will both promote their personal progression and develop their trade union role, strengthening workplace organisation.

We will guarantee that all provision is of a high standard and continuously improves in both its quality and diversity.

Our goal is to become the centre of excellence for facilitating high quality union-led learning.

We also aim to become the authoritative organisation for promoting innovation and research and disseminating best practice in such learning.

Our success will be determined by the sustainability of this activity through unions securing learning and skills at the heart of their organisation.

Section two

Introduction

This plan sets out the overarching strategic goals that unionlearn will help to achieve in its first three years of operation. It builds on TUC and union success, and assumes that all our work on learning and skills and trade union education will benefit from a new high profile, coherent framework and identity. It will not replace unions' own programmes, but add value to them and ensure that we achieve maximum impact as a result of all our activities.

Our goals focus on six key areas:

- Building union organisation and growth
- Promoting equality
- Building our contribution to learning and skills
- Improving quality
- Building our knowledge and intelligence base
- Raising our profile

Under each heading we set out a number of more specific goals, and in Section four we outline the vital underpinning work essential if we are to achieve them.

These goals are not set out in order of priority. Those in bold are things that unionlearn can control. The remainder are dependent to a greater or lesser extent on the contribution of other organisations, or our ability to influence them.

This Strategic Plan will be followed by an annual Operational Plan for 2006/7 which will make our objectives SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), and set out the activities we will carry out in order to move towards achieving them.

The Operational Plan will be produced by the new unionlearn senior team during May and June.

The Operational Plan will provide the framework for regional plans where it will be adapted to reflect priorities of regional unions and stakeholders.

From 2007/8 onwards, a revised Strategic Plan will be prepared for the April Board meeting, and the annual Operational Plan and regional plans will be available in May.

Section three

The next three years – our strategic goals

Within 3 years we aim to see the following achieved:

BUILDING UNION ORGANISATION AND GROWTH

- **We will be working closely with the Organising Academy and helping it to achieve its objectives through our range of services.**
- **We will be underpinning the TUC's strategic goals through the development and delivery of education programmes that reflect the needs of the movement.**
- **New opportunities to access education programmes online will have opened up, reaching and helping to draw into union activity workers who may be isolated from other members and reps.**
- **We will be supporting strategic management and leadership training for trade unions.**
- **We will have formulated continuing professional development (CPD) arrangements for trade union professionals to further enhance their standing.**
- **Programmes and networking opportunities will be in place to support and develop the work of union reps on, and involved with, SSCs, RDAs, RSPs, LSCs and other learning and skills bodies.**
- **There will be a body of evidence demonstrating the contribution of ULRs to union organisation and growth as a result of work commissioned with university research institutes.**
- **We will have developed briefings for union representatives, health and safety representatives, ULRs and union professionals on how to incorporate SfL in their roles.**
- **We will be playing an important part in European and international union developments, particularly in the training of representatives and officers**
- **All our promotional materials will reflect the contribution of union learning to organisation and growth.**

The next three years - our strategic goals

- Unions will associate unionlearn with union organisation and growth and use it to support their organising strategies
- Numbers attending high quality, publicly funded trade union education programmes for union workplace representatives and professionals will have continued to grow, supporting union organisation
- We will be on course for meeting our ULR targets for 2010
- Most unions will recognise the role of ULRs in rulebooks and other constitutional arrangements at branch and workplace level
- There will be more learning agreements and increased collective bargaining on training
- The network of unionlearn centres will be widely regarded by unions as supporting their organising strategies
- There will be effective support networks for all union representatives, including ULRs, with unionlearn and unions' own services complementing each other

PROMOTING EQUALITY

- **We will have developed, and be able to demonstrate, a clear understanding of equality issues in relation to learning.**
- **We will have systematically identified and disseminated best practice in equality in union-led learning, including understanding the need to underpin our practice with Skills for Life (SfL).**
- **Our reporting and monitoring processes will have enabled us to demonstrate how all services achieve equality objectives as set out in policy statements and have robust action plans in place to address weaknesses.**
- **We will have trained and developed equality reps using high quality learning materials.**
- **We will have stepped up the training offer for union professionals to upskill the movement in new and emerging areas of the equalities agenda.**
- **We will be delivering a high quality service across all regions, maximising the benefits of ICT, so that unions and union learners are not disadvantaged by where they live.**
- **We will be recognised for our support of the TUC's developing role in community cohesion and anti-racism.**
- **We will regularly be sharing our experience with and disseminating information to European and International trade union networks.**

- **We will have regularly taken up specific issues of inequality in learning and skills and implemented activity to address them e.g. occupational segregation in apprenticeships.**
- **All our promotional activities will reflect equality and diversity objectives.**
- **We will have benefited from taking the whole organisation approach to Skills for Life, which will have contributed to making our services and products accessible.**
- Wherever possible our courses, materials, resources and services will be accessible to all.
- Our tutor team will reflect the growing diversity in the communities they serve.
- The growing diversity in the workplace will be reflected in the profile of ULRs and union learners.
- We will be widely recognised on the basis of our track record for helping workers with few or no qualifications to improve their skills and get on at work.
- We will be the leading force arguing for equality measures in learning and skills along with the TUC, and this will be reflected in the contribution of union representatives on policy bodies.

BUILDING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO LEARNING AND SKILLS

- **We will have developed a well-established support framework of training, development, and support for the growing network of ULRs that complements unions' own services.**
- **We will have a union approach to meeting the learning needs of the increasing numbers of migrant workers in the workplace.**
- **We will be taking a lead role in assisting union members for whom English is a second or additional language to access ESOL programmes in order to encourage safe working practices and raise their achievement levels.**
- **We will have developed a trade union approach to, and demonstrated the added value of, the union role in Train to Gain and other subsequent programmes, particularly by encouraging take up by 'hard-to-reach' employees.**
- **We will have demonstrated the contribution that union learning and ULRs can make in promoting the take-up of learning at Level 2 – the key level for employability and the foundation on which higher level skills can be built.**
- **There will be a clearly understood role for ULRs in the Information Advice and**

The next three years - our strategic goals

Guidance framework and ULRs will be trained and supported in carrying it out.

- **We will have developed a union learning climbing frame structure with tools to help unions facilitate progression for learners.**
- **We will be providing a service to unions that will enable them to make best use of ICT in workplace learning, both in supporting learners and in facilitating communications between unions, learners, tutors and ULRs.**
- **We will have extended our network of provider partners into HE in order to support progression for union learners.**
- **We will continue to offer quality programmes at levels 1 to 3 for union reps and professionals and will map trade union education provision to appropriate skills frameworks.**
- **We will be systematically providing unions with timely and high quality briefings and support about policy development and implementation in order to develop effective union approaches.**
- **We will be playing a key role in organisation and planning for the Skills Olympics, Olympics and Paralympics, with particular reference to skills development and training of the current and potential workforce.**
- **We will be playing a leading part in any European or international union networks that share experience in learning and skills.**
- **We will have made a valued contribution to the debate about, and work towards, improving leadership and management skills across all parts of the economy.**
- The role of ULRs will be widely understood by employers and other learning and skills organisations.
- We will be able to demonstrate through increased agreements and collective bargaining that learning and skills is increasingly embedded in workplaces.
- We will have an established network of union-led learning centres in workplaces, union offices and unionlearn centres that offer a growing range of provision and services and are valued by unions.
- We will be acknowledged as a result of our track record as the organisation most able to target hard-to-reach learners, getting them into learning and achieving qualifications.
- We will be widely regarded as a centre of excellence for facilitating and supporting SfL learners.
- As a result of unionlearn expertise and know-how, we will have helped Skills for Life

to become more widely embedded into other learning programmes e.g. vocational and professional courses.

- We will be successfully managing ULF and other regional funds wherever we can establish them and have demonstrated year-on-year improving results.
- We will be providing tailored and negotiated support packages to assist unions with their ULF and regionally funded work, contributing to ongoing improvement in the quality and impact of union learning.
- Unions who have members with predominantly higher-level skills will have identified a successful role for ULRs, and increased members' access to training, including through CPD.
- We will have demonstrated union concern and commitment to training opportunities for young people through increased union involvement in and influence over apprenticeships.
- We will have influenced the provider network through our work assisting them to meet union learners' needs more effectively.
- Union representatives on public learning and skills bodies, particularly SSCs, will have a key influence on their strategic policies and be recognised as key partners by government and external organisations.
- Unions will be using opportunities arising from Sector Skills Agreements and Regional Skills Partnerships to influence and increase vocational, professional and technical training opportunities for their members by strengthening and increasing agreements with employers.
- We will be the organisation of choice for government and other agencies wishing to establish innovation and pilot activities at the workplace.

IMPROVING QUALITY

- **Robust quality improvement systems will be in place in all union learning centres, including the network of learndirect centres.**
- **We will have working relations with all appropriate standard setting bodies in order to influence their development and apply standards appropriately to unionlearn services.**
- **We will embed SfL in all our work on standards and kitemarks.**
- **Clear standards for all aspects of unionlearn delivery of services will be in place and fit for purpose.**
- **Innovation and good practice arising from ULF and other programmes and projects will be captured and mainstreamed in order to raise quality generally.**

The next three years - our strategic goals

- **Unionlearn and its activities will be able to demonstrate how ongoing internal and external evaluation has ensured continuous improvement.**
- **Working with the National Open College Network (NOCN), we will have maintained and extended the quality of trade union education programmes.**
- The unionlearn kitemark for programmes and projects that meet our good practice criteria will be widely understood and used by unions, and sought after by an increasing number of providers.
- The union role in providing IAG will be established and widely understood by unions and other stakeholders.
- An in-house accredited staff development programme for unionlearn staff will have been established and recognised by staff as helpful to them in their roles, and extended to union learning staff where requested and appropriate. This programme will identify and address training needs to enable staff to integrate SfL in their roles.
- We will have ongoing strengthened links with the QCA and have developed strategic and operational relationships with a range of awarding bodies increasing opportunities for union learners to acquire qualifications and accreditation.

BUILDING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLIGENCE BASE

- **We will have developed knowledge about union professionals and their changing roles, through development of databases, and will use this information on a regular basis to communicate, market and deliver services to them, including those with representatives on sector skills councils.**
- **We will have effective management information systems, which help us to demonstrate the volume and impact of union learning.**
- **We will have collected information and disseminated good practice in union-led learning which has a Skills for Life element.**
- **We will be working with a range of prestigious HE and other research institutions from whom we will both commission research and evaluation programmes and receive ongoing intelligence and advice about learning and skills issues, including the deployment of skills within high performance workplaces, particularly where they impact on trade unions.**
- **We will be a source of information about research in good practice in social partnership arrangements on learning and skills in other countries.**
- **We will have worked closely with any consultants appointed by the DfES to ensure effective collaboration in any evaluation projects.**
- We will have piloted and evaluated the operation of collective learning funds as part

of the process of establishing a new financial framework and responsibility for funding learning.

- We will be carrying out annual surveys of ULRs , which will be widely recognised and publicised as a major source of information for unions and other stakeholders .
- We will regularly collect and disseminate relevant labour market information and best practice case studies and this service will be widely used and valued by unions.
- As a result of the ongoing rigorous evaluation programmes, we will be an authoritative voice on union learning and will disseminate our findings widely.

RAISING OUR PROFILE

- **We will have raised widespread awareness of the extent and potential for union-led learning amongst a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community.**
- **We will be providing a platform for both ULRs and union learners to advocate the value and success of union learning.**
- Unionlearn will be a well-known, high profile brand and an organisation known for its expertise, quality and professionalism.
- In conjunction with the TUC, we will have achieved a much higher profile and achieved increasing media coverage for TUC learning and skills policy.
- Unionlearn and unions will be widely recognised as the voice of the employee in all aspects of learning and skills policy and activity.
- Trade unions will have taken on board the opportunities offered through the learning agenda and this will be reflected in journals, websites and other communications channels.
- We will have helped to raise demand amongst union members for learning, and understanding of, and interest in, the role of ULR.
- We will have an established network of union Skills for Life Advocates at a senior level in unions who champion the union role on a wide range of platforms.
- All unionlearn staff will feel involved in and committed to its development and, leading by example, it will be a 'learning organisation'.
- The unionlearn.org.uk website will be widely regarded as a key source of information and guidance to trade unions and other learning organisations.

Section four

Underpinning work

Unionlearn will have a distinct identity, working within the TUC policy framework, and contributing to it.

We will have an effective Board of the General Council, which gives strategic direction to unionlearn and is supported by two advisory groups.

A Partner's Advisory group of external experts from the world of learning and skills will act as 'critical friends' and advise on opportunities for development and influence.

A Trade Union Advisory group of national and regional officers and representatives of STUC, Wales TUC and NICICTU will give advice and feedback on how unionlearn is meeting the needs of unions.

In regions, there will be regular reports to the TUC Executive and Regional Councils, and the Regional Managers will have established arrangements that enable unions to influence unionlearn's priorities and services.

There will be regular meetings with the STUC, Wales TUC, NICICTU and with civil servants from the devolved administrations and the DfES to maximise synergy and collaboration in all areas of union learning.

The Senior Team of unionlearn, led by the Director will be effectively implementing the Strategic and Operational Plans, and regional teams led by the Regional Managers will be effectively implementing strategic and operational plans for their region.

Our financial and management frameworks and systems will enable unionlearn to implement its plans and to meet new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Section five

Measuring our success

The Operational Plan will set out how we will work toward these strategic goals during 2006/7. The goals will be accompanied by SMART outcomes identifying how they will be delivered, by whom, when, and the measurements for success.

Success measures will be quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative outputs will include targets set out in the Grant Agreement with the DfES and any other additional outputs attached to other contracts.

Our key targets for 2010 are:

- 22,000 ULRs trained
- 250,000 learners each year through the union route

Regional operational plans will combine their appropriate share of the above targets plus any additional outputs deriving from regional contracts.

Many success measures will be qualitative however, and we will draw on a variety of approaches, including internal quality assurance of products and services, performance against external standards e.g. matrix or the Common Inspection Framework, and external evaluation of unionlearn as a whole or elements of its activity.

Given the range and distribution of unionlearn activity, it will be essential that the framework for measuring success is clear and comprehensible, minimising the need for unnecessary bureaucracy and duplication.

Progress against the measures will be monitored by the Board.

Section six

Risk assessment

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Action to minimise risk
Reduction of resources to support delivery and activity, particularly through the provider network.	High/medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure unionlearn and unions understand how to get the most out of the changing funding framework e.g. smart use of ITQ, accessing Train to Gain and L3 pilots use the unionlearn brand to strengthen negotiating position ensure TUC policy staff aware of experience on ground in order to influence government policy work with unions to get most from SS agreements e.g. negotiating provision that SSCs prioritise for resources strengthen support to unions in their negotiations with providers and employers encourage collaboration and sharing of experience of projects to make learning affordable (partnerships with providers and employers) pilot collective funds as part of wider strategies emerging from the White Paper and Leitch Review foster positive relationships with existing and potential funders
Reduced union commitment	Low/medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish effective Board and regional arrangements so union priorities are reflected avoid entering into contracts that embed unhelpful competition with unions hold regular bi-lateral meetings with unions nationally and regionally to agree protocols and action plans and review them where possible, establish and manage regional funds as the 'model of choice' from which unions directly access resources
Failure to achieve outputs in grant agreement and other contracts	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> agree robust national and regional delivery plans put in place effective project management and monitoring so problems are flagged up at an early stage avoid entering into contracts with unachievable outcomes have an effective staff development plan in place to support individuals and teams in their work
Reduced stakeholder commitment	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish national Partners Advisory Group with 'critical friends' role establish channels for stakeholder input

Failure to reach ULR target, and increase activity/integration of ULRs	Medium	High	<p>regionally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree collaboration plan with key partners • ensure effective communications strategy <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a framework of training for ULRs to enable them to build effectiveness and respond to changes in learning and skills • focus services on removing barriers for ULRs • improve access to and availability of ULR training • improve virtual support and facilities for ULRs • prioritise working with unions to integrate ULRs into the union at work • implement an effective communication strategy aimed at increasing numbers and profile of ULRs.
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Section seven

Appendix 1

BUDGET

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Though unionlearn remains a department of the TUC, all its income and expenditure will go through a distinct unionlearn fund and appears separately in the TUC's accounts. As part of the TUC, it will report to Congress each year on the basis of the TUC financial year (January to December), therefore the first audited accounts will be presented in September 2007 covering the period April to December 2006. However, it will report to its external funders on the basis of their financial years, mainly April to March. Therefore, unionlearn's internal budgets are all based on an April to March financial year.

THREE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

The table below indicates the expected income and expenditure for the next 3 years. It incorporates the transfer of the Union Learning Fund from the LSC in 2007/08. The following assumptions have been made.

- Overall inflation uplift of 2% in 2006/07 and 2.2% in 2007/08.
- A TUC contribution of £1,136,000 in 2006/07 rising by 3% each year.
- Where particular funding streams do not continue, this is matched by a corresponding reduction in expenditure.
- Significant regional funding streams, though not guaranteed beyond 2006/07, will in practice continue.

The plan is for a small surplus in 2006/07 and 2007/08, though, due to the nature of grant agreements, this will depend on negotiations with funders to allow carry forward of income rather than repayment of any unspent grant.

In 2008/09 a deficit is unavoidable without an inflation uplift from funders to compensate for the cumulative impact of expected pay awards and other inflationary pressures.

Unionlearn will seek additional funding during this period where it is in line with our strategy

Budgetted Income and Expenditure for Unionlearn 2006/07 to 2008/09

Income by Funder				
Funder	Project	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
		£	£	£
DfES	Unionlearn Contract	1,500,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
DfES	Core ULF Support	1,900,000	1,900,000	1,900,000
DfES	e-brokerage fund	75,000	0	0
DfES	Skills for Life (ABSSU)	236,000	0	0
LSC	ULF - Hub	1,033,300	1,300,400	1,300,400
LSC	TU Education Support	150,000	250,000	250,000
LSC	Union Learning Fund	0	12,500,000	12,500,000
TUC	Central Contribution	1,136,000	1,170,100	1,205,200
Equal	High Road (Staff Costs & Software)	781,615	0	0
Equal	Academy Centres	250,000	0	0
Equal	High Road (Marketing & Events)	100,000	0	0
Equal	Action 3	200,000	0	0
Other	Top Sliced Funds	93,200	73,200	90,000
HEFCE	Aim Higher	341,500	0	0
Ufi Ltd	Management Fee, Learndirect Hub	95,300	78,000	78,000
East Midlands ESF	East Midlands Workplace Skills Needs	102,250	76,950	0
South West ESF	SW ESF LSC Co-finance	260,400	184,100	0
South West ESF	SW ESF Direct Bid	204,700	134,300	0
South West RDA	SW Learning Works for All Fund	219,875	310,850	459,625
North West RDA	NW RDA Support	98,150	98,150	98,150
North West LSC	NW LSC Core Funding	492,000	492,000	492,000
North West LSC	NW LSC Cumbria	104,850	104,850	104,850
Bolton/Bury Aim Higher	Greater Manchester Aim Higher	40,000	40,000	40,000
Northern RDA/LSCs	Northern Learning for All Fund	825,000	825,000	825,000
London LSC	Project Staff	165,000	165,000	165,000
Total Income		£10,404,140	£22,702,900	£22,508,225

Expenditure by Responsible Manager

Budget Manager			
Director	1,488,650	1,446,100	1,484,400
Union Development Manager	1,109,600	13,422,700	13,443,800
Business & Finance Manager	1,016,200	1,006,100	1,029,300
Communications & Marketing Manager	418,750	414,500	422,500
Research & Strategy Manager	57,050	58,700	60,400
Standards & Quality Manager	64,600	65,900	67,200
Trade Union Education Manager	527,000	632,100	745,900
Midlands Regional Manager	536,200	475,000	408,800
North Regional Manager	1,374,700	1,395,800	1,427,800
North West Regional Manager	1,239,500	1,262,700	1,288,300
SERTUC Regional Manager	894,650	915,800	937,900
South West Regional Manager	1,030,025	997,500	842,900
Yorkshire and Humber Regional Manager	438,250	448,550	458,960
OSD Based Staff	140,500	144,600	148,900
Total Expenditure	£10,335,675	£22,686,050	£22,767,060
Surplus/(Deficit)	£68,465	£16,850	-£258,835
Note - Breakdown of Expenditure			
Accommodation	511,200	517,300	499,500
General running costs	1,462,200	1,035,400	1,014,100
Payroll	5,913,400	5,875,400	5,780,500
Recharges from TUC	20,000	20,400	20,800
Staff related costs	1,055,250	1,029,900	979,100
Funding to Unions	598,075	13,035,050	13,195,700
Support to Colleges	775,550	1,172,600	1,277,560
Total	£10,335,675	£22,686,050	£22,767,260

Section eight

Appendix 2

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BOARD

The remit of the Board will be to oversee the strategic direction of the unionlearn and particularly to:

- Assist in establishing unionlearn as a high profile organisation that is the union voice on learning at work
- Maximise the potential of unionlearn to support union organisation and growth
- Consider and approve a 3 year strategic and financial plan and annual operational plans
- Approve budgets, receive quarterly and annual financial reports, and audit reports
- Monitor progress of unionlearn against its stated objectives and Key Performance Indicators
- Ensure that the activities of unionlearn reflect and demonstrate TUC policies for learning and skills and contribute expertise to policy development
- Ensure that unionlearn fully reflects the General Council's commitment to equality of opportunity
- Help to promote unionlearn and union work on learning with Government and other external stakeholders.

In order to reflect unionlearn's unique status as accountable both to the General Council and constituent unions, together with responsibility for handling public funding, it is proposed that the Board be elected from General Council members in such a way as to ensure representation of both large and specialist unions with measures to ensure a degree of gender balance. Representatives of the DfES and LSC would also attend as observers.

Nominations would be invited following Congress each year. All nominees would have to be members of the General Council.

- 2 members appointed by each union with over 500,000 members (one woman and one man)
- 1 member appointed by each unions with between 200,000 and 500,000 members
- 4 members elected from unions with less than 200,000 members of whom 2 will be

men and 2 will be women.

- Nominees must be members of the General Council but all unions with fewer than 200,000 will be entitled to vote, with votes being cast on the basis of the unions' affiliated membership.

The following will also be members of the Board.

- The President of the TUC.
- The General Secretary of the TUC (or senior member of TUC staff designated by the General Secretary to act on his behalf.)
- The Director of unionlearn
- An observer from the DfES and the LSC

The Chair would be elected by Board members at the first meeting.

Nominations will be requested immediately after Congress and the election in the smaller unions section conducted in time for the result to be announced at the first full meeting of the General Council after Congress. The Board will meet quarterly and the minutes will be tabled for approval by the General Council.

Prior to October 2006 The Director will report to the Executive on unionlearn's progress.

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