

unionsnorth

The Magazine of the Northern TUC



TUC
**Apprenticeships
are Union Business**

Apprenticeships

Increasing Apprenticeships and
Reducing Youth Unemployment:
A role for Trade Unions

Real Unions and East Coast Trains

Giving learning a great platform
at the Education Station

Workplace Better Health Olympics

Regional workplaces get gold for
raising heart rates and money

Cumbria is set to get even greener

Union reps visit Lakes College
'green' training facility

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unionlearn
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The unsung heroes that make a real difference for workers across the nation

Trade union reps are the unsung heroes making a real difference for workers throughout the country every single day.

For most reps the daily experience can be one of suspicion and mistrust from management, members only speak to them when there's a problem, and people outside of the workplace generally have little knowledge of what union reps do!

Despite this:

■ Union reps solve problems for workers every day, from the smallest grievance at work to major strategic issues involving industrial reorganisation to public sector reform, tackling inequality and discrimination, protecting



workers' rights, negotiating flexible working and more.

■ Union Safety reps, literally, make the workplace twice as safe as it would be with the work that they do, identifying hazards, assessing risks and 'encouraging' employers to tackle safety issues. Safety reps save lives and save employers millions!

■ More Union Learning Reps each year are enabling workers who have had no training for generations to access learning, at work, supporting workers and negotiating with employers. ULRs are helping workers to reach

opportunities that were previously well beyond their reach, in this region, over 50% of workers supported by ULRs go on to do formal training and gain qualifications they never expected at all levels, from Skills for Life to higher level skills.

The Northern TUC union rep awards are a bi-ennial recognition of that contribution and a chance to highlight this invaluable difference that reps make to people at work every day. Nomination forms are available from our office, via email or in hard copy.

Please note that all nominations need to be signed off by the appropriate regional officer in your union.

Closing date for nominations is Friday 25 January 2013.



Increasing Apprenticeships and Reducing Youth Unemployment

Unionlearn with the Northern TUC recently organised a seminar ‘Increasing Apprenticeships and Reducing Unemployment: A role for Trade Unions’ which outlined current policy and practice around Apprenticeships and quality.

The Keynote Speaker at the event, which was held on Friday 23 November at the

Centre for Life in Newcastle, was David Miliband, MP for South Shields and Chair of ACEVO’s Commission on Youth Unemployment.

The event showcased good practice as well as highlighting the role trade unions can play in reducing unemployment, through negotiating and bargaining to increase the number of high quality apprenticeship opportunities employers create and encouraging employers to engage more with young people as they prepare for the world of work, through

creating more work experience opportunities.

Attendees at the event heard first-hand from people involved in the whole process, including Neil Burke and Katy Portrey from the Regional Youth Work Unit, representing young people seeking opportunities, Gillian Brown on behalf of the National Apprenticeship Service, with a good practice case study from Martin Hottass, UK Skills Partner at Siemens, who are exponents of the broad-based benefits of Apprenticeships.

Northern TUC Regional Secretary Kevin Rowan said:

“ Unionlearn with the Northern TUC has been particularly effective in the area of apprenticeships and enabling trade unions to play a positive role in both promoting apprenticeships and supporting apprentices in many workplaces.

“ A good transition from education to work is often key to a young person’s success and in many cases trade union reps act as mentors and support for young people at the start of their careers. As this event illustrates there have never been more advantages to employing Apprentices so it would be fantastic to see more than the current one in seven regional employers doing so. ”

David Miliband, MP for South Shields and Chair of ACEVO’s Commission on Youth Unemployment said:

“ The Government has said it wants to abolish long-term youth unemployment so they have a responsibility to put in place the policies to do so, not least because young people who hear that message from the Government will feel a double betrayal. Better apprenticeships are a crucial part of this deal. ”

Gillian Brown, Employer Account Manager for the National Apprenticeship Service said:

“ Apprenticeships continue to go from strength to strength with a record number of starts in the last academic year and an increase in growth

across all levels and sectors. This shows that Apprenticeships are helping young people get into work and gain a qualification as well as supporting employers to invest in improving the skills of their workforce.

“ These are positive steps in our ambition to see Apprenticeships provide more and higher level skills and qualifications in even more industries and sectors, but we are not complacent.

“ Hand in hand with this growth we will work with partners and employers to continue to raise quality standards across the Apprenticeship programme to meet our ambition for a new era for Apprenticeships. ”





Apprenticeships and Progression Case Study: Janice Taylor - RCN Sunderland

Like many young people, Janice Taylor didn't know what she wanted to do after she left school in 2008, but she knew she wanted to further her education and so went to College in Newcastle to study A-levels.

Whilst there she decided she wanted to become a midwife and gained a conditional offer for a Midwifery degree

at Northumbria University. Unfortunately, Janice didn't get the grades she hoped for which caused her to re-think her plans.

After finishing College and having worked part-time in a shop during her studies, Janice decided that full-time work was her goal and she got a temporary administrative post for four months. This experience encouraged Janice to develop herself and get more qualifications in this area. The Mill-Tech Apprenticeship Scheme offered both of

these opportunities and it was through them that she was asked to interview for a placement at the regional Royal College of Nursing. Janice jumped at the chance and began working at their Sunderland offices in May 2011 as a NVQ Business Admin Apprentice.

Thanks to her enthusiasm, commitment and ability, Janice has become an integral part of the team in the RCN office and has progressed to complete her Level 3 with the support and backing of both her Line Manager, Julie Lockhart and

NVQ Assessor, Haley Williams-Dixon. But working with nurses and learning about the Health Sector re-ignited her desire to become a Midwife and take her expanded knowledge and experience into a front-line role. So, her next step was completing a year-long Access to Health Sciences evening course from Sept 2011-June 2012. The RCN supported this by allowing her to work flexible hours and genuinely encouraged her towards her goal.

Line Manager and RCN Regional Service Manager, Julie Lockhart said,

“By employing Modern Apprentices we are offering individuals the opportunity to develop their personal skills and to make a definite choice around career prospects, whilst as an employer we benefit from being able to employ to utilise the skills that they already offer at the same time as developing any new ones required to undertake

administration within a regional office.

“On a personal note, Janice is a pleasure to work with and provides a valuable contribution to the northern region team of staff.”

Janice applied to Teesside University for their Midwifery degree earlier this year and due to the nature of the course had to attend an interview before being offered a place. She passed this with flying colours thanks to her on-the-job experience at RCN, making her aware of many of the issues Midwives/nurses face and was familiar with current issues and policies in the health sector.

Now, two years later than she'd originally planned, but with a whole host of new skills, knowledge and experience, a more mature (but still just as passionate) Janice feels ready to embark on what she calls her 'dream job'.

Janice said:

“ I was first attracted to the RCN because it was focussed on delivering high quality support and representation for front-line nurses, health care assistants and midwives. I felt it was a job where you could make a real difference to the quality of nurses' experience, and provide support and help to them when needed. That has been very rewarding. Even though administration is not linked to midwifery, I believe having this experience of working with the Royal College of Nursing will make me become a better midwife, and I have found that I have matured in this time as well as gaining a lot of skills I can take to my next career.”





Rail unions and East Coast Trains give learning a brilliant platform at Newcastle

Newcastle Central Station has certainly lived up to its name as The Education Station.

More than 40 staff were presented with certificates for their achievements in literacy, numeracy and IT by the Managing Director of East Coast Trains, Karen Boswell. Mick Whelan, Aslef General Secretary and Northern TUC Regional Secretary, Kevin Rowan also lent their support and attended the event.

Kevin Rowan, Northern TUC Regional Secretary said: **“Everyone here at East Coast, - management, unions and staff,**

have clearly embraced the importance (and benefits) of investing in learning – whether that be with time, money, resources or a combination of all three.

“They have achieved a great deal in such a short time through innovation, commitment and the infectious enthusiasm of the ULR team. It’s always very inspiring to be a part of events like this and a perfect illustration of what effective partnerships can accomplish.”

Karen Boswell, Managing Director of East Coast Trains said: **“It’s fantastic to see so many of our staff take up these opportunities to learn new skills and have fun through this learning**

partnership with the Unions. It’s a great pleasure to award certificates to everyone who has embraced the chance to further their education, and it is inspiring to see how enthusiastic everyone is about The Education Station.”

The photo above shows some of the East Coast learners who gained qualifications in ICT, literacy or numeracy; a number of whom achieved a qualification in all 3 subjects(!), with Karen Boswell. Local ULRs - Jon Healey (RMT) and Tony Paul (ASLEF) who were responsible for setting up the courses in partnership with Sunderland College are also featured, justifiably looking very proud.

Staff calendar raises more than £2000 for charity at East Coast Trains' Education Station

2013 looks set to be a fantastic year for The Education Station and East Coast Trains as the learning project calendar has raised more than £2000.00 for their chosen charity, The Railway Children.



Managing Director of East Coast Trains, Karen Boswell came to Newcastle Central Station to present the charity with a cheque for the monies raised at a ceremony on 5th December.

The calendar was put together on the back of a digital photography competition for staff at Newcastle's Central Station as part of Adult Learners Week earlier this year. It began life as an idea to let staff showcase some of their best photographs with a £50.00 Jessops voucher for the best one, then progressed to picking a top 13 and turning them into a calendar, including sorting the print and production.

They originally hoped to raise around £1500.00 for the charity, but the calendar

has been an unprecedented success, with all 538 copies selling out in only 5 days both to staff and the general public on-board their trains. One pair of on-board staff sold 103 between them in a single shift. The total amount raised now stands at £2029.68.

Karen was joined at the presentation event by Union Learning Reps and calendar organisers, Tony Paul (Aslef), Bob Howes (TSSA) and Jon Healey (RMT), Officials from each union and Suzanne Parsons who will be accepting the cheque on behalf of The Railway Children, as well as some of the staff whose pictures are featured in the calendar and those who did such a good job of selling them.

Karen Boswell, East Coast Trains Managing Director said: **"Our staff at Newcastle have done a fantastic job to create and quickly sell so many of these great calendars. They have put to good use the skills they have learned at the Education Station, and I am really proud of their efforts to raise more than £2,000 for our chosen charity Railway Children."**

Kevin Rowan, Northern TUC Regional Secretary said: **"The Education Station's calendar is a brilliant way to combine encouraging participation in learning, increasing awareness of the project, celebrating people's skills and making a practical contribution to a very worthwhile cause."**

"Once again, the Union Learning Reps at East Coast Trains have gone above and beyond and continue to demonstrate innovation in the pursuit of benefiting their colleagues, unions, employer and now even external organisations."

Tony Paul, lead Union Learning Rep and train driver for East Coast said: **"On behalf of myself, Bob, Calvin and Jon I'd like to thank everybody who has made the calendar such a huge success; the staff who submitted their fantastic photos and those who helped sell them."**

"Everyone's collective efforts have raised a fantastic amount for the charity and done The Education Station proud. Roll on next May and the 2014 calendar!"



South Tyneside Homes receives Quality Award for their exemplar work on apprenticeships

South Tyneside Homes are further cementing their excellent reputation for investing in the future.

They received the unionlearn Quality Award for the Delivery and Coordination of the Apprenticeship Programme prior to their Board meeting on Tuesday 11th September.

The unionlearn Quality Award is a kitemark awarded to organisations that are committed to working with trade unions and can demonstrate that unions and union learners are considered in the design, development and delivery of courses and programmes.

Beth Farhat, unionlearn Union Development Coordinator, presented the award to Chief Executive, Isobel Riley in front of the full Board and was joined by Quality Award assessors Dave Storrie, Senior Union Support Officer and Ian West, Regional Education Officer who passed them with flying colours. South Tyneside Homes also feature as a case study in the new national unionlearn Apprenticeships Toolkit.

Beth Farhat, unionlearn Development Coordinator said: **“I think this must have been one of the easiest jobs for our Assessors as everyone at South Tyneside Homes has been working together and delivering on this agenda for quite some time, and it is only right that they now have the official Quality**



Award in recognition of their progressive approach and successful partnership.

“The calibre of their Apprenticeship programme is reflected in the motivated, highly skilled workers it produces who go on to make an invaluable contribution to their employer and our region as a whole.”

Andy McIntosh, Union Rep on behalf of the four recognised trade unions (GMB, UCATT, Unison and Unite) at STH said: **“Working collaboratively with the employer on the apprenticeship framework is crucial in allowing the Trade Unions to engage with younger workers with a view to strengthening both the union movement and the employer’s organisation from an early age, while delivering a life skills opportunity for the individual.**

“Young workers are the lifeblood of any organisation, whether that is a Trade Union or an employer. This partnership working with employers ensures that the social and economic needs of all parties are met.

“In South Tyneside Homes, the Trade

Unions welcome having the opportunity to have access to this group of people from the start of their apprenticeship and right through their employment with the organisation, with the full support of the employer.”

Mark Whittle, Director of Investment for South Tyneside Homes said: **“We are delighted to receive this award from the TUC in recognition of the work we do with our apprentices. As a local employer and a forward thinking company we place great importance in employing and training apprentices.**

“Now in addition to employing young people to learn the traditional trades, we are also training some this year for Administration, I.T., Housing and Customer Service, and we know that their time with us will stand them in excellent stead for their future chosen careers, whether it be with us or other employers.

“We are recognised as one of the Top 100 Employers of Apprentices in the UK and hope to continue this culture of training and education for the people who are the resources of the future.”



Recognise Me, recognises the experience that contributes to your degree course!

Newcastle College's innovative approaches to delivering higher education can reduce both the time and costs involved in completing a degree course.

Last year the college launched its Recognition Service, 'Recognise Me', an online service aimed at both businesses and individuals which enables those who have a number of years work experience and/or qualifications to apply to turn that experience into higher education credits for a module on one of the many foundation degree courses available. A successful claim could mean exemption from certain parts of the course.

What makes this service so unique is that not only is it free and online, claims

are made before enrolling so applicants know if they are eligible for credits and how much this will reduce their fees.

These services offer a number of benefits for employers:

- **Flexible delivery**
- **Tailored training**
- **Less time to complete the course**
- **Reduced time away from the workplace**
- **Significantly lower costs**

The College is currently expanding its services for employers. Alongside the recognition service, the College has developed online learning materials and courses which can be delivered by part-time, face-to-face and distance learning or through a blend of these methods. Through work-based learning contracts, courses can be fully work-based and focused on employers'

specific needs, issues and / or projects. Any combination of these options can be used to count towards all, or part of, a qualification

The College is working with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on the Workforce Development project, exploring ways to support employers who wish to engage with higher education.

Newcastle College provides an extensive range of full time or part time foundation degrees, for further details see www.ncl-coll.ac.uk

For further details on the Recognition Service go to:

<http://recogniseme.ncl-coll.ac.uk/>

For more information on the project please contact Shelly Smith on: shelly.smith@ncl-coll.ac.uk



Workplace Better Health Olympics gets gold in fundraising for local charities

Three of the region's major workplaces became involved in the innovative North East-wide Better Health at Work Award to raise money for charity.

The three: BAE Systems Washington/Birtley; the Identity and Passport Service in County Durham and HMRC Waterview Park in Washington came together over the summer to

organise a Better Health Olympic Games, which saw them raise more than £2100.00 for local charities Tiny Lives and Macmillan Cancer.



With the support and expertise of unionlearn's dedicated Health and Wellbeing Lead, Tom Ross, the PCS and GMB Union Learning Reps and Health Advocates at the three employers formed

a working group to organise a range of sponsored challenges for members, colleagues and the community to participate in as part of their ongoing work to help improve health and wellbeing in their workplaces and beyond - whilst also raising money for good causes.

The 'Games' included an army assault course at Albemarle Barracks, a 5-a-side football tournament at Birtley Sports Complex and a 5km and 10km family

walk around Herrington Country Park. Both charities assisted with the administration of the events as well as attending them to offer support and resources, including t-shirts and badges.

The culmination of the Workplace Olympics came in December with the presentation of a £1000.00+ cheque each to representatives of both Macmillan and Tiny Lives. The cheques were presented by Health Advocates, and lead organisers Trevor Best of BAE Systems, Tracy Maddison and Bev Gale of HMRC and Jeff McGough and John McGrory from IPS.



Northern TUC Regional Secretary Kevin Rowan said:

“ Our region fares badly in most of the key health indicators but the TUC’s health and wellbeing work and support of the Better Health at Work Award is making significant progress in making workers and workplaces healthier, happier, and more productive. Everyone involved in the Better Health Olympics should definitely get a gold medal! ”

Trevor Best, GMB Union Learning Rep and Health Advocate at BAE Washington/Birtley said:

“ Organising the Games as part of our collective Better Health at Work Award campaigns was great fun and an opportunity too good to miss to do some fundraising alongside it. This way the benefits of our better health work campaign is felt not just in our respective workplaces but on an even wider basis. ”

Martin Ward Platt, Consultant Paediatrician and Chair of the Tiny Lives committee said:

“ Each year 700 premature or ill babies are born across the North East and North Cumbria requiring specialised and intensive care. Nursing and medical care on the ward demands particular skills and it’s essential that staff keep up to date with the latest advances to facilitate this kind of need. It is via charitable events such as this that we are able to help fund the cost of care treatments for premature and ill newborn babies and the families in the Special Care Baby Unit. We are extremely grateful to everyone for their support. ”



Julie Gallagher, a Macmillan volunteer and recipient of the cheque said:

“ It’s absolutely amazing to receive such a generous cheque. Charities like ours depend on people and projects like this one to keep us going. Cancer affects 1 in 3 people so is likely to touch almost everyone in a personal capacity, whether it be friend, family or colleague. With extra funding like this, we can help more of those people. ”





HMP Holme House has the KnowHow when it comes to community and learning

The KnowHow Learning Centre based at HMP Holme House has been in operation since 2006 and has been successful from the outset.

One of the main reasons for its continued success is the emphasis placed on the learning agenda by not only the ULRs, but the entire Branch.

Ian Carson is a POA ULR who runs the centre, he is also Branch Secretary; his colleague and staunch Centre supporter, Tony Stocks is Branch Chair. So, the profile of learning is now on the agenda at every branch meeting. This, combined with the ongoing positive impact of the Learning Centre and POA presence has really increased the profile of what



they're doing at KnowHow and learning in general.

Even six years on after the initiative began, there is still enormous demand for learning and the learning centre is used in excess of 250 hours per quarter, for a whole range of things, all facilitated and organised via the union route. They run accredited courses like formal IT qualifications, Management courses and are set to deliver a Customer Services and Environmental Studies course. They also have lots of learners doing Taster courses, and will run any non-accredited courses that are asked for if they can

secure 10 or more participants.

Previously they have run British Sign Language, Guitar, Spanish and Digital Photography to name but a few. All courses are advertised internally and out to external partners, too.

Their generosity of time and resource is one of the other main factors in the ongoing success at KnowHow, working with partners unions and other local employers. The centre hosted a Personal Protection course for staff at Tristar Homes and workers at nearby Tetleys GB are offered all courses. But, their reach is widening as Ian and the team are making excellent in-roads at opening up the Centre to the local community as well. Their first cohort of community learners came through 18 months ago

thanks to a BBC radio Cleveland campaign promoting ‘Silver Surfing’ where Ian had registered the KnowHow centre as a provider.

Now, with in-house and employee learning well-established, Ian’s time is

mainly being taken up by community work, both tutoring and working to widen the centre’s reach and forge new partnerships. He has already had meetings with the Royal British Legion and Age UK as well as spending several hours a week with George, a 73 year-

old community learner and his friend Celia who are learning IT skills. Having seen the difference it has made to all of his community learners, Ian is committed to getting the word out about the Learning Centre and what it can offer to as many people as possible.

Community Case Study: George Washington...Proving that age is no barrier to learning!

George is a 73 year-old retired Corus employee who was introduced to the KnowHow Learning centre through his neighbour, Tony Stocks! Tony explained to George what the centre did and outlined some of the courses on offer, in particular the IT ones. He was very unsure at first, as he thought he was too old, but decided he’d come along and see for himself.

Since taking that first step, George is a very regular visitor to the Centre, making the 12 mile round journey once or twice a week, spending hours at a time there as he works his way through the UK Online course.

He has now bought himself a computer to have at home and is over the moon that it has already paid for itself with the online savings he’s been able to make on things like home and car insurance and holidays. George’s favourite website is Travel Zoo and his proudest purchase is a discounted mini-break for himself and his wife, where he saved £71.00. Aside from the more formal aspects of IT training, Ian has also guided George in the wider uses, helping him set up online banking and an ebay account.

As Treasurer/Secretary of his son’s football team, George is also very

keen to learn how to use excel and spreadsheets so he can manage the accounts electronically and he and Ian have begun to work through this aspect of computing. He has also found the internet a brilliant tool to help all the family, finding and printing off new recipes for his wife who loves cooking.

George said, **“Coming to the Centre and learning computer skills has really helped improve my skills and encouraged me to do something I wouldn’t normally have done. It has so many benefits for everyone, I’ve saved money, time and it has improved my skills in other areas, too. I am now quicker at texting and don’t even have to look at the keypad anymore. I found some walking boots online so it saved me going shopping**

for hours and I don’t like shopping!

“Ian is a very good support and trouble-shooter if anything goes wrong. Even if I’m at home I can just ring him up anytime and he talks me through it, so I’m never too worried about it.”

George is now such a convert he has signed up another friend, Celia who is enjoying the course as much as he is, so much so that she has also convinced her husband to come along. So it seems that when it comes to engaging the community, it’s easy when you KnowHow!

For more information or to increase your KnowHow contact Ian Carson at: ian.carson@poalearning.co.uk



Case Study: Unionlearn with the Northern TUC Mental Health First Aid Training



SABIC is the Saudi Basic Industries Corporation, one of the world's leading manufacturers of chemicals, fertilisers, plastics and metals.

SABIC has a large base of operations at the old ICI site in Wilton, Redcar and another at North Tees, employing almost 700 staff from the region.

Thanks to excellent joint working between management, the union (Unite) and employees, SABIC boast an impeccable Safety Record, and have won countless accolades in recognition



of their outstanding practice in and around Industrial Health and Safety. So, to complement this they decided they'd like to replicate the success to include the more general 'health' aspect of health and safety for their employees and formalised this by signing up to the Better Health at Work Award this year.

As part of the Award they were assigned an NHS Workplace Lead to guide them

through the Bronze Level and signpost them to relevant points of support, information and training. One of the first referrals made was to Tom Ross, Unionlearn with the Northern TUC's Health and Wellbeing Lead, and also a qualified Mental Health First Aid trainer.

Tom then went on to engage with the Health and Wellbeing team, to set-up and deliver a comprehensive 2 day Mental Health First Aid course for 12 people at the Wilton Centre in May 2012. The participants on the course were a mixture of 7 Union Reps (Shop Stewards/Safety Reps) and a cross-section of 5 people from across the HR Department, including Teresa Hodgson,

Human Resource Manager, Tony Redshaw, Unite Shop Steward and Process Technician and Malcolm Guest, Safety Manager.

Malcolm Guest said: **“As the EHS Manager who has been asked to lead this on behalf of SABIC, its actually one of the most personally rewarding activities I have been involved in for quite a long time. It’s been great how all levels of our organisation have embraced this and I expect this to continue as we further develop Health and Wellbeing improvements into 2013.”**

Despite doing very different jobs, both Tony and Teresa gained a lot from the course and have applied it practically in their respective roles – along with their fellow trainees. They both feel that having a joint course between union and management added another dimension, giving both parties additional insight into how the other works and how they can work together better.

More specifically, the training has enabled them to identify potential warning signs of issues before they arise and can therefore intervene at an earlier stage and are better equipped to offer the person concerned appropriate support and advice.

Teresa said, **“The ability to identify a person’s stressors and offer coping strategies will help us in our HR capacity to mitigate problems from the outset. For instance, if someone gets anxious when there’s a sudden influx of work, then their Line Manager can be advised to stagger tasks or prepare the individual for a spike in workload in advance.**

“Having trusted Reps trained in Mental Health First Aid also allows employees

the opportunity to access support and advice before having to make it ‘official’ with HR, and this is often enough to provide a timely resolution and avoids them getting to the point where they feel unable to cope with work and having to go off sick. These are obviously the best results for everyone.”



The training has also gone a long way to remove the stigma around mental health issues and there is not only more awareness, but more accepting attitudes and understanding throughout the workforce.

More people are willing to approach their colleagues/Reps with any issues they have, confident that they’ll get active support, and by the same token, the Reps are more confident to approach those they may think are exhibiting any symptoms of disorders like stress and depression. Several people have been referred on to their GP for more specialist help.

Tony Redshaw **“Having been given the opportunity to be trained in Mental Health First Aid this has enabled the reps to develop a good understanding**

of mental health issues that can impact on an employees’ Mental Health and Wellbeing. Hopefully the knowledge and understanding of issues such as stress and anxiety will enable Reps to support and signpost employees to specialist care and support to meet their Mental Health needs in a quick and timely fashion.”

Due to the success of the first MHFA training, and as part of their ever-growing Health and Wellbeing programme, it looks as though Tom will be making a return visit to SABIC in 2013 to deliver the same joint training session for a second cohort of staff, including some of their 20 Health Advocates.

Daren Smith, SABIC’s UK EHSS Director: **“I am delighted with the progress that the Health and Wellbeing team has made this year and with the support SABIC has received from the NHS. The reinvigoration of our Health and Wellbeing programme is beneficial to all our employees and I have been particularly impressed with the level of engagement and enthusiasm I have seen from all levels of the organisation.**

“The variety of health and wellbeing topics and activities that are available is seemingly endless and I remain committed to promoting and supporting the work that the Health and Wellbeing team undertake at SABIC. The Mental Health at Work programme is just one of many instructive and informative initiatives that have wide ranging application for our teams both at work and outside of work. This is a truly encouraging start to a programme that has a long way to go and much to achieve.”

Union reps visit Energy Coast site to see how Cumbria is set to get even greener!

Britain's Energy Coast in partnership with Nuclear Management Partners is investing £4m in a new training centre at Lakes College, Lillyhall.

The facility will equip hundreds of people with the skills to deliver a wide variety of construction projects, in particular those related to the energy sector.

The resurgence of the nuclear sector and growth of the renewable energy sector, driven by the challenges of climate change and energy security, along with the need to upgrade National Grid's electricity transmission network, means that there will be significant job opportunities for the young people of West Cumbria - as long as they have the right skills. Ensuring local people can take advantage of these opportunities is the reason Britain's Energy Coast invested in this project.

Design work for the Centre started in January 2012 and construction work began in Spring 2012, which will take around 48 weeks to complete. The building incorporates the latest developments in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation and trainees will have hands-on experience of these technologies throughout the course of their studies.

Once running, the new centre is expected to take on 280 trainees a year.



Energy Coast are keen to engage with trade unions, in particular trade Union Learning Reps and recently invited the TUC to organise a site visit in November to witness the cutting edge training and development centre and also to discuss how ULRs and Unions might engage in promoting the centre through taster courses and awareness raising sessions.

The three hour visit consisted of a group of ten ULRs/Green Reps from various (PCS, Unison and GMB) unions and workplaces in Cumbria, including the Rural Payments Agency, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Sellafield and Lakes College. The group found the day extremely useful and are looking forward to the next visit in March/April 13 to see the finished article.

The centre is built with state of the art technologies using photovoltaic, solar, ground heat and Bio-mass boilers as part of their energy training/pledge.

These visits will help develop a positive and productive relationship with Energy Coast so that we can ensure trade unions are playing their full role in supporting this vital area of the local economy and providing good

opportunities for working people to enhance their skills and job opportunities.

Britain's Energy Coast

Britain's Energy Coast is a dynamic one-stop-shop for economic development, delivering business support and support for energy innovation; funding for physical and skills-related regeneration projects; and manage a high quality business property service which includes Westlakes Science & Technology Park, assets in Lillyhall and workspace in Workington and Blencathra near Keswick.

Their aim is to create an entrepreneurial environment where businesses can grow; helping to stimulate wealth and jobs that directly benefit the West Cumbrian community and aid Britain's response to the pressing challenges of climate change and energy security.

To get involved call: 01900 65656
Email: info@britainsenergycoast



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Kevin Rowan

Northern TUC Regional Secretary
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Get ready for a taste of things to come in 2013!

January - March 2013 Timetable

Drugs and Alcohol at Work

Financial Inclusion

Health Impacts of Working Older

Equality Update and Cultural Awareness



Over the coming weeks and months there will be a brand new programme of practical and informative briefings covering many topics that will help you in your role as a ULR or union rep.

Check our website and your inbox for a confirmed and comprehensive timetable in the near future.

www.unionlearn.org.uk/regions/northern

events

For information on events or issues please contact the Northern TUC

January 2013 Calendar

- 19 Regional Council
- 25 Closing date for Northern TUC Union Rep nominations

February 2013 Calendar

- 13 Supporting Learners Event

March 2013 Calendar

- 11 National Apprenticeship Week 11 to 15 March 2013

March 2013 Continued

- 28 TUC Office closes for Easter Break 12.00 noon to 9.00am 3 April

April 2013 Calendar

- 13 Biennial Regional Conference Assembly Rooms, Newcastle. 13-14 April
- 14 Union Learning Rep Award Presentation
- 23 World Book Night

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