



Organising and Learning

October 2011

Licence to Skill

Welcome to the PCS ULR 'Licence to Skill' e-newsletter. We look at the push on Digital Inclusion including the launch of the BBC's Go On: give an Hour. There are also a number of learning resources that ULRs will find useful and of course there are your learning event stories.

As usual, I'm currently looking for case studies from ULRs about apprenticeships and what support there is available for ULRs and apprentices'. I am also very interested in hearing about your involvement in the wider community. Please get in touch with me if you are involved with apprenticeships in your workplace or you've had experience in working together with other unions.

This newsletter is designed for PCS Learning Reps and those with an interest in the PCS learning agenda, the e-newsletter informs you about the successes of the Learning Reps, updates Learning Reps with relevant information and important dates for the diary.

The Newsletter is interactive with links to various websites that hopefully you will find useful. Grateful thanks everyone who sent in their articles for the newsletter. **Please note that PCS is not responsible for the contents of external websites.**

Send me your learning success stories and events for future newsletters. Liz Kearns, PCS National ULR Support Email: elizabeth@pcs.org.uk Tel: 0151 298 3913

Digital Inclusion: BBC's Go On: Give an hour



There is a close connection between people who are 'digitally excluded' and those who are socially and financially excluded. Digital inclusion has important implications for equality, and so is definitely a union issue. It also has implications for skills and workforce development.

On 30th October everyone gets an "extra hour" (the clocks go back!). The 30 million people who use the internet daily are being asked to 'give an hour' to help some of the 10 million who never use the internet to get online.

Give an Hour will be supported by BBC TV and radio from 24th October for two weeks. The key message to people will be to pledge to help get someone online. The BBC are launching Give an Hour at BBC North, at MediaCityUK, in Salford Quays on Monday 24th October from 12pm – 2pm. BBC staff will be giving their hour to learners from across the North, to inspire them to get online to access BBC content amongst much more.

The BBC are also looking to the local community to help out in this event: Organisers of the event were wondering if representatives from the PCS Union would like to take part, to show others how to get on-line.

They've identified several subject areas under which people might explore their passions online: gardening, family history, food, sport, health and finance: so if there's a particular area you're interested in please let them know.

Give an Hour will be an informal, fun event to inspire our older audiences to use the internet. The BBC will brief you fully, it won't be arduous, and you'll be given a checklist of websites to work from – both BBC and external sites, around the particular themes mentioned above. For example if you're interested in cookery, You'll be asked to search for recipes with your learner, use BBC Food, or look at some external sites around this area – all the time encouraging the person you're with to try to use the mouse and website for themselves.

If you're interested in taking part or for further information, please contact Richard Chadwick in BBC Learning at Richard.Chadwick@bbc.co.uk or by telephone on 07713 315 857.

The Give an Hour website will be live from **mid-October** at www.bbc.co.uk/giveanhour

Building on our success

The action we took on 30 June was the best supported strike in PCS history. By striking alongside education unions 750,000 public sector workers stood united against the government's attack on our pensions.

Our strike changed the debate on pensions and exposed the government's spin – highlighting that our pensions are affordable now and in the future.

The 30 June strike and the marches and rallies held in every major town and city across the country demonstrated the support we have amongst the public and other public sector workers.

Since then we have been campaigning against job cuts and the pay freeze. We continue to attend every meeting with the government on pensions. But so far ministers have refused to negotiate properly.

Strike on 30 November

At the TUC congress in September up to 20 unions representing 3 million public sector staff agreed to co-ordinate industrial action over pensions if the government will not compromise on its plans to make us work longer, pay more and receive less pension.

This unprecedented and historic agreement could lead to the biggest strike for a generation in protest at the government's unfair assault on the public sector.

The PCS NEC met on 29 September and agreed that we should continue to press Ministers for genuine negotiations and that we would participate in co-ordinated strike action on 30 November in pursuit of a fair agreement. This will be followed by an overtime ban from 1–31 December. Further information will be issued soon.

Pensions calculator

The PCS pensions calculator gives you an estimate of what the government's proposed pension changes will cost you: both between now and your retirement, and after you retire.

Go online to pcs.org.uk/pensions and see what you could lose if the government gets away with robbing your pension.

Bust the pensions myths

Public sector pensions are:

- ◆ Affordable and sustainable – the Hutton report, National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee of MPs all prove this
- ◆ Not gold-plated – the average public sector pension is no more generous than comparable schemes in the private sector
- ◆ Essential for combating pensioner poverty – the average PCS member's pension is worth £80 per week. When added to the basic state pension this puts you just £4 over the official government poverty line

For more information and resources go to: <http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/campaigns/30-november/index.cfm>

Check pcs.org.uk/n30 for campaign updates

Working in the Wider Community

HMRC Greater Manchester Branch were going through a period where it was becoming difficult to book a meeting room to run courses in Archer House.

Val Nightingale ULR, remembered that two of the other ULS had attended a Networking Event in Stockport and mentioned a Learning Centre connected to the Post Office.

After some research, Val managed to trace the CWU Learning Centre at Mowbray House, Stockport and the contact name of Graham Kingston. The Centre was within a 10 minute walk of Archer House and had the benefit of a conference room and separate IT training room.

Val emailed Graham to ask if it would be possible, for PCS ULRs and learners to make use of the CWU Learning Centre, depending on availability. As it happened, Val's email couldn't have been better timed, Graham mentioned that the CWU had been discussing working closer with other unions and he arranged for Val to meet with Ged Bretherton (Regional Project Worker) to discuss the needs of the PCS ULRs.

In October 2010, CWU held a Celebration of Learning Event for both CWU and PCS which meant that staff from Archer House were able to attend during lunchtime.

Since then PCS Reps have attended a one day CV Workshop at the learning centre and the ULRs have had two open days for people to go over who are interested in languages for taster sessions. We hope to be able to arrange set times when staff can go over and study in their own time.

PCS reps have since used the Centre to hold meetings and for research purposes. Val said, "We have built up a very good rapport between the two Unions and Graham, wherever possible opens the learning centre for the reps or members to use.

Learning at Work Day

PCS Commercial Sector's Shipley office (Fujitsu Northern, Yorkshire & Humberside Branch) held its inaugural Learning at Work Day on 24th August, 2011

ULR Paul Pullen, decided to focus the Learning at Work Day on education and community services available in the Bradford, Shipley and Keighly area, local to the majority of members and staff at Fujitsu.

Simon Wadsworth, from Shipley College attended with lots of good advice for potential learners. Similarly, Maria Mousawi from Bradford College provided copies of their latest Full-time and Part-time prospectuses. Other contributors included Thompsons Solicitors, Lighthouse Financial Advice, The Money Advice Service, Volunteer Centre Bradford, University of Bradford and Bradford Libraries, all providing plenty of information, promotional materials, and funding advice

Mark Ball from Unionlearn provided some useful information for reps and members alike concerning recent learning initiatives such as e-learning, online centres, funding, etc., and will prove an excellent contact for the branch.

One of the main attractions of the day proved to be the cake sale and raffle. Several reps and members took the time and effort to bake some rather tasty cakes as well as contributing raffle prizes. They raised £69 which was donated to the PCS hardship fund.

Overall, Fujitsu's first Learning at Work Day was well attended and also proved to be a great success as well as an ideal opportunity to promote PCS to members and non-members.

Digital Inclusion, Learning Resources. First Click

The BBC's First Click website uses the best of online content to help people take their first steps to getting online. First Click has a range of resources around hobbies and interests. They are designed to support recent beginners to grow in confidence and build on their new-found internet skills. Themed resources include exploring nature and wildlife, searching for recipe ideas and using the BBC Gardening website to find information on plants, etc.

If you'd like to run a First Click Beginners' Course, to register and order resources download the [PCS Spreadsheet](#) from our ULR webpage and send it DIRECT to firstclick@bbc.co.uk please ensure you put 'PCS Union Resources' in the subject line.

Once you complete the form, resources will be sent within 28 days. Each resource pack for every course registered will include:

For Course Leaders:

- ◆ A course Leader guide containing support and tips to plan, promote and run a First Click Beginners' Course
- ◆ Simple session plans on a range of topics
- ◆ Step by step instructions to support course leaders
- ◆ Flexible approach to accommodate all learning styles
- ◆ Top tips from experts - Digital Unite, Age UK
- ◆ Appointment cards, certificate
- ◆ and engaging marketing toolkit (posters, leaflets, pens, balloons, T-shirts, etc).

For Learners:

- ◆ 20 copies of the first Click Learner Guide (in the form of a durable lightweight, landscape easel binder, slightly bigger than A4) comprising of:
- ◆ Clear topic sections and highly graphical content that avoids jargon
- ◆ Step-by-step instructions that are easy to read and understand, with clear learning outcomes and checklists
- ◆ Links to BBC WebWise content to practice skills
- ◆ Space in the Learner Guide for personalised notes

Course materials are available to preview in the attached PDF document. You can also download and print extra versions of the resources here:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/connect/campaigns/firstclick_guides.shtml

Once you receive the hardcopy resources, you can give the learner guides away at your courses and request more for your next group of learners. Email the campaign team to request more hard copy resources with the completed PCS Union Spreadsheet at: firstclick@bbc.co.uk

Support after signing up to First Click includes downloadable resources and from the end of September there will be a number of new themed resources available for download from the website around: social media, food and cookery, sport and the Olympics, managing your money, gardening and nature and family history and genealogy – think Who Do You Think You Are! The First Click website is: www.bbc.co.uk/firstclick



Have your Say

The Future of Informal Adult Learning On-Line Consultation

Adult learning can mean lots of things to different people. We can learn in many different ways- with a teacher, on our own, in a self organised group or on-line. We know learning can improve and change our lives in many ways. We can learn a new skill, build our confidence, and develop our understanding of the world. Learning can help us deal with changes in the workplace and new situations in our lives.

The government is planning for the future of adult learning and they want your views and the views of your learners and for this they have started a consultation. The full version of the consultation can be found at <http://www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations> however, NIACE have put the main questions for ULRs, learners and members of the public into an easy to use online survey. This is really a great opportunity for you and your learners to have a say. Please complete the online survey and let NIACE know your views to inform the government plan. The survey closes on 31st October 2011. Go to: <http://www.niace.org.uk/current-work/the-iacl-review>

Apprenticeship Events



Rural Payments Agency, Workington

ULRs at the Rural Payments Agency Workington have been very busy arranging NVQs for their colleagues in various subjects including Customer Service, Team leading and Business Administration, along with a Business Improvement Course. All the courses were a great success and everyone who did them passed.

The ULRs on site have always been active and as a result, the staff at Workington have always been keen to improve their personal development and also in learning and development. The enthusiasm and commitment of the learners who take a part in union learning has proved exceptional.

At an awards ceremony for the staff, Pauline Brown, Head of Site, said "I was delighted to be asked to present the awards....I take great pride in the fact that Workington has such a great success rate. Well done to all involved"

The ULRs have another 25 people doing apprenticeships and are hoping to start a range of courses with the Open University from November which, if passed, will result in learners achieving Level 4 qualifications.

Department for Education, Runcorn

Richard Masters is the PCS union learning representative at the Department for Education in Runcorn, Cheshire, and through working closely with his employer, PCS, Unionlearn and Joint Learning Partnerships has managed to support 67 of his members to achieve NVQs in Contact Centre and Business Admin Apprenticeships at level 2 and 3 over the last 18 months. Richard also encouraged members of the management team to get involved with workplace learning and seven of them have now achieved NVQ level 3 Management qualifications.

We celebrated these achievements at an Awards Event, where candidates were given framed certificates to mark their achievements.

Richard said “the management team were very receptive to the joint working partnership and have been extremely supportive of the local trade union branch here at Runcorn” “We both share a joint aim of making the site a good place to work, with secure jobs and a place where our members can also develop relevant workplace qualifications”.

From a union perspective, this project helps to underpin the future of the Runcorn DFE site, against a background of cuts in the public sector. Our union branch believes that a constructive working partnership with the employer and helping our members gain relevant workplace qualifications can only benefit our members. It and help to show that the Runcorn DFE site is a model of positive industrial relations.



Dates for your Diaries

Over the next couple of months there are events and National campaigns that are going on that you or your members may be interested in and you could plan some learning events around. Below are just a few of the various campaigns that are taking place in June. The websites can provide you with ideas and resources for you if you want to promote awareness or hold themed events

October	–	Black History Month	November 2 nd	National Stress Awareness Day
October 7 th		National Poetry Day	November 11th	Armistice Day
October 10 th		World Mental Health Day		