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# EVALUATION OF THE WALES TUC LEARNING AND EDUCATION SERVICES 2010-2013

## Executive Summary

### 1. Research Aims and Objectives

1.1 ERS was awarded the contract to undertake an independent evaluation of the delivery of the Wales TUC Learning Services and Education Services Business Plan 2010-2013. The overarching aim of this evaluation is to review the process and impact of the work undertaken by Wales TUC with the funding they receive from the Welsh Government and to assess the effectiveness of Wales TUC in achieving their objective of engaging employers and employees in learning activity.

### 2. Methodology

2.1 Our evaluation involved a number of stages. This included:

- A detailed review of strategic and operational documentation;
- Analysis of programme data;
- Primary consultation with key stakeholders including 19 employers, 3 Welsh Government officials, 14 Wales TUC staff, and 32 union staff; and
- An online survey of Union Workplace Representatives (479 responded).

### **3. Key Findings**

- 3.1 Wales TUC contributed, via the union led learning model, to adult learning in Wales. By upskilling and supporting unions both with and without WULF programmes, Wales TUC contributed towards the fact that learning is central to the activities of trade unions in Wales.
- 3.2 The period 2010-13 was difficult for employers, employees and unions alike. The recession led to significant redundancies. However, Wales TUC was regarded as a constant in a changing environment. Unions largely understand the Wales TUC offer and appreciated where it could add value to their members in terms of the benefits of having trained Union Workplace Representatives.
- 3.3 Overall, on the basis of the research undertaken and the evidence available the investment in Union Workplace Representative learning has had a considerable benefit to workplaces, but particularly to the employees supported.
- 3.4 The research identified that almost 7 in 10 of all representatives believed that the training and support received during 2010-13 had a significant contribution on them being able to deliver their role. This view is reinforced by wider comments expressed by the representatives via the online survey and from wider stakeholders.
- 3.5 The evaluation found that the Welsh Government's Basic Skills contract post-2010 was regarded as much more effective than the previous contract. Wales TUC Learning Services knew the value of the product to employees and employers and were well positioned to capitalise on this programme as a lever to engage employers and employees..
- 3.6 The evidence indicates the ULR role has had significant impact on employees through improving levels of motivation, morale and personal development.
- 3.7 Overall 43 per cent of Union Workplace Representatives highlighted that they did not have sufficient facility time to undertake the role. Union Workforce Representatives have been trained to fulfil the role but are often limited by their employer as to how they can actually deliver the role.
- 3.8 There is strong support and appreciation of the Wales TUC role in assisting WULF projects and the WULF Project Managers. The response from the majority of unions interviewed to the support on offer was largely positive. Wales TUC offered both capacity i.e. to support unions do more in terms of delivering the WULF project and expertise i.e. advice and guidance that directly translated to more successful outcomes.

## 4. Recommendations

4.1 The evaluation provided a number of recommendations. In brief:

- The Welsh Government should continue to recognise Wales TUC as the organisation to deliver similar single contracts in the future.
- Consideration should be given to:
  - commissioning a single comprehensive programme of activity rather than separate silos of services
  - including the delivery of any essential skills delivery programme into any wider contracts to be delivered by Wales TUC.
  - the future support requirements for WULF projects that should be delivered by Wales TUC.
  - continuing the resource to widen support networks for trained ULRs.
  - reviewing how wider support networks for Green and Equality Representatives could be resourced and delivered.
  - the issues around facility time prior to commissioning future union learning programmes to ensure that good value for money is achieved.
- The Welsh Government and Wales TUC should consider the development of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework and make available the necessary resources to implement this. The resources required to deliver this needs to be commensurate with the scale and risk of the programme.
- Wales TUC should review the online survey data to consider where specific improvements could be made. Survey data could be used as a broad benchmark against which to compare future performance.



Authored by Chris Barlow with support from Matthew Hill

Full Research Report Available at: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/evaluation-wales-tuc-learning-education-services/?lang=en>

**Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government**

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