

**Research Report
No 282**

Evaluation of the Union Learning Fund in Year 3

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**Department for Education and Skills
An Evaluation of the Union Learning Fund in Year 3**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *This report sets out the findings from the national evaluation of the Union Learning Fund (ULF) in its third year of operation.*

Project profile

- *The scale of ULF activity has increased by a third in Year 3, with 95 projects funded to a total of £4.2m. 32 of the projects focus on addressing basic skills in the workplace;*
- *One in five projects of the 95 projects are in their first year of operation, half have been running in their second year and just under a third are more established projects that have been supported by the ULF for three years;*
- *There has not been a significant shift in the distribution of ULF activity by region with relative concentrations in London and the North West;*
- *Overall, projects in Year 3 have delivered a higher level of average output and there has been a significant increase in the number of employers involved, linkages to strategic partners such as National Training Organisations (NTOs) and linkages to workforce development initiatives including Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) and basic skills. 20% of projects in Year 3 worked directly with Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs).*

Sustainability

- *Additional leverage of funding from employers and unions has increased significantly with a total of £1.6m of funds levered into the ULF fund of £4.2m in Year 3. A greater number of projects have secured additional funding and this has been from a wider range of sources;*
- *Projects that have been running for three years have produced longer term business plans for project activities to demonstrate how activities will be sustained in the longer term. There is much more evidence of sustainability than in Years 1 and 2, however there remains a minority of projects that are not operating at this more strategic level;*

ULF Learners

- *Analysis of the profile of learners engaged in ULF learning activities suggests that unions have been very successful in engaging non-traditional learners including older males, people in minority ethnic groups and shift workers. An estimated four fifths of ULF learners have qualifications below NVQ level 2 or equivalent. Further work is planned to develop the monitoring framework against which data on learners can be consistently reported across projects.*

Outputs

- *Across all three years of ULF funding:*
 - almost 14,000 people have taken part in learning;
 - 3,250 learning representatives have been trained;
 - over 25,000 people have been reached by awareness raising activities;
 - nearly 6,000 ILAs opened¹;
 - almost 9,000 individuals have had their learning needs assessed.

Performance

- *In comparison to the previous two years, project performance against targets has improved significantly. Key difficulties remain in recruiting union learning representatives, due to problems in securing release. A smaller but concerning number of projects report difficulties in accessing learning provision at or near the workplace.*
- *A minority of projects have not achieved their targets, however, the more established projects are developing on a more strategic basis and have performed well. Although many of the barriers faced were due to external constraints, on-going support is needed to help ensure that the design and planning of projects are effective and seek to overcome barriers. Critically, there is a need to ensure that, having encouraged learners to take part in learning, suitable provision is available and expectations are met.*

¹ ILA 'opened' refers to an ILA account opened by individuals. The numbers reported by some projects will be an approximation of the number of ILAs opened, but cannot be truly reported as the exact number: ULF project workers help individuals access ILAs by getting application forms and advising on courses etc, but they do not open the account on behalf of the individual. Furthermore the extent to which an ILA has been used to pay for a course within the lifetime of the project will not be monitored by most projects, except in a small number of cases where the union is registered as an 'ILA provider'.

Capacity

- *Despite the operational issues faced, overall, there has been a significant increase in the extent to which lifelong learning for members has been integrated into many (40+) union agendas and capacity has developed through the development of skills and experience of key staff, the increase in union learning reps, the development mechanisms to support their work in the workplace and emerging union strategies on lifelong learning.*
- *Support and financial commitment from unions' own funds has increased dramatically in Year 3. There is still a long way to go, however, to ensure that the union learning agenda is effectively mainstreamed. There is an on-going need to ensure that policy and longer-term strategy are developed to build infrastructures and integrate lifelong learning with "mainstream" union activity and the work of partner organisations.*

Employer Feedback

- *The employer feedback that was received was very positive, however, it cannot be reported as representative of 'ULF' employers as a whole due to the small numbers in the survey.*
- *Employers report that the learning activities funded by the ULF have had a positive impact on both individuals and organisations. An unexpected benefit noted by employers has been the positive impact on industrial relations. Employers also identify that it is very unlikely that the benefits noted would have been achieved without the union led development that particularly helped to engage those who do not normally access learning at work.*
- *The feedback from employers and the lack of response also indicates that there is further scope to engage management in the union-led activities supported by the ULF to ensure the workforce benefits are maximised.*

Building Capacity

- *The consultation with unions identifies ten key elements to build union capacity to deliver lifelong learning:*
 - base strategies on the needs of members within a sector;
 - develop 'agents for change' that facilitate access to learning;
 - engage representatives, officers and committee members;

- develop union policy on lifelong learning;
- clarify roles and responsibilities across the union;
- strengthen and extend partnerships;
- develop structures and resources internally;
- share good practice to help build skills and expertise;
- communicate successes to others;
- develop the longer-term vision for lifelong learning in the union.

Conclusions

- *The ULF is at a turning point, where the period of trial and experiment is coming to a close and there is a need to shift the focus to develop a medium term strategic framework within which ULF activities can develop. There are three key aspects that need to form the focus of sustaining ULF activities. These include:*
 - the development of union 'learning strategies' that set the vision and objectives for learning by both unions and DfEE (now known as the Department for Education and Skills, DfES);
 - the development and extension of partnerships with colleges, LSCs, NTOs and employers;
 - the building of internal infrastructures that can sustain union learning strategies.

Recommendations

- *DfES sets the context for the ULF in the medium term by stating more explicitly its expectations of ways in which union-led lifelong learning will develop in the next five to ten years.*
- *DfES, the TUC and unions agree the definition of what constitutes 'capacity building' in union lifelong learning and that, within this definition, there is a focus on the impact of union learning in the workplace.*
- *Union bids to the ULF state more clearly how specific activities aim to achieve the union's own objectives for building capacity in lifelong learning. The criteria for bidding to the ULF explicitly requires bids to identify activities under one or more of the following four headings;*
 - Basic Skills activities;
 - Start up activities - new unions or innovation projects;

- Consolidation activities - roll out of activities developed in previous years;
 - Infrastructure development.
 - *Support for ULF projects continues to focus on advice and support for project managers, but also supports unions to develop bids in the following areas: detailed costings, targets and resource planning, partnership development and the development of wider strategies on learning.*
 - *Unions and TUC/TUCLS nationally and in the regions improve and co-ordinate communication strategies around ULF activities and achievements to raise awareness of union learning with potential partners including employers, employer networks, learning providers, funders and to other agencies promoting workforce development such as LSCs, Learning Partnerships, NTOs, RDAs and the SBSs.*
 - *DfES develops a strategy for communicating the outcomes and issues faced in the achievement of the ULF aims and objectives to other DfES teams and key agencies.*
 - *DfES, the LSC and the TUC develop guidance and promote good practice that encourages strategic and high level contact between unions and providers to help widen existing networks and partnerships and enhance the supply of workplace based provision for learners.*
 - *The DfES and TUC agree a programme of communication with non-participating unions with the aim of understanding if there are any barriers preventing participation in the ULF and that part of the ULF fund continues to remain available to unions wanting engage in the lifelong learning agenda for the first time.*
 - *In continuing to develop the support given to unions the TUC Learning Services:*
 - consults with unions about their priorities for developing skills and good practice and identifies preferred approaches for the delivery of this support
 - sets out an annual timetable for events; and
 - involves practitioners more in the sharing of good practice, for example, through establishing 'action learning sets'.
-

- *DfES and the LSC develop an action plan for 2001/2 to prepare for the handover of the ULF to the LSC. The plan should consider actions to improve communications with local LSCs and the wider range of agencies involved in workforce development including NTOs, RDAs, Learning Partnerships and the SBS and consider the potential for information or guidance given to colleges about their role in supporting ULF activities.*
- *The process of agreeing the monitoring and evaluation framework is completed and ULF projects are briefed with guidance on the information that they will be asked for from DfES, external evaluators and TUC Learning Services, setting out the key dates and the format in which this data will be requested. Finally, the national evaluation is refocused, within the context of this new framework, to measure the impact of the ULF on learners and employers.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was announced in 'The Learning Age' Consultation Paper published in February 1998. The Fund aims to promote innovative activity by trade unions to support the creation of a learning society.
- 1.2 The evaluation of Year 1 projects concluded that the ULF had been a success in its first year and in Year 2 activities had been further extended, but planning for sustainability was a key issue that needed addressing. This research report sets out the findings from the national evaluation of the ULF in its third year of operation.
- 1.3 At the time of writing there are a number of key changes taking place across the structures of organisations that deliver and manage government lifelong learning initiatives in England. This includes the establishment of the national and local LSCs (who will have responsibilities for developing strategies and resourcing local workforce development plans), a review of National Training Organisations (responsible for development sector workforce development plans) and the setting up of the Small Business Service. During 2001/2002, DfES will be working jointly with the National Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to prepare for the handing over of the responsibility for the ULF in 2002 to the LSC.
- 1.4 In addition, during 2000/2001, the TUC Learning Services (TUCLS) team has consolidated its structure of regional teams, formerly known as the TUC Bargaining for Skills teams, that had been mainly funded by Training and enterprise Councils (TECs).
- 1.5 These changes provide an opportunity and potential threat to ULF projects that seek to develop lifelong learning activities and integrate them with the work of other partners seeking to improve workforce skills and promote lifelong learning.

Evaluation Objectives

- 1.6 The objectives of the evaluation of the ULF have been to:
- *report progress and performance of projects;*
 - *assess whether project activities are sustainable over the longer term.*
 - *identify the longer term impacts of ULF activities on unions, such as changes in union management and policy on lifelong learning and the building of partnerships with other organisations;*
- 1.7 The evaluation has been developed to report on the following key issues:
- *what evidence is there of increased union capacity to support learning?*
 - *what evidence is there of increased take-up of learning by employers and employees?*
 - *what evidence is there that that new learning opportunities are available to all employees/union members and previously excluded groups?*
 - *to what extent have unions developed partnership arrangements with employers to encourage learning amongst the workforce?*
 - *what linkages are there to employer's take-up of other workforce learning/training initiatives?*
 - *what evidence is there of the longer term sustainability of project activities, including whether longer term commitment has been secured from other partners, such as employers and providers?*
 - *what are the implications for the TUC & DfES to ensure the benefits of ULF activities are maximised?*

Methodology

- 1.8 In Years 1 and 2, the evaluation focused mainly on reporting on the achievements of individual projects. In Year 3, the collection of data from projects has remained the core focus of activities, however there have been **three main changes in the focus** of the evaluation:
- *firstly, case study work has looked at the way in which unions have developed a number of ULF projects over the three years and how together, these have impacted upon lifelong learning within the union;*

- *secondly, the evaluation has gathered some limited feedback from employers, reporting on their motivations for involvement in ULF projects, the ways in which employers have been engaged and their view of impacts on the workforce;*
- *thirdly, projects have been asked to report data on the profile of learners supported by ULF projects.*

- 1.9 The evaluation also includes a special focus on the Basic Skills projects that have been funded by ULF.
- 1.10 York Consulting has **surveyed project managers** twice during the Year 3 evaluation in order to clarify details of project activities, to collect monitoring information on target and actual outcomes and obtain feedback on issues faced and lessons learned. **Appendix A** shows a full list of all ULF projects.
- 1.11 A total of 135 survey questionnaires were sent to projects, 95 to project managers of Year 3 projects and 40 to the project managers of activities funded in previous years but not in receipt of ULF funding in Year 3.
- 1.12 72 (75%) of the Year 3 projects and 22 (55%) of the Year 1 and 2 projects responded. The majority of Year 3 non-respondents were projects funded for two years until March 2002, or recently contracted with DfES and are due to complete in Autumn/Winter 2001.
- 1.13 In addition to the survey of project managers, **12 case studies** have been carried out. Four of the case studies have focused on individual projects. The other eight have focussed on a broader review of ULF activities across individual unions. The project level case studies covered projects of interest including one by a union taking part in the ULF for the first time and one project involved the provision of learning as part of a local regeneration programme. Case studies have involved interviews as appropriate with a range of individuals including project managers and key project workers, senior officials within the union, employers, partners and participants in learning programmes.

- 1.14 In the first survey of project managers, respondents were asked if they were willing to provide contact details of employers to take part in an employer survey. 40 projects indicated that they would be willing to provide contacts and all were asked to provide a random sample of five employer names. A total of 67 employer contacts were provided. Employers were surveyed using a postal questionnaire. 20 employers responded (30%) and all were followed up with telephone interviews to discuss their responses in further detail.

Report Structure

- 1.15 The report includes quantitative and qualitative findings. Sections 2 to 6 report the quantitative data in the following way:
- *Section 2 sets out the profile of projects;*
 - *Section 3 reports on the quantified achievements of projects and performance against objectives;*
 - *Section 4 reports on the barriers faced by projects in the implementation of activities;*
 - *Section 5 reports details on the profile of learners involved in ULF activities, and*
 - *Section 6 gives an overview of the basic skills projects and their performance.*
- 1.16 **Section 7** looks at the **wider impacts** of the ULF and reports on the types of activities that have been generated as a result of ULF funded activities and **Section 8** seeks to draw conclusions from these findings about the performance of the ULF projects in achieving overall objectives of the fund.
- 1.17 **Section 9** reports on **feedback from employers** that have participated in the ULF. **Sections 10** draws together the **good practice** identified by unions and from the case study research that underpins the development of union capacity to deliver the learning agenda. Finally, **Section 11** sets out **recommendations** for the future of the fund.

- 1.18 A number of annexes include further detail on the ULF projects, outputs achieved and contextual data: **Annex A** shows the Year 3 projects by union. **Annex B** shows the ULF funding received by unions over the three years of the fund. **Annex C** shows the detail of additional lifelong learning activities reported by unions as being generated by the ULF. **Annex D** gives data on the aggregate performance of ULF projects against targets over the three years. Finally, **Annex E** shows the aggregate union density by Government Office region in 1998.

2 PROJECT TYPE

Introduction

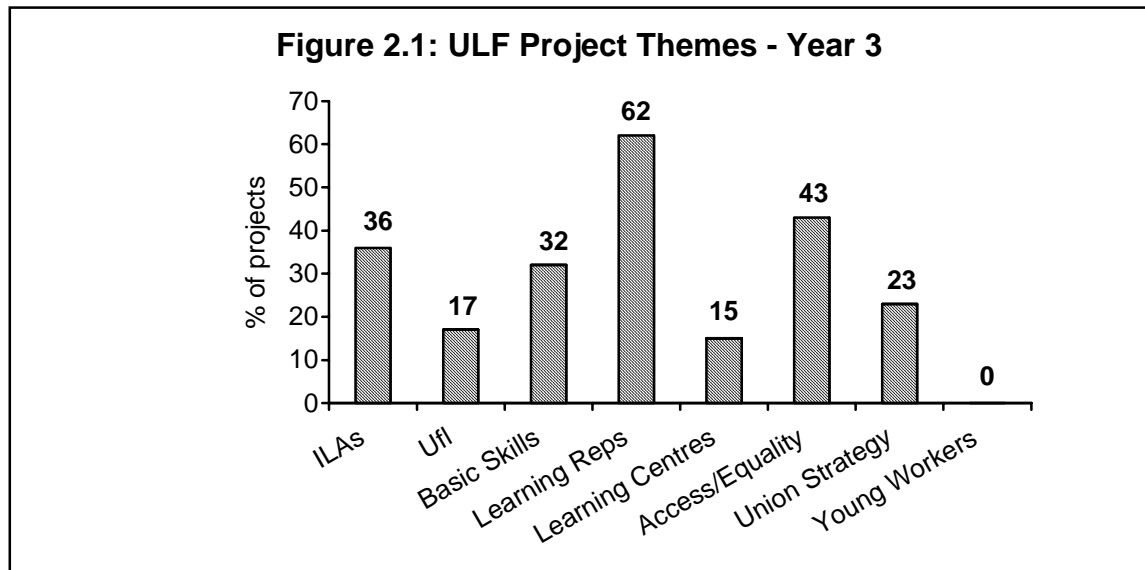
- 2.1 In total, 215 projects have been supported by the Union Learning Fund over the last three years. In this section, we seek to provide an outline of the 203 projects that come into scope of the evaluation. Projects outside the scope of the evaluation include a number of short-term basic skills projects funded in Year 2 and contracts that have supported the work of the ULF team at DfEE. This section gives an overview of the projects supported by the fund and the extent to which this has changed over the past three years. This section looks at the type of projects, the location of activities by region and the partnerships that support project delivery. In addition, this section reports on the distribution of ULF funds and the additional funds levered from other external sources to support activities.

Number of projects and unions

- 2.2 In the first Year of the ULF a total of £1.7m supported 44 projects run by 19 unions and five regional TUC Bargaining for Skills (BfS) teams. In Year 2, 64 projects were run by 33 unions and 4 BfS teams and were allocated a total of £2.7m of ULF funding.
- 2.3 In Year 3 of the ULF, £4.2m has supported 95 projects funded across 41 unions and 4 BfS teams. Over half of the Year 3 projects (53) continued to fund activities supported in the previous year. Eight unions ran three or more projects including UNISON (12 projects), GPMU (9 projects), AEEU (6 projects), GMB (6 projects) and MSF (5 projects). Nine unions participated in the ULF for the first time in Year 3.

Projects by Theme

- 2.4 The projects address a wide variety of different issues and deliver a complex set of activities, with many projects addressing more than one theme. **Figure 2.1** shows the number of projects addressing each of the main themes addressed across the ULF in Year 3. Table D.1 in Annex D shows this data for all three years.



- 2.5 The most common activities in Year 3 are the development of Union Learning Representatives (hereafter learning reps). This Year, learning rep training has included both the initial training programme, mainly the TUC's Front Line Advice and Guidance course and further training and development for learning reps including basic skills awareness seminars. Almost two thirds of projects include the training of union learning reps., compared to less than half of projects in Year 1.
- 2.6 Access and equality are also key themes and are explicitly addressed by almost half of all projects. There is much less focus in Year 3 on targeting younger workers, whereas young people were an area of particular priority in the initial stages of the ULF. In Year 4, a priority for the ULF will be age diversity, encouraging the provision of learning opportunities for workers of all ages. Other key points to note about the range of activities are:
- *almost one in four of the 'new' Year 3 projects include addressing basic skills. This includes a small number of 'mainstream projects' that are not part of the basic skills ring-fenced ULF funding programme;*
 - *a third of continuation projects in Year 3 include an element of developing union strategy on lifelong learning.*
- 2.7 In Year 1, the focus of projects was very much on one or two core themes. In Year 2, projects became more complex, addressing a much wider range of themes and activities. This trend has not continued in Year 3, as it appears that unions have established and consolidated activities rather than develop more complex, multi-theme projects.

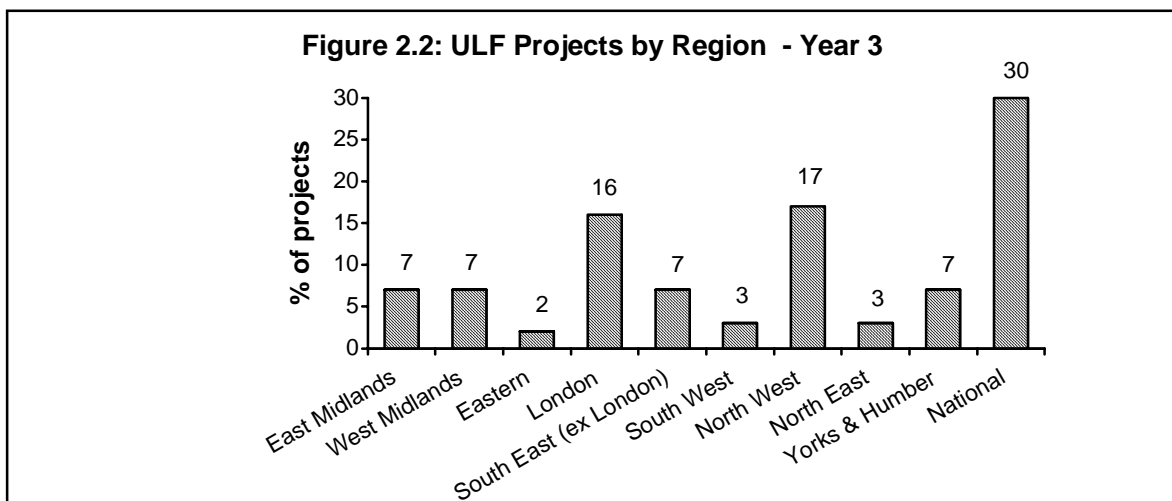
New and Continuation Projects

2.8 In Year 2 and 3 of the ULF, projects can be divided into 'new' and 'continuation' projects. 'New' projects describe those that were not funded in the previous year. Conversely 'continuation' projects are those that have been funded by the ULF in previous years. Table D.2 in annex D shows the number of 'new' and 'continuation' projects over the three years.

2.9 In Year 2, a third of projects were a continuation of Year 1 activities. In Year 3, 56% of projects were continuation projects. Those projects that had been funded across the three years were required by DfEE to produce a 'business plan' that outlined how the projects was to be developed in the longer term, with the expectation that there should be evidence of longer term planning for sustainability.

Projects by Region

2.10 **Figure 2.2** shows the number of projects operating in each region in Year 3. Table D.3 in Annex D shows this data over three years. In Year 3, just under a third of projects are defined as 'national'. The majority of these projects include the development of central resources such as on-line materials for learning reps. A smaller, but increasing number of projects are 'national' in their aim to develop lifelong learning infrastructure across the union or in key sectors nationally. The remaining projects are distributed throughout the regions, with relative concentrations in the North West and London.



- 2.11 In Year 1, almost half of all projects either had a national focus or were based in the North West. In Year 2, the distribution of project activity increased in some of the relatively under-represented regions. The relative concentration of trade union density in the regions may explain some of the difference in the profile of ULF activities by region.
- 2.12 **Annex E** shows the Department of Trade and Industry (1999) *Workplace Employee Relations Survey 1998*², which reports that the aggregate union density is highest in the North West at 45% of all employees in establishments. However, density in London is relatively lower than the national average of 34% at 27%. It was noted in the Year 1 ULF evaluation that the reason for relatively high levels of activity in London and the North West was likely to be associated with the relative strength of the TUC Bargaining for Skills team in those regions. The Year 2 ULF evaluation noted the potential to stimulate activity in regions where there had been relatively few projects. In Year 3, however, **activity remains relatively concentrated in the North West and London regions** and the overall distribution has not changed significantly.
- 2.13 The analysis of the geography of ULF activities finds that, in addition to the 30% of 'national' projects, a further 10% of projects are operating in more than one region. This is a new feature of ULF projects. In previous years a project's activities were most likely to be undertaken within a single area, whereas in Year 3, project activities are increasingly being managed across more than one region. ULF project managers also report working in more workplaces. Of those that have reported multi-site activity (30 projects), these report working across an average of six sites each.

Project Funding

- 2.14 Union Learning Fund projects in Year 3, as in previous Years, vary considerably in the amount of funding received. In Year 3, funding was available over two years and 9 projects were given funding for two years until March 2001. In addition, 18 projects contracted with DfEE during the year and are due to complete in Autumn/Winter 2001.

² Department of Trade and Industry (1999) *Workplace Employee Relations Survey 1998 Cross-section*.

2.15 Overall, the average funding per project has remained relatively stable at just over £40,000. **Annex B** shows the total ULF funding allocated to unions across Years 1 to 3. The larger unions (AEEU, GMB, GPMU, MSF, TGWU, and UNISON) received 45% of all ULF funding in Year 3. This proportion has increased from last year, where these unions were allocated 40% of the total funding.

Leverage

2.16 Additional funding leverage indicates the extent to which unions are integrating ULF with the work of other partners and have demonstrated their credibility and capacity to deliver to other funding sources.

2.17 **Table 2.1** shows that, in total, Year 3 projects report **leverage of an additional £1.64m of external funds**, to support and sustain ULF activities. This represents an additional 40% of the total of ULF funding in Year 3. In addition to these funds, projects note that there is significant additional support made in-kind from employers, unions and partners. Furthermore, some projects report that they are in negotiation with employers to secure funding, mainly around investment in learning centres and in several cases, projects did not wish to disclose the amount of employer funds involved, as this data seen was commercially sensitive.

2.18 There has been a significant increase in the amount of funding levered in from the unions, indicating that ULF activities are being seen as more mainstream activities by the union as a whole. **Table 2.2** shows that the amounts levered are a significant increase from previous years, both in terms of the proportion of projects leveraging in funding (just over one third) and an increase in the average amount levered in, £54,000.

Source	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Employers	£148,260	33%	£263,060	47%	£302,266	18%
TEC	£135,700	30%	-	-	£137,300	8%
ADAPT	£104,508	23%	£89,000	16%	£25,000	14%
ESF (non-adapt)	£40,847	9%	-	-	230,000	2%
SDF	-	-	£115,000	20%	101,000	6%
Colleges	-	-	-	-	132,000	8%
Other - Union	£24,036	5%	£94,500	17%	£711,801	44%
Total	£453,351		£561,560		£1,639,370.00	

Table 2.2: Trends in Leverage of others funding in to ULF projects			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Number of projects	16	13	30
Proportion of projects	36%	20%	32%
Average amount 'levered in'	£28,300	£43,200	£54,600

External Links

- 2.19 Unions involved in ULF work with a wide variety of partners in the delivery of projects and link to a range of workforce development initiatives. One of the key aspects to developing learning capacity for unions is the extent to which they develop effective partnerships with other organisations. Table D.4 in Annex D shows the analysis of project bid partners over the three years.
- 2.20 Analysis of the project partners finds that the total number of **colleges** mentioned in project bids as bid partners has not increased since last year, although, the total number of projects has increased by a third. The TUC ULF support team report that there has been a notable increase in the number of new colleges with whom unions have developed delivery partnerships, especially in the delivery of basic skills projects, where there has been considerable mutual benefit derived from joint working. Developing partnerships with new colleges enables unions to offer a wider range of provision to their members and colleges have benefited from not only accessing adult learners that may have not previously accessed further education (see Sections 5 and 6), but also from developing new working relationships with employers and enhancing the delivery of workplace provision.
- 2.21 The main change in the make-up of partnerships has been the decline in the number of **TEC** partners. This is perhaps not surprising given the closure of TECs in March 2001. Given the extent of funding levered in from TECs to support projects, the potential loss to the ULF activities of the decline in partnerships with TECs is apparent, with **sixteen projects directly involving TECs as active partners**. TEC funding has only been a significant proportion of total funding for three projects. However, the involvement of TECs in projects, on steering or research groups, has proved mutually beneficial for both the TEC and the ULF project/union, helping to network unions into wider partnerships and helping TECs their deliver their workforce development objectives.

- 2.22 There has also been an increase in the number of projects working in partnership with **NTOs**, demonstrating the extent to which the potential for links across the NTO network for joint working on workforce development agendas has been realised. A third of projects still have TUC links through one of the Bargaining for Skills teams and TUC Learning Service in the regions. Three projects have direct links with RDAs through funding support or via membership on project steering groups.
- 2.23 Finally, the analysis in Table D4 in Annex D shows that there has been a significant increase in the proportion of projects that involve unions working in partnership with **other unions**. One in five projects in Year 3 involve one or more unions.

Links to other Post-16 Initiatives

- 2.24 Projects seek to link to a wide variety of **other workforce development initiatives**. Integration with these initiatives provides the possibility of sustaining project activities both in terms of linking to opportunities for accessing 'mainstream' funding and linking learners to other learning routes and opportunities.
- 2.25 Table D5 in Annex D shows the number of projects reporting links to other workforce development initiatives. Overall, linkages have increased in Year 3 with the exception of the number of projects with direct links to Ufi/Learndirect. Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) remain the most common linkage, with 36 of the Year 3 projects facilitating learners' access to ILAs as part of their programme of activities.
- 2.26 The decline in the number of projects reporting links to Ufi/Learndirect is partly due to the experience of projects in Year 2 where almost a third of projects expected to be working directly with Learndirect hubs or **Learndirect** centres, in many cases before these were operational. The actual developments that have taken place this year have been substantive, including the development of a Learndirect sector hub by Manufacturing Science Finance and local access points by the Public and Commercial Services union.

Working with Employers

2.27 A key task in the development of the ULF projects has been the development of effective relationships with employers and to gradually increase the scale of projects, transferring models developed at one site to other sites or to new employers. In Year 3, projects have been asked to provide a variety of information relating to their relationships with employers involved in the projects, including:

- *the number of workplaces/sites covered by the project;*
- *the status of any learning agreements with employers.*

2.28 Around a third of ULF projects operate at **more than one workplace or site**, covering a total of 178 different sites. This represents an average of five sites per project, indicating that these projects are beginning to roll out their delivery models across multiple sites and across employers. Some observers assume that ULF activities occur in workplaces where positive partnerships already exist between unions and employers. In some projects, this is the case, however, increasingly projects report that union work on lifelong learning is **helping to develop or improve workplace partnership**. This is confirmed by employers (see Section 9). **Table 2.3** shows the status of agreements across projects.

Table 2.3: Status of Agreements with Employers – Year 3	
	Number of ULF Projects
Agreements in place with employers before ULF	12
Agreements have been made as a result of the work undertaken through ULF	26
No agreements are in place at present but the Union hopes to develop an agreement in the near future	14

2.29 Just over two thirds of projects (62 projects) operate in one or more workplaces and 80% of these ULF projects report that the learning activities are taking place either within the context of an existing partnership (13% of all projects), have generated agreements as a result of ULF activities (27% of all projects) or, it is hoped, will lead to an agreement in the near future (15%). This suggests that 20% of workplace based projects do not operate within the context of an agreement with employers on union-led learning activities.

3 OUTPUTS AND TARGETS ACHIEVED

Introduction

3.1 In this section, we examine the performance of the projects undertaken in Year 3 of the union learning fund, compare this performance to that of projects in Years 1 and 2 and report on the total achievements over the three years. This analysis is based on a quantitative analysis of key output indicators as shown in **Table 3.1**. This standard set of indicators covers the broad range of activities undertaken by ULF projects.

Table 3.1: ULF Output Measures	
1.	Number of people attending awareness/briefing sessions;
2.	Number of people having their learning needs surveyed/assessed ³ ;
3.	Numbers of learners starting courses: learners and learning reps;
4.	Number of learning representatives trained: initial training and further training;
5.	Number of Individual Learning Accounts: opened and used ⁴ ;
6.	Number of accredited courses developed ⁵ ;
7.	Number of other materials developed ⁶ ;
8.	Number of learning centres developed/enhanced;
9.	Number of people achieving a qualification: learners and learning reps;
10.	Number of employers involved.

3.2 However, it should be noted that the approach of using a standard set of output indicators hides the true variety of outputs achieved through ULF. In addition, the outputs achieved indicate the scale and type of activities undertaken, however, these indicators cannot be automatically used to measure the extent to which capacity has been built across the Union. **Section Ten** discusses union capacity building in further detail. Nonetheless, the analysis does cover the majority of quantitative outputs and provides the basis for assessment of performance in Year 3 of the ULF.

³ 'Number of people having their learning needs surveyed/assessed' includes those that have taken part in a general learning needs survey and those, such as basic skills learners, that have had a formal assessment of their learning need.

⁴ ILA 'opened' refers to an ILA account opened by individuals. The numbers reported by some projects will be an approximation of the number of ILAs opened, but cannot be truly reported as the exact number: ULF project workers help individuals access ILAs by getting application forms and advising on courses etc, but they do not open the account on behalf of the individual. Furthermore the extent to which an ILA has been used to pay for a course within the lifetime of the project will not be monitored by most projects, except in a small number of cases where the union is registered as an 'ILA provider'.

⁵ 'Number of accredited courses developed' refers, in a small number of cases, to new qualifications developed. In most instances, however, this measure refers to the development of existing courses, customised to contextualise materials for specific groups of learners.

⁶ Number of other materials developed refers to materials such as guidance materials, handbooks etc.

3.3 Some minor changes have been made to the way in which outputs are reported, including collecting further detail in some output measure categories. In addition, ULF project managers were asked to report for the first time on the following:

- *the profile of learners taking part in ULF activities (see Section Five);*
- *the additional activities that have begun or are planned as a result of the successes achieved by one or more projects (see Section Seven).*

Outputs achieved

3.4 **Table 3.2** shows a summary of the total outputs achieved by projects in Year 3, and the performance of all projects over the life of the ULF. It should be noted that the analysis only covers outputs achieved up to the 31st March 2001. A number of projects have run on into the 2001/2 financial next year and will achieve further outputs. These outputs will be reported in Year 4.

3.5 In summary the outputs achieved in Year 3 have been:

- *7,322 learners have taken part in learning, of whom 1,200 were new learning reps;*
- *over 1,600 training episodes for learning representatives including further training for existing learning reps in basic skills awareness;*
- *69 accredited courses have been developed or customised;*
- *3,700 ILAs opened.*

3.6 Across all three years of ULF funding:

- *almost 14,000 people have taken part in learning;*
- *3,250 learning reps have been trained;*
- *over 25,000 people have been reached by awareness raising activities;*
- *nearly 6,000 ILAs opened;*
- *almost 9,000 individuals have had their learning needs surveyed or formally assessed.*

Table 3.2: Outputs from ULF Projects – in Year 3 and across all years		
Outputs	Year 3	All ULF Projects
	No.	No.
Number of learners	7,322	13,954
Learners	6,122	n/a
Learning reps	1,200	n/a
Number attending awareness sessions	11,960	25,413
Number of learning representatives on training courses	1,640	3,256
Number achieving qualifications	4,559	5,996
Number of accredited courses developed	69	160
Number of other materials developed	69	164
Number of employers directly involved	1,110	2,292
Number of learning centers established/developed	40	66
Number of ILAs opened	3,713	6,605
ILAs used (where known)	324	n/a
Number of learning needs surveyed/assessed	5,162	8,928

3.7 There is a wide range of other outputs achieved by the ULF projects. The following are examples of the additional outputs reported by unions that did not fit within the standard set of outputs measures. These include:

- *Learning Bank – a database of training opportunities, and Learning Champions (AEEU);*
- *training for Union Officers and joint working with other unions (ASLEF);*
- *development of websites (BECTU);*
- *new stewards elected (GMB);*
- *a Black and Asian member networking group (IPMS);*
- *feasibility studies (NATFHE);*
- *Learndirect access points established (PCS);*
- *a database of professional facilitators and congress and conference events (RCN);*
- *newsletters for members (UCATT);*
- *local and national agreements on learning agreed with employers and secondment of internal project workers (USDAW).*

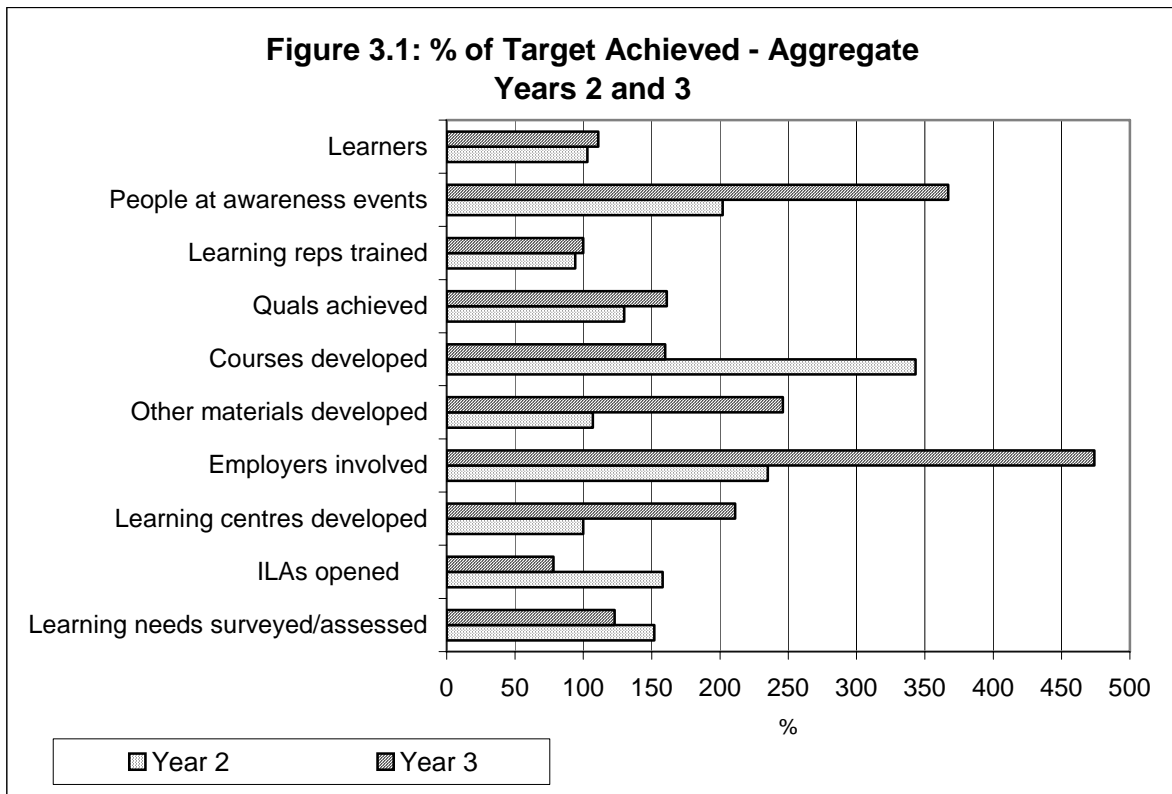
3.8 The range of output indicators demonstrate that ULF projects deliver both learning activities and activities that build infrastructure and capacity to support lifelong learning.

Target Setting

- 3.9 Whilst the achievement of targets is not the only objective of the Union Learning Fund, the ability of unions to plan, monitor and achieve outputs is a factor that helps demonstrate capacity to develop and deliver learning. TUC Learning Services have been working with unions to advise on appropriate targets for projects, however, a significant minority of projects (15%) did not set out quantifiable targets in their project bids to the ULF in Year 3. In further discussion with the projects, the evaluators have identified at least one quantitative target for all but 2 of the Year 3 projects, which had outputs that could not be categorised within the standard set of ULF output indicators. For the remaining projects, performance against one or more target indicator is used in the following analysis. The analysis reports on the outcomes achieved by the 31st March 2001 and only for those projects that were due to complete by this date.

Achievement of targets

- 3.10 **Figure 3.1** shows the extent to which aggregated targets (i.e. the sum of the expected target across all the projects that seek to achieve that output) have been achieved. In Year 3, targets have been met or exceeded their target against all outputs except the aggregate target for ILAs. Some targets have been exceeded by a considerable margin, including:
- *the number of employers involved was almost five times that originally forecast;*
 - *the number of people reached by awareness raising activities is almost four times the original target;*
 - *the number of 'other' materials developed is more than double the original number expected;*
 - *the number of learning centres developed or enhanced has been double that expected.*
- 3.11 In Year 3, performance across the indicators has improved from the Year 2 performance in the majority (seven out of the ten) of the standard indicators.

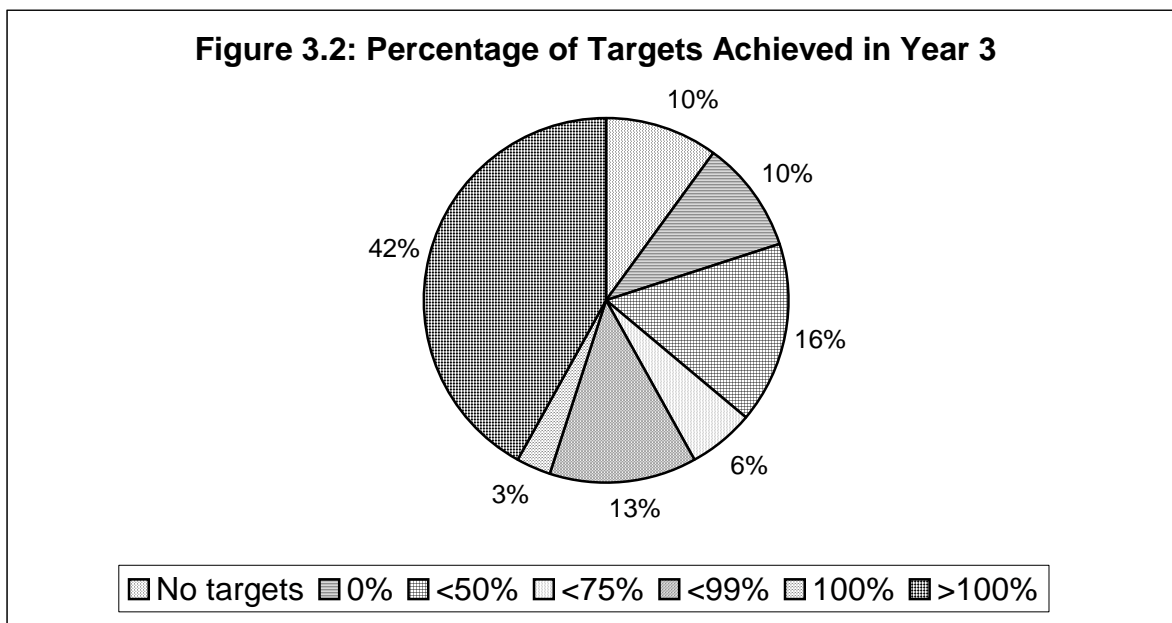


3.12 Figure 3.1 shows aggregated data across all projects. This figure masks the fact that some projects under achieved and others significantly exceeded targets (this is discussed below). However, overall, Year 3 projects show a marked improvement in the delivery of outputs against targets. This is seen to be due to both improved capacity to deliver and better project management skills, including more realistic target setting.

•

3.13 Comparing the performance of individual projects against targets is not straightforward as there is a range of projects with varied objectives, operating in different contexts. For example, some focus on the workplace; others are focused on developing infrastructures across the union. Given this variety, there is no single measure or set of measures that can give an indication of the type of project that is most likely to succeed, as the definition of success varies. However, **Figure 3.2** reports on the achievement of projects against their original targets.

3.14 At the end of March 2001, 45% of projects had achieved or exceeded all of their targets, while a further 13% had achieved at least 75% of their targets. Conversely, 10% had made no progress towards their targets. This shows a marked improvement on the similar analysis of performance in Year 2, when for example, only 25% achieved or exceeded all their expected targets.



Outputs per Project

3.15 Output per project⁷ provides an indicator of the extent to which capacity has developed through learning lessons from previous years and in delivering projects more efficiently. Table D.6 in Annex D shows the data on average outputs per project achieved over the three years.

3.16 In a number of key areas, the Year 3 projects have made substantial gains over previous years:

- *the number of learners per project has increased steadily and in Year 3 there is an average of 130 learners per project;*

⁷ The calculation of a particular output per project includes only projects that have outcomes against this measure.

- *there has been a substantial increase in the number of qualifications achieved per project. This suggests an improvement in support and focus on accessing accredited providers, and reflects the extent to which 'continuation' projects have supported learners engaged in previous projects through to accreditation;*
- *the number of employers directly involved in projects has also increased, which again suggests increased capacity to deliver larger scale projects and provides an indication of the extent to which projects developed in one workplace are being rolled-out into new sites.*

3.17 Despite the overall, very positive rate of improvement in performance, there are a number of areas where projects (overall) have not seen an improvement in performance on previous years. For example:

- *the number of ILAs per project opened through ULF has fallen;*
- *the number of people that have had their learning needs surveyed/assessed per project has also continued to fall;*
- *the number of learning reps trained per project has fallen.*
-

3.18 The barriers that projects have faced in achieving their objectives, and the reasons for this are discussed below. In reviewing the output data, the seemingly relatively poor performance in undertaking needs assessment and accessing ILAs is felt by project managers to be partly due to the changing nature of projects.

3.19 The fall in the number of ILAs per project is felt to be due to the fact that in Year 1 and 2 many projects focused specifically on promoting ILAs and helping members to access provision using them, whereas the use of ILAs in Year 3 is now more integral to broader based projects that include several themes or activities.

3.20 Similarly, in Year 1 and 2 many projects focused on assessing the demand for learning and surveying members' learning needs. In Years 2 and 3, 'continuation' projects have subsequently focused on the delivery of learning. Furthermore, where more formal learning needs assessments are taking place, for example, in the basic skills projects, the more intensive and expert resource required to do this means that the volumes achieved via this activity should not be directly compared with the volumes achieved through more general learning needs surveys.

- 3.21 The finding that projects have trained less union learning reps than anticipated does cause concern as the ULR is at the heart of much of the union learning agenda. Although the proportion of projects seeking to train and support ULRs has increased, the actual number of trained learning reps per project has fallen by nearly half since Year 1. This again may reflect a change in focus for projects as they try to build networks of support for their existing learning reps before training new ones. However, a number of projects have trained less ULRs than expected and several of these projects cite **difficulties in securing release** from employers for staff to attend learning rep training. A small number of projects have faced difficulties arranging training provision for learning reps. Below, we report on the barriers faced projects in achieving their objectives. A 'lack of support from employers' is reported as the major barrier across the ULF and within this gaining release from employers for both ULR training and learners is a major issue.
- 3.22 Activities have been underway to seek to reduce these barriers. This has included developing a module on working with employers to include in the core union learning rep training course, the Front Line Advice and Guidance (FLAG) programme. In addition to the core 5-day course, the programme will have satellite modules covering specific topics such as NVQs, ICT and basic skills that will enable trained ULRs to attend for one day sessions to develop further skills and knowledge on topics of relevant to them in their workplace and to the learners they seek to support.
- 3.23 In addition to these developments, however, there remains a need to ensure projects that train learning reps also develop effective strategies for seeking to minimise these potential barriers. Even if the TUC's proposals for the right to time-off for training for ULRs are realised, there will be a need to ensure that employers are supportive of the work ULRs, are convinced of the business benefits of release and that reps are effectively encouraged to take-up these rights.
- 3.24 It is expected that Year 3 'continuation' projects will perform relatively better than those projects run by unions that are relatively 'new' to the ULF. Table D.7 in Annex D shows the analysis of the outputs per project produced by new and continuation projects in Year 3 and indicates that the Year 3 'continuation' projects have on average been much more successful in delivering outputs than Year 2 projects or the 'new' Year 3 projects, indicating increased capacity to deliver. Across the majority of indicators, the continuation projects in Year 3 have produced more outcomes per project than new projects. The following changes are of particular note:

- *continuation projects supported over three times as many learners to achieve qualifications;*
- *many more employers are involved in continuation project activities.*

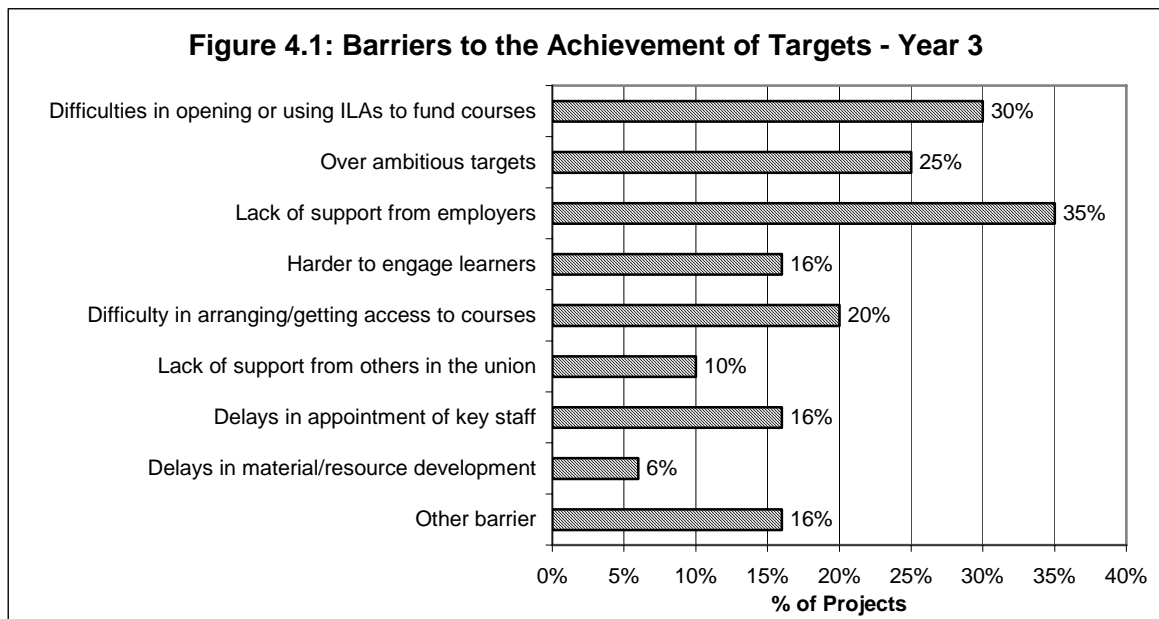
Costs per Output

- 3.25 Cost per output measures the efficiency of projects to deliver a single output⁸ and it is expected that cost per output would fall as capacity to deliver increases. Table D.8 in Annex D shows the analysis of cost per output achieved by the ULF projects in Years 1 to 3 and clearly demonstrates the significant fall in cost per unit across the key indicators, particularly in relation to learners enrolling, learners achieving qualifications and the number of employers directly involved in projects.
- 3.26 The only area in which cost per unit has increased since Year 1 is the take-up of ILAs, but, as discussed previously, this is probably at least in part due to difficulties experienced by some projects in accessing ILAs.
- 3.27 Overall this pattern suggests that unions are building on the groundwork undertaken in earlier funding rounds to roll-out larger scale projects using the knowledge and expertise they have gained.

⁸ The calculation of cost per output only includes projects that have a target or report outcomes against a specific measure. However, it does not attempt to apportion the project's funding across its targets.

4 BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING TARGETS

4.1 In Year 3, projects were asked to identify the key barriers to the achievement of project targets. **Figure 4.1** outlines the key barriers identified. Three quarters of projects identified at least one barrier.



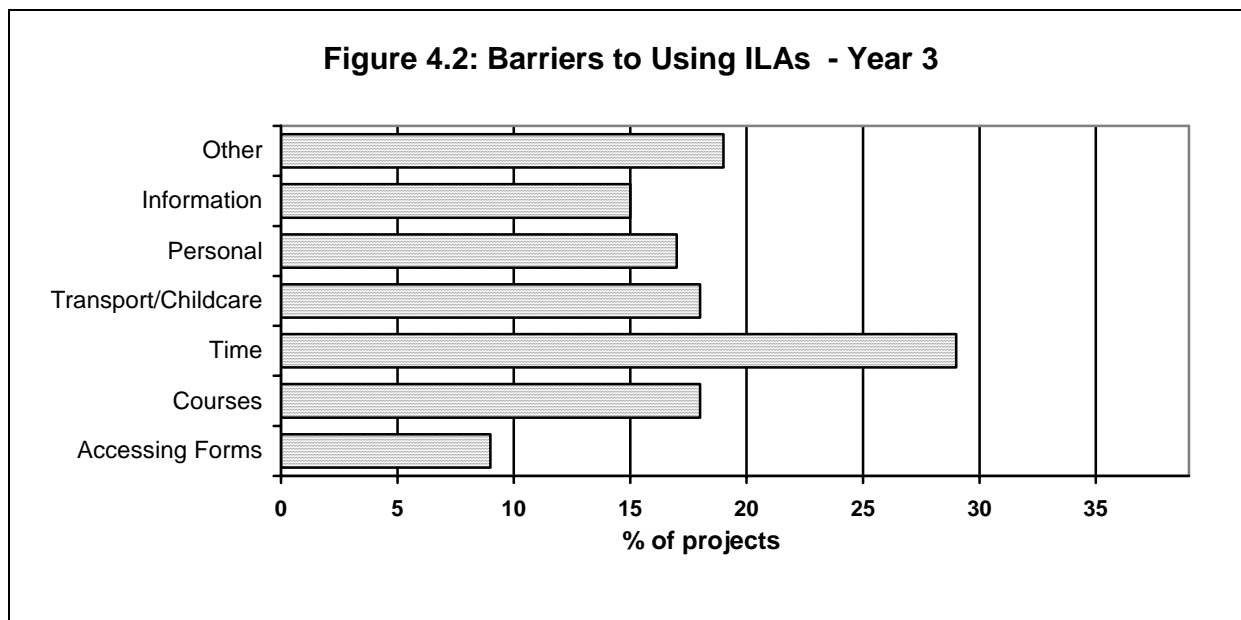
4.2 Almost four in ten projects feel that they faced barriers to achieving targets due to a lack of support from some employers. This includes difficulties faced even when national partnership or corporate learning strategies are in place where as one project manager notes:

- *“The principle of Lifelong Learning has been agreed at senior level and we are now getting forward agreement of this, however the operational implications of corporate policies have not filtered through to local operational managers”(ULF project manager).*

4.3 Overall, the issue of securing release for learners continues to be an issue for projects, indicating the continued need for projects to promote the business benefits of ULRs to employers. The other main barriers faced in project delivery have been:

- *difficulties in opening or using ILAs to fund a course;*
- *over ambitious original targets;*
- *difficulties in arranging/getting access to courses.*

4.4 The issues mentioned in the 'Other' category of barriers include problems created through the announcement of redundancies by firms and other unrelated industrial relations issues that have caused workplace projects to be put on hold. Projects were asked to identify any specific issues relating to use of ILAs. The responses are outlined in **Figure 4.2**.



4.5 Overall, just under half of the projects seeking to access ILAs for members reported no problems. Figure 4.1 shows that ULF Projects Managers are most likely to identify issues relating to courses and time as being the greatest barriers to using the ILA. Difficulties relating to courses refer to finding appropriate courses or relate to the learners confidence to progress to college based provision.

4.6 Some of the barriers initially faced by projects in accessing ILAs were due to the changes taking place during the year with the establishment of the national ILA framework, and some initial problems in accessing accounts through new mechanisms. Most of those issues have now been overcome. However, some targets for the number of ILAs were not met because, in the sequencing of project activities, ILA take-up will not be met until projects have become established and learners engaged. Particularly, over ambitious targets for ILAs were set for some basic skills projects, where, on reflection it was unrealistic to consider the use of an ILA to access provision as a progression route within the timescale of the project.

- 4.7 In addition, financial barriers, including the payment of the £25 contribution is still felt to present a barrier to low paid workers. The costs and access to transport and childcare are also felt to be more significant barriers for ULF learners than for ILA customers as a whole.
- 4.8 A number of projects have sought to address the problem of the financial contribution to ILAs through establishing a collective learning fund. The Year 3 MSF project in the North West is an example where this has been achieved through funding contributions from participating unions and the NHS Trust.

5 ULF LEARNERS

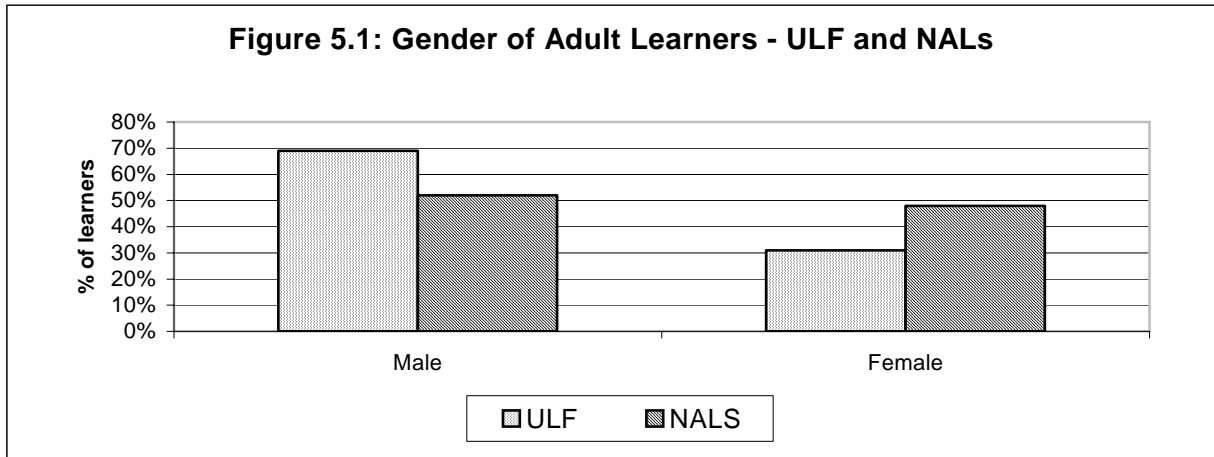
- 5.1 An additional area for investigation in the Year 3 evaluation has been the collection of data on the profile of the learners⁹ involved in the ULF projects. It is recognised that at present many projects do not have the systems in place to provide detailed information about learners, and requests for this information were not made until early in 2001, making it difficult for projects to collect data on learners retrospectively. Projects were asked to report on the following: gender, age, ethnicity, disability, occupation, employment status and previous learning and qualifications of learners.
- 5.2 There was very little data known on the proportion of learners with a disability. Overall, two thirds of projects were able to provide information about the characteristics of learners. During Year 3, TUC Learning Services has led development work with participating unions and DfEE to agree the framework of monitoring data that reports on union learning. This has included clarification of the definitions and methods of collection of data on the profiles of learners taking part in ULF activities. This work will be on-going in Year 4 of the ULF.
- 5.3 Where possible, comparisons are made here to similar data reported in the National Adult Learning Survey (DfEE, 1997). **No direct comparisons should be made between the two sets of data as the sampling and reporting mechanisms differ considerably between the two sources of data.** Therefore, the extent to which observed differences in the data from the two sources are due to factors such as the relative concentration of ULF activities in certain industry sectors or in certain geographical regions cannot be known. **However, NALS does provide interesting benchmark against which to report the profile of ULF learners.**

Gender

- 5.4 **Figure 5.1** shows the proportions of male and female ULF learners and the results by gender of the National Adult Learners Survey (NALS). Figure 5.1 shows that around 69% of ULF learners are male and 31% are female. This differs markedly from respondents to the National Adult Learners Survey, which reported a relatively even gender distribution of adult learners nationally.

⁹ This analysis includes learning reps.

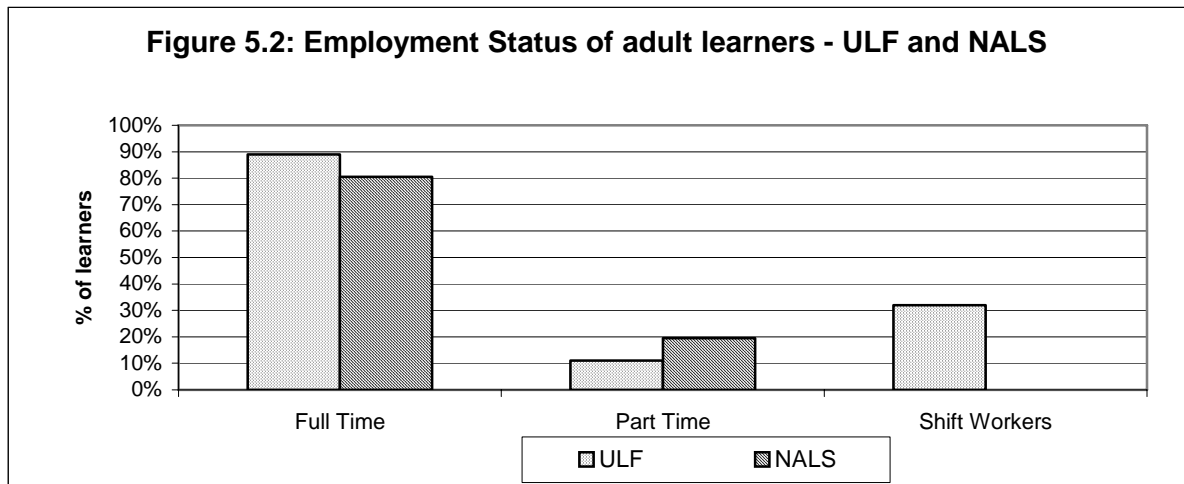
Figure 5.1: Gender of Adult Learners - ULF and NALS



Employment Status

5.5 **Figure 5.2** shows a similar comparison for the employment status of ULF learners. Figure 5.2 shows that the vast majority of learners involved in ULF are employed full-time (around 89%), which is higher than the proportion of learners in the National Adult Learners Survey. Furthermore, it should be noted that a significant minority of ULF learners work shifts, a group always perceived as marginalized by existing provision. An estimated 6,500 ULF learners in Year 3 were full-time employees, 775 worked part-time and just over 2,300 were shift workers.

Figure 5.2: Employment Status of adult learners - ULF and NALS



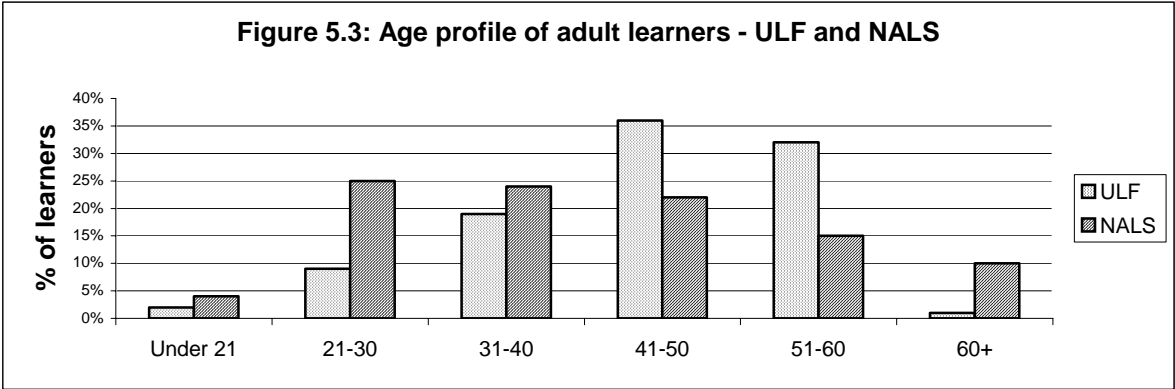
Ethnicity

5.6 **Table 5.1** shows the breakdown by minority ethnic group of ULF learners in Year 3 and that reported in the National Adult Learning Survey. Again there are marked differences between the make-up of ULF learners and those covered by the National Adult Learners Survey. Broadly, ULF has a relatively higher proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups.

	% ULF	Estimate for ULF	% of NALS
White	90%	6,600	95%
Black	2%	149	1%
Indian	4%	267	2%
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	2%	135	0%
Chinese	0%	20	0%
Other	2%	150	2%

Age

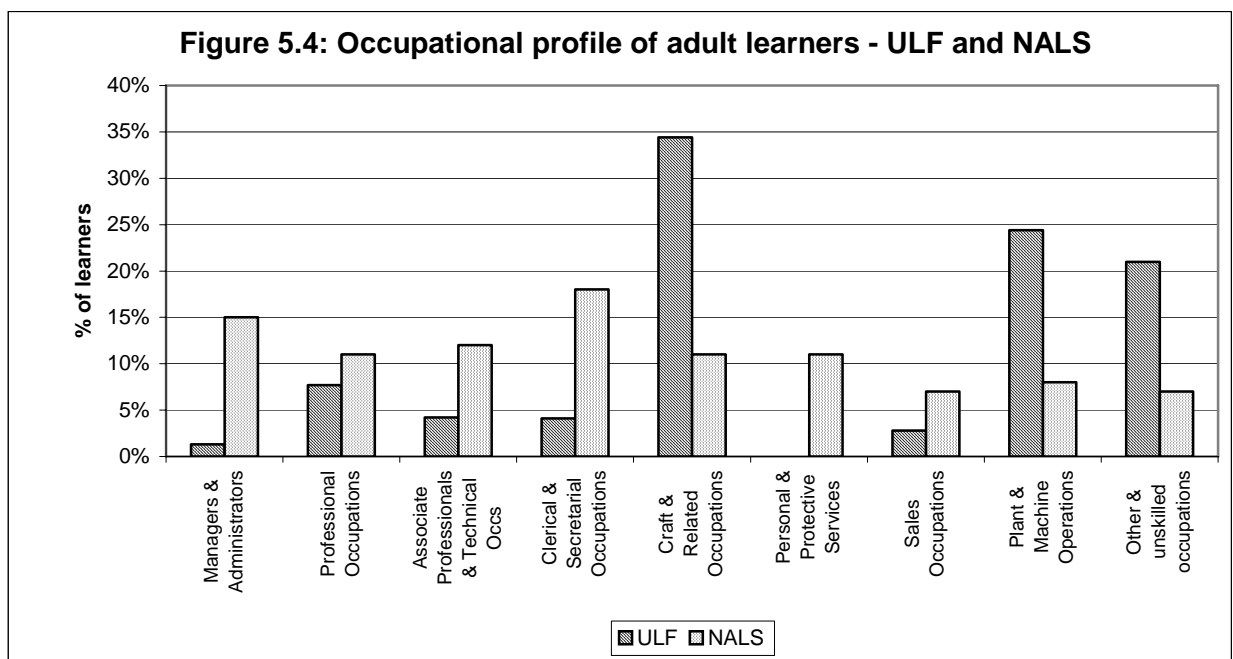
5.7 **Figure 5.3** shows the age profile of the ULF learners in Year 3, again compared to the National Adult Learning Survey¹⁰. The graph demonstrates the strength of ULF in engaging older workers, over two thirds of ULF learners are aged between 41 and 60 compared to around 37% of those reported in the NALS.



¹⁰ The age bands for the National Adult Learners Survey differ slightly to those used to monitor the ULF. They are 19 and under , 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69.

Occupations

5.8 **Figure 5.4** shows the occupational breakdown of the ULF learners in Year 3, again compared to the NALS. Figure 5.4 indicates that the ULF projects have been successful in targeting learners who are excluded access to learning. The key occupational areas in which ULF projects reach learners are craft and related occupations (34.4%), plant and machine operatives (24.4%) and other and unskilled occupations (21.0%). A total of 80% of ULF learners work in these occupational groups, compared to 23% of those reported nationally in NALS. **Table 5.2** shows the estimates for learners in each occupation covered by ULF.



**Table 5.2:
Occupations of learners**

	% of ULF	Estimate for ULF
Managers & Administrators	1.3%	100
Professional Occupations	7.7%	570
Associate Professionals & Technical Occs	4.2%	310
Clerical & Secretarial Occupations	4.1%	300
Craft & Related Occupations	34.4%	2,520
Personal & Protective Services	0.0%	0
Sales Occupations	2.8%	200
Plant & Machine Operations	24.4%	1,790
Other & unskilled occupations	21.0%	1,540

Highest Qualification

- 5.9 ULF project managers estimate that only around a fifth of ULF learners have a highest qualification level of NVQ level 2 or equivalent or higher. This compares to around 52% of respondents to the NALS. This would seem to be further evidence of unions' ability to reach those traditionally excluded from learning through the work of the ULF.

Non-traditional Learners

- 5.10 Project managers also estimate that up to four fifths of learners (80%) engaged through the ULF have not taken part in any formal learning at or outside of work in the past two years. In the National Adult Learning Survey, three out of four learners (74%) had participated in learning at some point in the three years prior to the survey.
- 5.11 Further work is required to develop the monitoring to improve the reporting of learner profile data and benchmarks against which to assess the extent to which unions help to achieve the 'widening participation' agenda. However, initial indications are that ULF projects have been successful in reaching groups of learners that are traditionally hard to reach and engage in learning.

6 BASIC SKILLS PROJECTS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

“This course has given me the chance to get beyond the conveyor belt and factory life. I used to be frightened of going back to learning but now I am not. It has widened my way of thinking. I am very grateful to the Baker’s Union, Oldham College and Park Cakes Bakery for giving me this chance”

Learner, Basic and Key Skills in the Baking and Food Industry, BFAWU

Introduction

6.1 In this section we report on the progress and achievements of the basic skills funded projects through Year 3 of the ULF and compare them to the achievements of the Basic skills projects funded in Year 2.

6.2 The funding of projects with a specific focus on basic skills began in Year 2, in collaboration with TUC and the Basic Skills Agency. Over the two years, 43 projects have been supported (a third of all ULF projects) to address basic skills in the workplace. The remainder of this section is structured as follows:

- *key findings from the review of basic skills projects last year;*
- *the profile of basic skills projects;*
- *outputs achieved;*
- *learner profiles;*
- *evidence of capacity building.*

Key findings from Year 2

6.3 Year 2 of the ULF funded the first tranche of basic skills projects. The evaluation reported on the key achievements and lessons learned by the unions involved. In Year 2, most project teams had little or no previous experience of working in this field. To support the basic skills projects, the TUC and Basic Skills Agency provided a dedicated resource to provide advice and guidance to unions. This support has been recognised by unions as a model of good practice in helping projects and in building union capacity in this area. The Year 2 evaluation also identified the following:

- *the projects made good initial progress in developing structures of support in a limited period of time;*
- *however, the number of learners with basic skills needs that had been engaged in learning was below expected targets;*

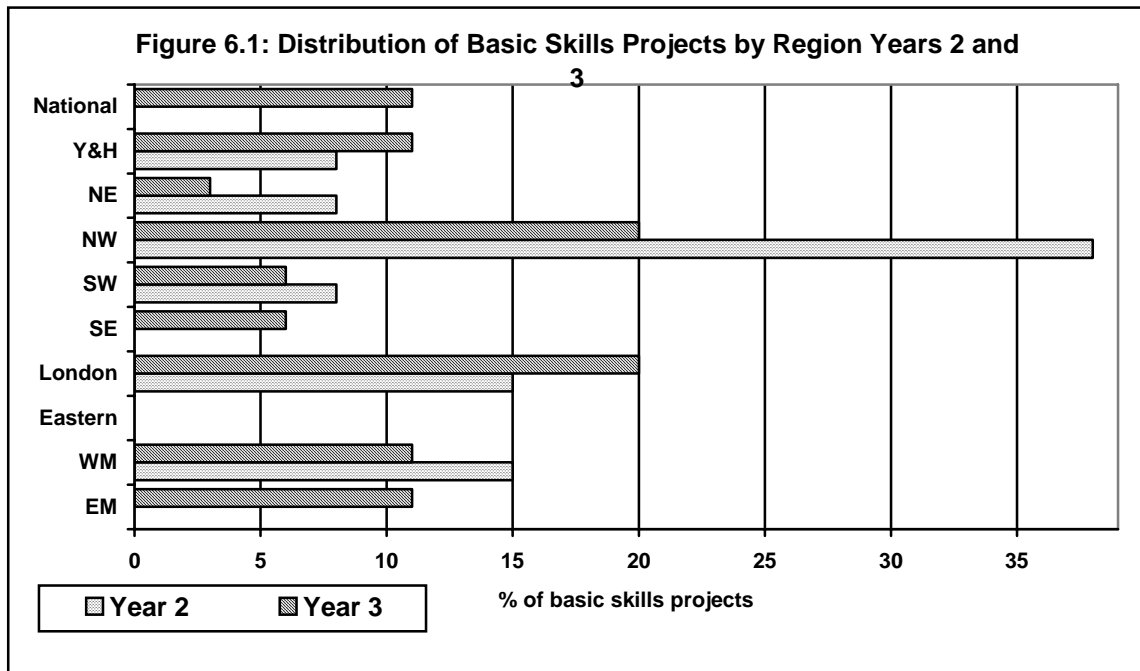
- *the projects reported the importance of engaging employers in the development of basic skills within the workplace;*
- *the process of engaging learners for basic skills provision was often slow and harder than expected, and reinforced the need for ground work to be done in the development of structures such as learning reps, methods of assessment and workplace provision before learners could be effectively engaged;*
- *the monitoring of learner achievement and progression was a relatively weak aspect for many projects;*
- *overall, however, the issue of addressing basic skills had become an important agenda for several unions.*

Number of projects and unions

- 6.4 In Year 2, there were 11 basic skills projects run by 8 unions and one Bargaining for Skills (BfS, now TUC Learning Services team) in the regions. All of the unions running projects in Year 2 have continued basic skills activities in Year 3. In Year 3, 16 unions and four BfS team ran 32 basic skills projects in Year 3.

Projects by Region

- 6.5 **Figure 6.1** shows the geographic distribution of projects in Year 2 and 3. the profile is similar to that of the 'mainstream' ULF projects in the regions areas with the highest concentration of activities are the North West and London. The distribution of projects has become more evenly distributed since Year 2. In Year 2, basic skills projects were located in six regions. In Year 3, there was at least one project in all regions, with the exception of the East of England.
- 6.6 In Year 3, there are also four basic skills projects with a national focus compared to none with this focus last year. These national projects include ASLEF's Improving basic skills in the rail industry, BFAWU's Basic and key skills in the baking and food industry, CATU's Facing the future together and UNISON's Workplace basic skills capacity building.
- 6.7 Just over half of the basic skills projects (18) in Year 3, are operating in more than one workplace. On average the basic skills projects are operating across four workplaces.



Project Funding

6.8 Total funding of basic skills projects in Year 2 was £400,000 and just over £1.5 million in Year 3. The average funding size of basic skills projects has increased. In Year 2, 77% of projects were funded by the ULF to between £20,000 and £40,000, but in Year 3 nearly three quarters of the projects received more than £40,000 of ULF funding. In addition, the number of smaller projects (less than £20,000) funded this year has increased. These projects include CATU - Facing the Future Together and UNISON – Capacity building. These smaller projects consolidate basic skills activities developed in Year 2 or through the union’s other learning activities.

External Links

6.9 The ability of the basic skills projects to engage partners in the development of learning activities is vital to their success. An analysis of the partners involved as project bid partners shows that there has been an increased proportion of projects working with NTOs and RDAs, with one in five projects working with an NTO and one in six working with an RDA.

- 6.10 The evaluation in Year 2, identified the involvement of employers as active partners in basic skills projects as being critical not only to the success of the single project but to building employer understanding of basic skills issues and sustaining activities. The two most prominent groups of partners are colleges and employers. However, overall, the percentage of projects with employers identified as bid partners has declined. In contrast, at the local level, projects have developed a wide range of new partnerships with providers and employers and the actual number of employers and colleges taking part in projects has increased.

Outputs achieved

- 6.11 Three of the projects report no outputs to date. Two report that this is because their contract with DfEE began later in the year. The other has been delayed due difficulties in committing staff resource to the project: resource that is already committed to other ULF activities. **Table 6.1** shows the summary outputs achieved across the remaining projects. In Year 3 of the ULF, basic skills projects have reported that just under 2,300 learners have been engaged in project activities. In addition, 647 learning reps have been trained in basic skills awareness.
- 6.12 One project, **Bargaining for Skills in the North West**, assisted 960 or 40% of the total learners supported by the ULF basic skills projects this year. This was due to a unique opportunity offered by an employer to assess and train employees on one site. Whilst this achievement must be celebrated in terms of the scale of achievement, it must be noted that the circumstances by which it came about means that it would be unlikely that this scale of activity would be replicated in an 'average' ULF project, however, the scale might be repeated in projects where similar circumstances of large scale redundancies or closures were happening.
- 6.13 In some of the analysis that follows, we look at the performance of the achievements made by the other projects in order to assess the progress of those operating in a more 'normal' context. Working with providers, ULF basic skills projects have developed 26 courses, including developing materials with specific reference to the context in which basic skills learners are working. In addition, ULF basic skills projects have been involved in the development of, or improved access by basic skills learners to, ten learning centres.

Table 6.1: Basic Skills Projects - Outputs in Year 3	
	Year 3
	N
Number of learners	2297
Number of learning representatives trained	647
Number of courses customised/contextualised for specific workplaces/unions	26
Number of 'other' materials developed	25
Number of learning centres established/developed access to	10

Learning reps - basic skills awareness training

- 6.14 During the Year, the TUC and partners have developed the basic skills awareness course as additional provision within the Front Line Advice and Guidance (FLAG) training for union learning reps. Across the basic skills projects, 228 new learning reps new have been trained and a total of 419 learning reps have attended the basic skills awareness course, this includes 'new' learning reps and those that have attended the FLAG course in previous years.

Accreditation and progression

- 6.15 **Table 6.2** indicates that just under 1,500 ULF basic skills learners or 58% of those that had started a basic skills programme, had achieved accreditation by the 31st March 2001. Awards include OCN, Wordpower and Numberpower. The remaining 42% of those starting programmes had not completed their learning by this date.

Table 6.2: ULF Basic Skills Projects – Qualifications and Progression	
	Year 3
	N
Number of people who achieve qualifications	1,442
Number of ILAs opened	391
Progressed into other learning	134

- 6.16 ULF project managers report that 9% of learners (134) that have completed their basic skills course have progressed on to other courses including key skills, CLAIT, IBT and ECDL programmes. However, tracking the progression of learners onto other provision is not standard practice across the ULF projects and there may be additional numbers progressing into other learning.
- 6.17 Projects also report that 17% of basic skills learners have also opened an ILA, however because the opening of ILAs cannot be tracked by ULF project managers, the actual number of accounts used to fund courses to which basic skills learners progress cannot be reported.
- 6.18 **Table 6.3** shows the total number of people involved in awareness raising activities. These activities include events in the workplace that introduce potential learners to the project and explain options for taking part in basic skills programmes. This activity also includes communication to a wider audience of employees, managers, union officials and partner organisations. In total, almost 4,500 people have been engaged in basic skills awareness raising activities.
- 6.19 Across the projects, 140 employers have been involved in the ULF basic skills activities, an average of 7 per project. This compares to an average of 3.5 employers per project last year and is higher than the target number forecast. This indicates that, although there are some difficulties in ensuring that there is effective partnership working with employers to secure release for learning and in supporting basic skills learners at work, many projects have been more successful than expected in engaging employers in the issue of addressing basic skills in the workplace.

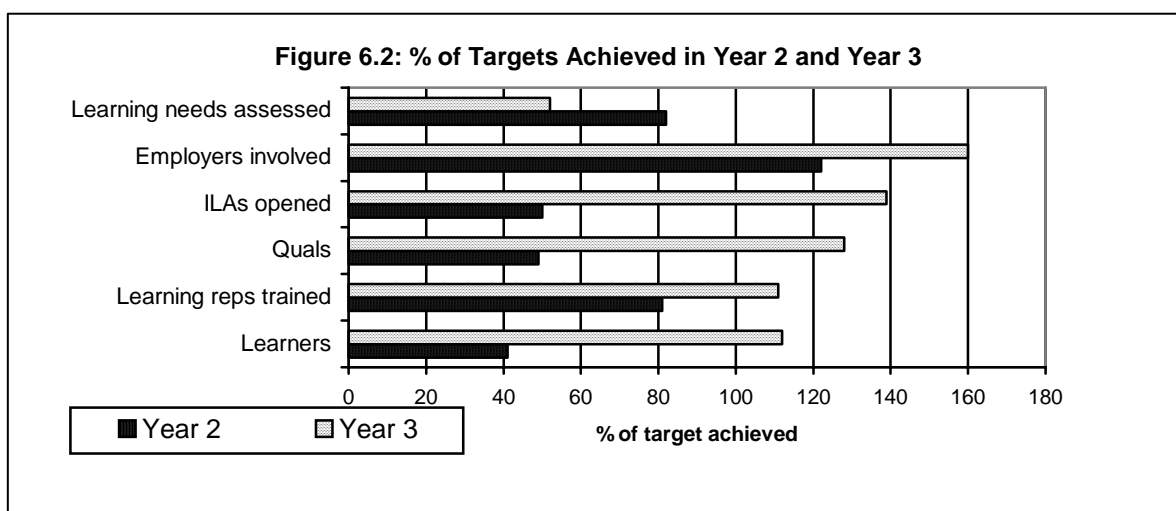
Table 6.3: ULF Basic Skills projects - Engaging learners and employers	
	Year 3
	n
Number of people attending awareness raising events	4468
Number of employers involved	140
Number of learning needs assessments	1036

6.20 The total number of learning needs assessments reported is 1,036. This is less than half of the number of basic skills learners reported. This difference potentially causes concern as it is expected that all basic skills learners will have a formal needs assessment at the start of their programme. This is potentially a reporting problem due either of a lack of clarity in the definition of learning needs assessment or that ULF projects are not automatically collecting data on assessments undertaken by providers. In the development of monitoring the of ULF activities this measure needs to be reviewed to ensure clarity and accuracy in reporting.

Achievement of targets

6.21 Overall, the performance of the basic skills projects is significantly better than last year. **Figure 6.2** shows the percentage of total outputs against the original targets set by the projects. In Year 3, all but one of the aggregate targets has been reached. The target that has not been met is the number of learning needs assessments undertaken. However, this may be due to a reporting problem. In contrast in Year 2, only one of the aggregate targets was met.

6.22 In addition, it must be noted that one project involved 40% of the total number of learners. Taking this project out of the performance analysis finds that the remaining projects achieved 70% of their combined target for learners. Even with this project taken out of the analysis, the performance has been relatively better in Year 3 compared to the performance in Year 2.



- 6.23 Below we report on the difficulties projects have faced in achieving targets. One key factor mentioned by almost a third of projects is that initial targets set were over ambitious. The TUC/BSA support for projects needs to help unions to set realistic objectives, particularly in the first year of a project.
- 6.24 There has been a significant improvement in performance upon last year's achievements even excluding the TUC NW project's achievements. Improved performance is also noted in terms of the outputs per project, shown in **Table 6.4**. The average number of outputs per project in Year 3 exceeds those achieved in Year 2 with the exception of the number of courses developed and the number of learning needs analyses undertaken. However, as noted above, the reporting of this needs to be reviewed.
- 6.25 It is also noticeable that the performance of the 'continuation' projects is significantly better than that of the 'new' projects in Year 3. In addition, the 'new' Year 3 projects performed better than the Year 2 projects against over half of the output indicators. This would indicate that the support and planning behind the 'new' projects has been beneficial and that union capacity to deliver them has increased.

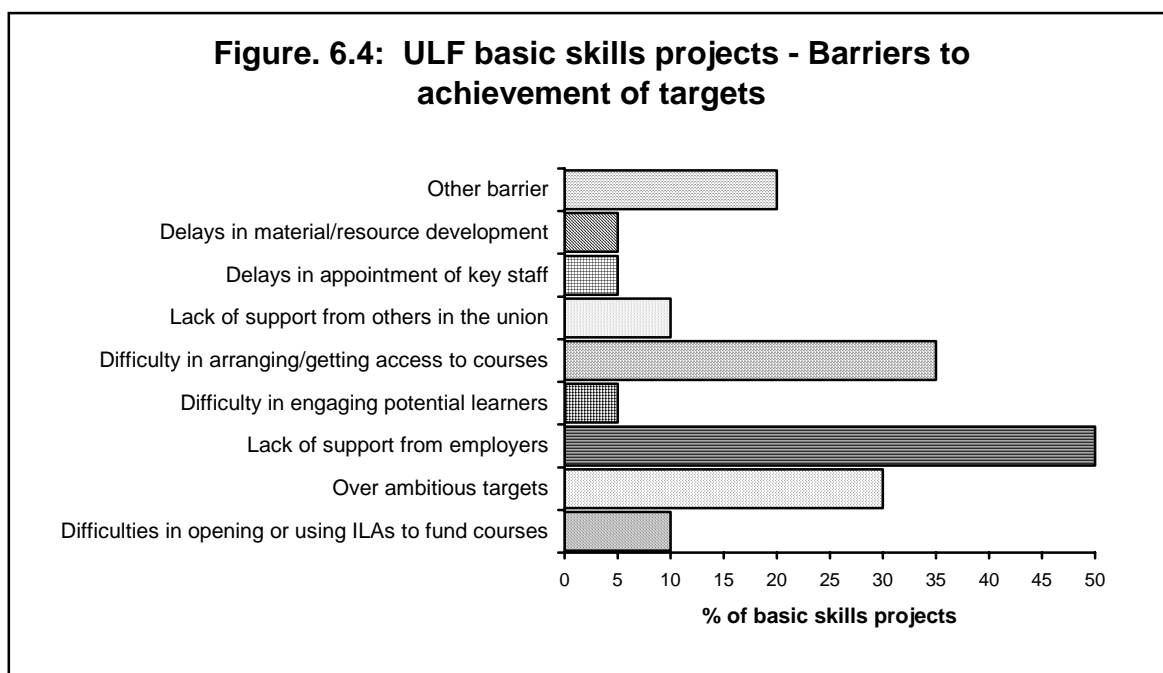
Table 6.4: ULF Basic Skills Projects - Average output per project Years 2 and 3				
	Average for All Year 2 Basic Skills projects	Average for All Year 3 Basic Skills projects	Average for new Basic Skills projects	Average for Basic Skills Continuation Projects
Basic skills learners				144
People attending awareness sessions	13	27	22	345
Learning representatives trained				18
Learners achieving qualifications				141
Accredited courses developed				3
Other materials developed				2
Employers involved				8
Learning Centres established				1
ILAs taken-up				83
Training/Learning needs analyses	12	4		63

- 6.26 The relatively low number of learning needs assessments achieved against original targets causes some concern. For a number of projects, accessing skilled staff to undertake assessment has been problematic. Projects and colleges have noted a shortage in basic skills tutors due to the wide range of initiatives currently underway nationally, leading to pressures in demand for providers with a track record of delivering basic skills in the workplace.
- 6.27 In addition, engaging learners continues to be a key challenge and this has been more problematic for some projects more than others. Further sharing of good practice in this area is key to ensure that unions develop appropriate approaches to engaging members. Successful basic skills projects have identified a number of key factors and lesson learned:
- *trained ULRs;*
 - *support from the employers including supervisory and management staff;*
 - *links with other union learning activity to offer a progression route for basic skills learners;*
 - *working with skilled and experienced tutors.*
- 6.28 These elements have already been highlighted by the BSA and the TUC in guidance and materials for learning reps and ULF projects. There is a continuing need to ensure that unions and project partners use this good practice guidance as the basis for future work.

Barriers

- 6.29 The basic skills project managers indicate a range of barriers faced in achieving their objectives. **Figure 6.4** shows that a third cite over ambitious targets as a key reason why targets have not been met. The TUC/BSA support team confirm that in a number of cases, unions sought to develop quite ambitious programmes, covering a number of regions and developing complex delivery models.
- 6.30 The two main problems encountered have been **problems in accessing suitable provision** and in the **lack of support from employers**. The latter has arisen in a number of instances where initial support for the project from senior managers has not been effectively communicated to others such as line managers or supervisors that results in actual support in terms of release or support for learners.

6.31 Projects have also reported some problems in accessing provision. Some providers have not been able to commit resources to supporting a ULF project. A number of projects also report difficulties associated with **purchasing basic skills provision** from providers; some have found difficulties in being able to satisfactorily agree with provider the delivery of provision at a time and place to suit employer and learner needs at the workplace, others have found considerable difference in the prices charged by different providers for workplace delivery.



6.32 Good practice, for example that emerging from the BSAs 'A Fresh Start in the Workplace' programme has highlighted the benefits of engaging supervisory staff in the development and delivery of workplace basic skills activities. Other national initiatives seek to increase the volume of basic skills tutors, however shortages of tutors will continue, in the short to medium term, to be an issue that may restrict union ability to achieve their objectives in this area. The design and delivery of future projects needs to be carefully considered to ensure that these real constraints are realised and the expectations of learners with basic skills needs are not unduly raised without the infrastructure being in place to help ensure that expectations are met.

Profile of ULF basic skills learners

6.33 **Figures 6.5 to 6.9** show the key characteristics of the basic skills learners that have taken part in ULF basic skills projects. In summary,

- *three quarters of basic skills learners are male;*
- *85% work full time and 15% work part time. However, 66% of the basic skills learners work shifts, indicating that projects have been successful in engaging those that find it difficult to attend much of the college or class-room based provision available;*
- *12% are from minority ethnic groups who are involved in ESOL and other basic skills provision;*
- *the age profile of the basic skills learners is similar to those taking part in 'mainstream' ULF projects, with four in ten basic skills learners aged 41-50;*
- *half of all basic skills learners work in plant and machine operative occupations and a further quarter work in other unskilled jobs. Interestingly, the spread of those undertaking basic skills learning cuts across all occupations, with 2% of basic skills learners currently working as managers and a further 2% in associate professional and technical occupations.*

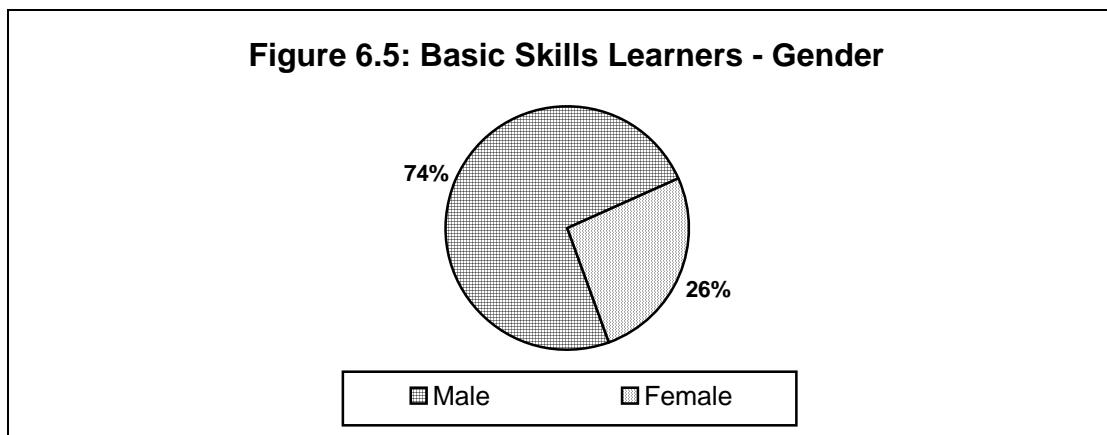


Figure 6.6: Basic Skills Learners - Employment Type

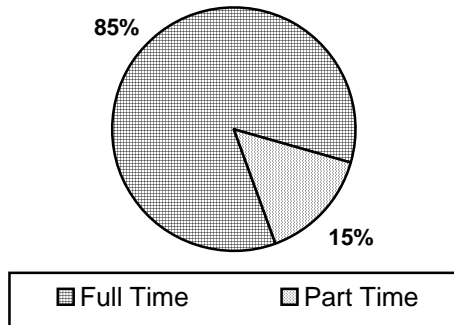


Figure 6.7 Basic Skills Learners - Ethnicity

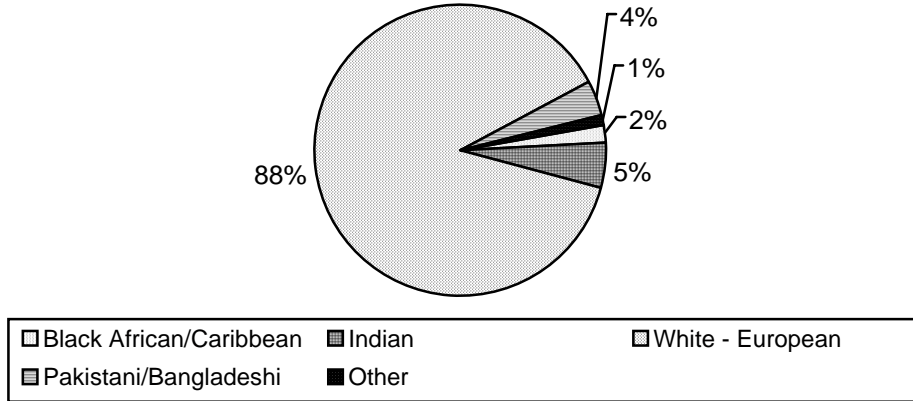


Figure 6.8: Basic Skills Learners - Age

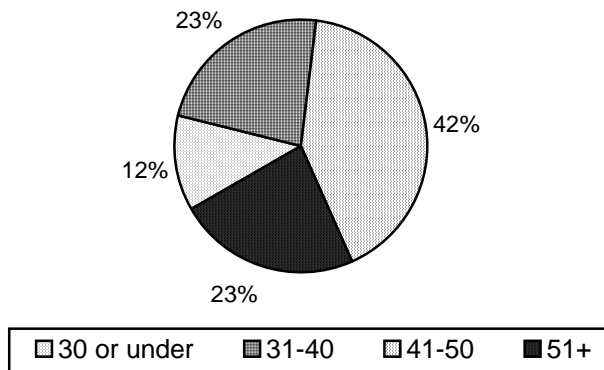
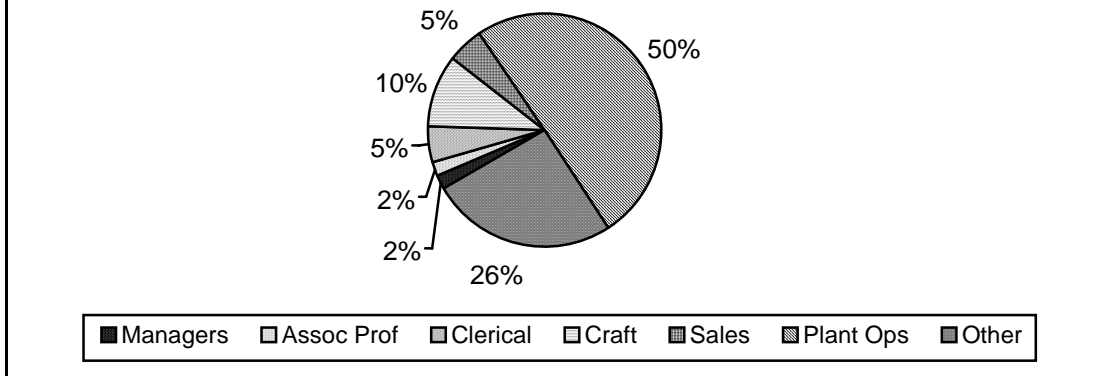


Figure 6.9: Basic Skills Learners - Occupation



6.34 The majority of projects are partnerships with college basic skills departments or local authority adult education centres to undertake basic skills assessments and delivery of training. A smaller number of projects have recruited a basic skills tutor to the project. Across the projects where assessments and learning were delivered by a partner, almost a quarter of project managers were not able to report the basic skills levels of those supported on ULF projects. This indicates a similar finding to that reported for the mainstream projects in Years 1 and 2, that **key data on the profile of learners is not automatically being requested by or being reported to ULF project managers** by others in the delivery partnership. However, gaining an understanding about the types of learners is critical in planning and designing future projects.

Basic skills levels

6.35 Three quarters of the basic skills projects were able to report on the level of basic skills need. Two thirds of these projects support learners with pre-entry or entry-level basic skills. Across the projects, 72% of learners had pre-entry or entry-level basic skills needs and the remaining 28% had Level 1 basic skills needs. This finding indicates that the **ULF projects are succeeding in reaching out to and engaging learners with the lowest level of basic skills.**

Evidence of Capacity Building

- 6.36 The aim of the ULF in supporting the basic skills projects is to build the capacity within unions to developing lifelong learning through addressing basic skills needs at work. Despite the problems faced, Year 3 activity has demonstrated how capacity has been built within unions in a number of ways.

Making the case to employers

- 6.37 BFAWU has identified that potentially around 40% of employees in the industry have basic skills needs and this is recognised as an issue not only for individuals, but also for the sector as it seeks to build basic standards in food hygiene. The current ULF project has used materials developed in the BSA 'A Fresh Start in the Workplace', that mapped the basic skills curriculum against the occupational standard underpinning the food hygiene qualification and a **Food Hygiene and Basic Skills Pack** has been produced for use in the sector.

Developing tutors and pathways

- 6.38 UNISON has been seeking to develop structures to support basic skills learners. Its Capacity Building project has developed an in-service **training structure and framework for tutors** teaching on workplace basic skills programmes. The framework provides a progression route into the union's learning@work programme.

Innovation in assessment delivery

- 6.39 The UCATT basic skills project has developed its working relationship with Lewisham College, introducing innovation in the **delivery of on-site basic skills assessments**, by the college using laptops to help the union to integrate basic skills needs through the provision of health and safety training.
- 6.40 Bargaining for Skills London has been working to facilitate the **roll-out of the TUC Communications CD-ROM** and the **training of learning reps** in basic skills issues. In addition, through this project, all Bargaining for Skills workers and tutors have been briefed on basic skills.

Developing union structures to support basic skills

- 6.41 GMB has been focusing on the **development of a network of learning reps** within two major plants, including the provision of advice and guidance to those with basic skills needs. In addition, the union has been working with the BSA and an FE college to map basic skills standards to the Cleaning and Support Services NVQ and offering an NVQ with basic skills support. Project work has included the development of more user friendly NVQ materials and undertaking basic skills assessments at the start of the NVQ programme. This has helped to ensure that appropriate basic skills tuition was built into the course and learning reps have been trained as D32/33 assessors, helping to build capacity in the workbased-delivery of NVQs and the basic skills learners in the workplace. In total, 65 learners were recruited onto the course and participants have achieved units towards the full NVQ. In addition, the mapping has identified the extra tuition needed for learners so that they could be accredited with City and Guilds Wordpower and Numberpower.
- 6.42 The work undertaken by BFAWU provides an example of the impact the basic skills projects can have on employers and has been very well received, with a member of the employer's management reporting:
- *"We need people to move forward with the company. We have had a major reorganisation of the factory and we need people open to change and willing to learn. ULF has been an impetus for learning – it has opened up some real opportunities to us".*
- 6.43 The company's involvement in the project has stimulated it to look into further training for its staff and, as a result of approaching local colleges one has offered to set up a learning centre on the factory site. The following indicates the way in which the ULF basic skills activities have helped GMB to develop its capacity in basic skills delivery.

GMB basic skills: The project in its first year did not reach expected targets, but learned valuable lessons about the key success factors for the delivery of an English as an additional language (EAL) project. These included:

- The need for detailed initial assessment;
- The value of having an experienced trainer, able to be flexible to the needs of learners at the workplace;
- The need to engage employers effectively to help build their understanding of the aims of the programme.

In the follow-on programme, the project has exceeded its targets, and had a number of additional achievements including learning reps in one workplace developing a training strategy with one public sector employer, 35 learners on IT courses, the development of a joint employee development scheme involving 300 employees, a new steward elected and 80 enquiries about learning opportunities. The projects have helped the union develop a programme of EAL support that covers a range of needs from pre-entry to guided open-

learning. In addition, the union is developing a network of learning reps and the development of workplace and safety rep courses including provision for reps with English language support needs, thereby opening up access to development for reps potentially previously excluded from union education. The experience of the ULF projects to date and the capacity built has led to the development of an EAL programme with a hospital, for cleaners and domestic staff, and the proposed development of a programme with a local authority contractor to undertake training needs analyses and deliver training for a potential 1000 workers.

- 6.44 Overall, Year 3 has seen a significant increase in the achievements and capacity developed by the basic skills projects. These achievements have indicated the value of ring fencing funding to target resources and support in this area, as it seems unlikely that the progress achieved to date would have been made, at the rate seen, without this provision.
- 6.45 There remain a number of projects that have faced similar problems as those identified last year, indicating the need to ensure that the good practice learned to date is built into the design and delivery of future projects.
- 6.46 Many of the issues faced are similar to those faced nationally by other partners in delivering basic skills. However, the basic skills ULF projects offer opportunities to test models of delivery in the workplace that maximise the use of expert resources, particularly basic skills tutors. The presence of project workers and union learning reps trained in basic skills awareness offers the chance to develop and test approaches whereby, ULRs and others work jointly in the workplace. The learning gained from testing models needs to be reported and shared not only across unions, but also with other partners, colleges and others seeking to address the basic skills agenda.

7 OTHER ACTIVITIES GENERATED BY ULF

- 7.1 The assessment of achievement and performance above, reports on the wide variety of the outcomes from ULF projects, however the analysis does not capture the activities developed by unions as a result of their ULF projects. **Table 7.1** reports the proportion of projects that have identified some additional activities that are planned or have already started as a consequence of ULF projects.

	Started	Planned
Similar projects developing in new regions or branches of the union.	21%	18%
Employers developing similar activities elsewhere i.e. at other sites.	13%	6%
Union is working with new employers on similar activities	19%	11%
Union working with new partners to develop similar activities	17%	12%
Union is working with other unions to develop similar activities	11%	9%

- 7.2 The type of additional activity most likely to be reported is the development of similar projects based on the models developed through ULF in other areas, looking to extend the project to work with new employers and partners.
- 7.3 The development of ULF projects aims to build union capacity in lifelong learning. Developing a simple measuring of increased capacity is not straightforward. The structures within unions vary considerably and their 'baseline' of education services that existed prior to the ULF also varies. The additional activities generated by the ULF are one indication that capacity building is taking place. These activities either stimulate the development and extension of similar projects or are activities that seek to address gaps that have been identified.

7.4 In this section we report on additional activities that have been reported by the project managers involved in the delivery of ULF projects in Year 3. We are aware that this may under-report further activities, as the training and development of union learning reps also leads to learning activities that are on-going. Currently there is no systematic way of reporting on the volume and type of learning activities that union learning reps undertake outside of those that are supported through ULF projects. The TUC and 'ULF' unions are currently exploring ways in which this activity can be reported.

Proportion of projects with continuing activities

7.5 Two thirds of Year 3 project managers survey identified at least one additional activity resulting from the ULF project. Of the remaining one third of projects, 75% are on-going ULF projects (funded for two years).

7.6 A similar proportion of the projects funded in earlier years that have not sought additional funding from the ULF are also continuing. 65% of those in this category report some form of activity that is ongoing.

7.7 Of the projects that have continued, the majority have accessed other external funding sources or been supported by funds from their union. Unions report that, where the project activities have not continued, this was because some activities reached a natural conclusion. Others were unable to access further funding or issues at the local levels, such as employers withdrawing their support, or the loss of a key worker meant that project activities have some to and end.

Types of additional activity

7.8 The additional activities that have taken place include work that will seek support from the Union Learning Fund in future bidding rounds, but there are also many other activities that are supported solely by unions, by employers or through other sources of external funding. The activities reported can be categorised into three types that include:

- *workplace learning projects;*
- *capacity/infrastructure re-building, such as developing networks of support for learning reps;*
- *strategy and planning, including consultation, research and communication activities that seek to build and inform the planning of broader strategies.*

7.9 The detail of the additional activities reported are shown in **Annex C**, which includes the activities reported by Year 3 projects and those funded in previous years. Three quarters of projects funded in Year 2 sought Year 3 funding. Of those that have not been funded as 'continuation' projects in Year 3, Annex C indicates that two thirds are continuing in some form. **Annex C** highlights the following:

- *those most likely to not be continuing were those funded in Year 1. In several of these cases, activities located were in a single workplace where changes at the local level caused activities started under the ULF to come to a stop or be 'put on hold';*
- *where some projects did not continue, unions reflect that the original design and concept for the project was not sufficiently well conceived, and although specific activities have ceased, the experience gained has been built in to the design of their other activities. Only 2 of the unions taking part in Years 1 and 2 have not taken part in Year 3.*

7.10 In addition to reporting on the continuation of activities, some projects have provided information about the additional learning outputs that had been achieved since the original ULF funding came to an end. Key outputs include:

- *additional learners, including 200 learning reps;*
- *qualifications achieved;*
- *additional employers involved;*
- *more people having their learning needs assessed.*

7.11 To date, there appears to be little ULF supported activity that has not led to further activities on lifelong learning with the unions taking part in the programme. Responses indicate that in some cases, additional developments include strategic and infrastructure development work. In a few instances however, additional activities represent 'more of the same' workplace level activities, which although having merit in their own right, do not seem to help develop sustainable infrastructures that can help underpin a broader strategic approach to lifelong learning in the union.

7.12 **Table 7.2** shows the additional funding reported as secured by projects in support of ongoing activities.

Table 7.2: Funding accessed for additional activities		
	No. of Projects	Amount (£)
Union Funds	5	£ 44,900
TEC/CCTE	1	£ 100,000
Employer	5	£ 105,000
College/FEFC	4	£not known
Regional Development Agency	1	£ 70,000
European	2	£ -
Other	1	£ 16,250
Total		£ 336,200

7.13 The sources of funding in addition to ULF money include TEC/CCTE, employer funding and unions' own funds. In total, at least £336,200 has been levered in by these projects, since their original ULF funding ceased, over and above any ULF funding for other related projects. In several cases, additional employer and union funding was indicated but the amount was not known or reported.

8 ULF PROJECT PERFORMANCE - CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 There is on-going evidence that the capacity to deliver lifelong learning continues to grow through the development of 'on-the-ground' learning activities and the development of more strategic approaches and planning.
- 8.2 Considerable capacity to deliver and manage projects has been developed to date, however some constraints have appeared that may limit the potential for significant expansion of union learning activities.
- 8.3 The use of the ULF in establishing relatively small scale projects that test out models of delivery and develop capacity has been effective. There is evidence that many unions are building policy and infrastructure around their ULF activities. However, much of this more strategic development is in its early stages and there is a need to ensure that these activities are more strongly embedded into mainstream union activities and linked to other, related, workforce development initiatives. This will ensure that the learning from ULF is used by unions to develop activities as 'demonstration' projects that are the building blocks of a longer term vision for building union capacity to deliver learning.

From project to strategy

- 8.4 When the ULF was first launched, it was seen as an opportunity to explore ideas and experiment with approaches. Although there is still scope to engage more unions, who may require a similar time to explore appropriate models, there is a need to shift the focus. Most of the unions that have been participating in the ULF to date have now established working models and a rationale for their work. In addition, the ULF has established that unions can play a unique role in promoting and delivering lifelong learning in the workplace. The fund itself is now more securely established, through extended funding commitments.
- 8.5 To help ensure this shift in emphasis is realised, the administration of the fund itself now needs to develop, to help set the medium term agenda and provide a framework within which unions can focus on the medium term vision. To achieve this, DfES needs to set out its expectations of the role that the union movement will play in the national strategy for workforce development in the medium term (the next three to five years).

- 8.6 Whilst accepting that there will be no single template, nor that all unions will be able to develop at the same rate, setting this vision will help to provide a context within which those working to deliver union learning activities can more clearly plan for the future.

Planning for the future has improved

- 8.7 The DfEE's requirement on the more established projects, to produce a forward plan, has had a positive impact, and has been a tool, which has engaged others in the union. The business planning requirement focuses on forward plans for individual projects. Some unions, however, have used the planning exercise to bring the planning of individual projects together to form a more coherent plan for union learning activities. In other cases, these cross-project linkages have not yet been made. There is a need to work towards more consistency in building strategic approaches to developing ULF project bids.
- 8.8 Overall, projects have performed in excess of their planned targets. **For established projects, target setting now needs to be bolder**, building in more realistic expectations of achievement. These targets should be based on previous project experience and the average output 'benchmarks' reported in this and local level evaluations.
- 8.9 Although some projects have performed exceptionally well, others have struggled to achieve their target outputs. There is a need, particularly in the drive for increased volume of ULF activity, to ensure that good minimum standards are maintained in the quality and realism of bids and, where weaknesses are observed in project plans, that advice continues to be given to ensure that project design and concepts are sound.

Possible Gaps

- 8.10 Forty four unions have participated in the ULF to date. There is scope to engage further unions in the programme to help extend the coverage of lifelong learning across the union movement.

- 8.11 In addition, project activities remain relatively concentrated in two regions. New and developing regional structures offer scope to further improve awareness of union lifelong learning activities in the regions where there has been relatively little activity to date. Unions need to reflect on the extent to which there is potential for improved networking and communication with the national and local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs), Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Learning Partnerships. The TUC's new Learning and Skills Task Groups, regional TUCLS teams and the union representatives in LSC boards all offer potential channels through which information can be passed and further partnerships can develop.

Resources: leverage of funding from union and employers has increased

- 8.12 Feedback from participating employers confirms that, where the benefits to the employer and individuals have been made clear, and are integrated into the employer's own objectives for the development of the workforce, employers see the benefits of contributing to the co-funding of ULF activities. Overall, the funding levered into projects has improved, especially the funding secured from employers.
- 8.13 Funding has been levered in from a range of sources to match the ULF funding for projects, and to support other similar or complementary activities. ULF project managers are increasingly aware of the other sources of funding available. Several projects report that they would like to further improve their knowledge and understanding of the range of funding sources and issues to address. There is a need to build further capacity around bidding for resources both internally within the union and other external sources of funding.
- 8.14 Research with a small group of employers has identified that there is a need to engage senior and line managers effectively to ensure that they are aware of activities, benefits for the workforce and better able to integrate Ulf activities with wider workforce development activities. A number of employers were not clear about the activities supported by the ULF and the details about who has been taking part in their workplaces.

Awareness and commitment from partners

- 8.15 The changes in partner infrastructures make it more difficult to identify the specific opportunities for partnership working. However, there is considerable potential to **view these changes as an opportunity for unions** to develop awareness of union learning activities.
- 8.16 There are a number of opportunities that already exist for developing and extending messages about union learning, including:
- *union membership of some LSC boards and committees;*
 - *the 'relaunch' of regional Bargaining for Skills teams as TUC Learning Services in the regions;*
 - *the establishment of the TUC's national and regional Learning and Skills Task Groups;*
 - *union involvement in Learning Partnerships and Ufi/Learndirect hubs.*
- 8.17 Whilst accepting that there are certain competitive pressures between unions, for example, seeking funding from a local LSC, there is a need to build a coherent strategy for communication and developing links to the LSCs.

Sharing of good practice between projects has improved but there is still much more scope to strengthen networks to help build capacity

- 8.18 The experience, barriers and issues faced by some of the new projects in Year 3 are the same as those experienced by projects in earlier Years. Therefore there are considerable opportunities to build the learning from the experiences of previous projects into the design and planning of future activities. Despite the support and advice given to projects by TUC Learning Services, some projects have not sought out, or been able to get access to, relevant and timely advice.
- 8.19 There is considerable scope to develop support structures for project managers and approaches to the sharing of good practice across ULF funded projects. Project managers, for example, working on basic skills projects, have expressed the wish to work more collaboratively.

Monitoring and Evaluation

8.20 The National evaluation to date has monitored outputs across projects and reported on issues faced and perceptions of impact. As the focus of the programme is changing and the capacity of unions has developed over the 3 years, there is scope to further develop the monitoring and evaluation framework. Initial discussions have taken place between unions, TUCLS and DfEE on the framework for data collection. Agreement of the monitoring and evaluation framework needs to continue to ensure that:

- *outputs are reported in a consistent format, enabling comparison between years;*
- *project evaluations provide the basis for project and strategy development;*
- *the national evaluation develops to provide more structured evidence of the impacts of the ULF on union, learners and employers.*

9 EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

- 9.1 This section reports on feedback from employers taking part in the ULF. A questionnaire was sent out to employer contacts identified by ULF Project Managers. Questionnaires were sent to 67 employers and 20 were returned, a response rate of 30%. Telephone consultations with employers explored and expanded on some of the issues highlighted in the postal questionnaire.
- 9.2 The employer contacts were generated upon requests to those projects working directly with employers. The number of contacts represent employers across a mix of new and continuation projects, however, the number of contacts generated was considerably less than the original number anticipated. Any further research into employer inputs and outcomes for the ULF as a whole will require further development of the way in which employer contacts are identified and nominated. **The low proportion of the overall number of employers taking part in the survey means that the findings reported here are only indicative of the employer perspective, but cannot be presented as one that represents the views of all employers involved in the ULF.**
- 9.3 Of the 20 postal questionnaires returned, 12 were from employers in the public sector and seven in the private sector, with an average workforce size of 1,105 employees. The employers who took part in the telephone consultations had an average workforce size of 1,233 employees. Eleven of the organisations involved were from the public sector and seven from the private sector. Employers responding had taken part in eleven different ULF projects covering both mainstream and basic skills projects involving sixteen unions.
- 9.4 The employer feedback covered the following context: links to the workforce issues facing employers and training and development practices, planning and involvement in the ULF, motivations for involvement, the benefits derived and overall assessment.

Context

Workforce issues facing employers

- 9.5 The workforce issues facing employers vary from the need to improve the skillsbase of the workforce, to problems of recruiting skilled people and the retention of workers. The following illustrate the main issues faced:
- *“Our major workforce issues are recruiting and retaining workers such as engineers and social workers. Salaries are not always comparable with the private sector” (Public Sector employer);*
 - *“There is a low take up of NVQs. Basic skills abilities are not as high as many in the industry perceive” (Private Sector employer);*
 - *“The main issues in the sector are about embracing change. The industry is getting increasingly sophisticated and so there are more technical issues to deal with” (Private Sector employer).*

Training and Development needs

- 9.6 Only one employer indicated that there were no real training and development issues in their company. The most common training and development needs highlighted were as follows:
- *the need for basic skills improvement;*
 - *IT skills development;*
 - *customer service and management skills development;*
 - *sustainability of the business;*
 - *recruitment of trainees and younger people.*

Links to other workforce development practices

- 9.7 In establishing the context in which ULF projects take place, employers were asked about the main training and development practices and initiatives that help to tackle the workforce issues highlighted above.
- 9.8 Three-quarters of employers surveyed (15) had a company training plan, with two-thirds (13) having ‘in-house’ vocational training. The majority had employee appraisal schemes (15) and training budgets (16).

- 9.9 The extent to which the ULF project activities are linked to other company training and development activities varies. Some employers indicated that the ULF project fits in with the overall promotion of lifelong learning and improving the confidence of individuals on the shop-floor. For example one employer reported that the ULF project *“does not fit in with any other learning projects in particular but does fit in with the overall learning strategy”*. Other employers noted that the ULF project sat clearly within liP objectives.
- 9.10 One employer gave a specific example of how the ULF project was linked to other learning projects within the organisation:
- *“The ULF project fits in with other learning projects by encouraging staff to be proactive in their own development, offers development in specialised areas, keeps them up to date and enables them to cascade what they have learnt/developed down to other members of staff” (Public Sector employer).*
- 9.11 Five employers indicated that links to certain training/development activities could be improved. For example, one employer indicated that **linkages with performance/appraisal review** could be achieved by **improved communication between the project and line managers** of employees involved in ULF learning activities.
- 9.12 Only one of the employers had any previous experience of working with Government funded programmes. This indicates that ULF union-led learning activities offer a potential route to widening the range of employers engaged in, and aware of, wider national workforce development agendas and initiatives. This indicates the potential role for unions and TUC Learning Services to continue to raise employers awareness of good practice and current workforce development initiatives in a way that complements the objectives of other organisations working on this agenda. This role has been fulfilled in the past explicitly by the TUC BfS (Bargaining for Skills) teams in the regions, who were explicitly funded by a number of TECs to raise awareness of liP, ILAs and NVQs.
- 9.13 None of the employer respondents reported that learning agreements were in place with the union. Two employers did have partnership agreements with the union and a further two indicated that a learning/partnership agreement was something that they would be interested in developing in the future. **This confirms feedback from ULF projects and unions that ULF activities are linked to, and in some cases helping to promote, partnership at work.**

Planning and Involvement

Engagement and Planning

9.14 Just over half of the employers were directly involved in developing the project proposal, a specific example being that the employer/organisation was given a project draft by the union, to which they made changes. Some of the **key messages** effectively used by the unions to promote the project to management and employees were as follows:

- *The project would fit in alongside other training and development needs that the company is seeking to address;*
- *It was a chance for all workers to have access to learning and to develop the relationship with the union;*
- *It was a partnership agreement with the union employer and local college.*

9.15 Initial perceptions of employers had been largely positive towards the ULF project, although, one project indicated that they had felt it was “a waste of time”. However, this was not due to the project’s objectives which the employer viewed favourably, but that the employees would not be willing to take part. The following show more positive employer perceptions:

- *“I was initially concerned whether there would be enough interest from staff but this has not been a problem and the project has now probably reached a plateau” (Public Sector employer);*
- *“We were very interested in what it could offer in terms of workforce development” (Private Sector employer);*
- *“The project appears to be vital in raising awareness of learning opportunities. We need to give people a chance” (Private Sector employer).*

Management and learner involvement

9.16 The extent of staff involvement has depended on the size of the organisation. Smaller organisations tended to be less able to give support from HR and line/senior managers and, in these cases, projects were largely facilitated mainly by the learning rep and other reps. The results of the employer questionnaire indicate that HR and senior managers were involved in over half of the projects and line managers involved in just less than half. This indicates that potentially, there is **scope for increasing employer involvement in the planning and delivery of learning activities** supported by the ULF.

- 9.17 Where HR, senior managers and line managers have been involved, common activities included the following:
- *facilitating the project steering group;*
 - *releasing staff to undertake learning;*
 - *evaluation activities;*
 - *project steering group member.*
- 9.18 The main type of support given to projects other than managers' time, is time given to learning reps for training, and to carry out their activities. Employees largely have to undertake the learning activities in their own time and one employer remarked that any time undertaken for learning would have to be made up.

ULF Learners

- 9.19 The lack of direct involvement in projects meant that more than half of the employers responding were unable to give detailed profiles of the learners involved in the activities funded by the ULF. Where employers were aware of those that had taken part, half of employers report the ULF project targeted a particular group of employees in the workforce, in the others learning was offered to the workforce as a whole. Targeted employees included lower paid workers, non-traditional learners, those wanting to return to learning and specific occupational groups such as technicians. One project particularly targeted female shift workers.
- 9.20 A further employer indicated that they initially targeted non-traditional learners but did not get as much interest from this group as was hoped for. Hence, the project was opened up to the rest of the workforce and so as one employer noted:
- *“a large number of people volunteered who did not need much encouraging; they just needed the opportunity”. (Private sector employer)*
- 9.21 This remark highlights some of the conflicting priorities faced by projects in seeking to target learners versus encouraging sufficient numbers to establish projects and make courses viable. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the original objectives of engaging non-traditional learners are not overlooked in order to meet targets, and that the lessons learned on how to reach to harder target groups are built into the design of future activities.

Union Learning Representatives

9.22 The consultations with employers have shown that they were aware of and largely supportive of the work of the union learning reps in the workplace. Learner reps were operating in just over half of the ULF projects, and a further employer indicated during a telephone consultation that talks were underway with the union with regard to training people and implementing the role in the workplace. Key activities highlighted by employers as being undertaken by the learning reps are as follows:

- *facilitating action;*
- *raising awareness;*
- *encouraging and motivating employees;*
- *providing guidance;*
- *marketing the project;*
- *organising courses as required.*

9.23 The key points raised by employers with regard to the role of learning reps in workforce development are highlighted below, and indicate the extent to which employers value the role, especially in improving the linkages between staff and management in the delivery of learning projects:

- *“The reps help the unions to have a less contentious interface with employers” (Private Sector employer);*
- *“The rep has done everything expected of her and more” (Private Sector employer);*
- *“Employees tend to be suspicious of the union and myself. The rep helps to remove some of this suspicion” (Private Sector employer);*
- *“The rep has encouraged 20 medical secretaries to enrol on a computer course” (Private Sector employer).*
-
- *One employer gave negative feedback about the role of the union learning rep. He suggested that the learning reps in his workplace “were only in it for their own personal development”.*

Motivations for Involvement

9.24 The most common motive for involvement in the ULF was to “develop a more confident and enthusiastic workforce”. This was reported by two-thirds of employers (13). Half of employers surveyed reported improved workforce literacy (10), numeracy (10) and IT skills (10). Where involvement by employers was linked to a broader strategy for training and development these included:

- *encouraging and promotion of lifelong learning;*
- *recognition of the role that the union learning representative can play in the workplace;*
- *improving the skills base of the workforce;*
- *confidence building;*
- *improving communication;*
- *part of the challenge of becoming a more sustainable business.*

Benefits Derived

9.25 Employers were then asked to identify whether the expected benefits of involvement had been realised. The key benefit identified by half of the employers was that involvement in the activities funded by **the ULF had encouraged employees to continue learning**. The main impact of the ULF projects on workforces and organisations were reported as follows:

- *improved confidence;*
- *basic and IT skills development;*
- *raising awareness of learning opportunities;*
- *getting people back into learning;*
- *stimulation of employee interest in learning.*

9.26 The other benefits most likely to be reported were **improved industrial relations**, and a more confident/enthusiastic workforce; each benefit being reported by just over a third of employers. The following represent the types of benefits identified:

- *Increasing the demand for learning: "IT courses have been very popular. There have been two basic IT courses per evening, five days a week" (Public Sector employer);*
- *Achieving recognition for learning: "One employee was awarded the 'Adult Learner of the Year' award" (Public Sector employer);*
- *Helping non-traditional learners into learning: "The project has helped employees get over the barrier to learning; some have bad memories of learning from school days" (Public Sector employer);*
- *Encouraging a learning culture: "In the staff canteen, people now talk about the learning activities they have been involved in, rather than last nights football" (Private Sector employer);*
- *Helping with internal promotion: "An internal vacancy was filled by a learner rep who had completed a basic and intermediate IT course. Her skills were head and shoulders above the rest of the applicants" (Private Sector employer);*

- *Developing a more trainable and promotable workforce: “The workforce is more prepared for change and more willing to progress” (Private Sector employer) and “Strong relationship with the union has helped reduce employee fears of outsiders” (Private Sector employer).*

9.27 There was a mismatch between initial expectations and the benefits realised, however that has not been seen by employers as a failure of projects. The employers indicated that there were **benefits for both the individual and the business** in the development of learning activities via the ULF. Where employers indicated that motives for involvement had not resulted in an observed benefit, explanations included the fact that a number of the projects were still in the early stages and no significant changes were expected at this time.

9.28 It was suggested that some of the benefits, such as a workforce that would be easier to train, were **only likely to be seen in the long-term**. A further explanation is that **a number of the benefits are not quantifiable** which makes an **assessment of the overall impact of the project more difficult**.

9.29 Some examples of where projects were still in their early stages meant that benefits were yet to be observed employer commented as follows:

- *“It’s far too early to give any meaningful assessment of the impact of ULF, we’ve only just trained our first learning reps” (Public Sector employer);*
- *“The project is only 5 months into a 12 month span of activities. Some of the expected benefits/effects have not been observed yet, but there are good indicators that these will follow” (Public Sector employer);*
- *“The learning rep has only just finished his training and we have not had time to initial any action” (Public Sector employer).*

Overall Assessment

9.30 The overall assessment of employers responding to the surveys is very positive about the ULF guided activities and the benefits for workforces. Only one employer portrayed a negative impact but this was put down to *“a workforce entrenched in the 1970’s”*, not willing to embrace change and opportunity, rather than any fault with the unions objectives with the ULF project.

9.31 However, it must be stressed that the approach adopted to obtaining employer contacts resulted in a low number of responses from employers. Therefore the findings reported here can only be seen as indicative as there is potential for a response bias which means that responding may have been more likely to have had positive experience with the ULF. Further development of the evaluation is required to ensure that any future survey of employers can be reported quantitatively. The feedback from employers to date indicates that benefits can be derived from ULF activities in the workplace and that these are recognised by employers as being due to union-led activities. However, because of the low number of employers in the survey, the actual proportion of all employers involved in the ULF that report this finding cannot be stated.

Added-Value

9.32 Almost all employers indicated that none or very little of the benefits achieved would have taken place without the involvement of the union. Indeed, employers remarked that:

- *“It would have been incredibly difficult to achieve what we have without the involvement of the union” (Private Sector employer);*
- *“Nothing would have gone ahead without the union involvement” (Private Sector employer);*
- *“The union has given awareness raising with regard to learning the attention it deserves” (Private Sector employer).*

9.33 One employer did feel that if given the same budget she would have been able to achieve the same amount of benefit as has occurred with the union involvement. However she was keen to add that the contacts provided by the union and resulting networking opportunities have been crucial towards the success of the project.

Future Involvement

9.34 **Almost all employers were keen to continue involvement** in the learning activities and a number **indicated plans for future involvement and roll-out**. Possible funding sources included continued union funding and the organisations’ own budgets.

9.35 The main barrier to future involvement was the need to raise the awareness of some managers of the benefits of learning and the role of the union in promoting learning in the workplace.

10 BUILDING UNION CAPACITY IN LIFELONG LEARNING

Introduction

- 10.1 An aim of the ULF is to build union capacity to deliver lifelong learning. Therefore an objective of the evaluation is to report on the impact of ULF activities on unions. Given the original 'experimental' nature of the ULF, and the different starting points at which different unions come from in developing internal capacity around lifelong learning, there has, to date, been no clear definition of what 'capacity building' is and how this can be reported.
- 10.2 In asking unions to state how capacity has developed, a wide range of impacts are reported. These include:
- *delivering learning activities: the delivery of union learning fund projects and additional activities that 'generated' as a result;*
 - *developing expertise: developing a deeper and broader understanding of the learning sector and specific issues such as basic skills and the use of IT based learning; increasing the number of staff able to develop and manage lifelong learning activities;*
 - *developing awareness of the benefits of lifelong learning for members and the union;*
 - *developing strategy and policy in the union on lifelong learning;*
 - *developing support structures for lifelong learning in the union, including integrating awareness and responsibilities for supporting lifelong learning activities into the remit of officers and other lay reps;*
 - *developing sustainable resources such as websites and handbooks;*
 - *developing the ability/credibility to influence the actions of employers and other partners;*
 - *developing credibility and ability to influence the learning of members;*
 - *the development of stronger partnerships with employers and other partners.*
- 10.3 **Table 10.1** gives examples of the actual impacts that unions report. This feedback and the evidence for the case studies gives an indication that there have been notable impacts on most of the unions participating in the ULF to date. However, there are different perspectives on what is meant by capacity building.

**Table 10.1:
Impact Of The ULF On The Union And Other Partners**

Impact		Example
Impact on the union	<p>Developing resources and expertise</p> <p>Securing ownership of the lifelong learning agenda amongst others in the union</p> <p>Developing union strategy and policy</p>	<p>BECTU: The development of the 'Skills for Media' service has developed from ULF activities into a sector partnership with the NTO and others.</p> <p>PCS: The work of the team that developed ULF projects over the last 3 years has now been mainstreamed into the union. The Lifelong Learning team are funded and supported by the union on an on-going basis, giving more staff resources to support ULF and other activities. It has its own committee and access to communication channels and links into other union bodies.</p> <p>GPMU: The two new branches involved in the projects have fully taken on board the lifelong learning agenda. There is now a wider understanding of what lifelong learning is about by officials, admin staff and reps. This has meant members with problems with training can be effectively signposted</p> <p>TGWU: Learner reps are now working in areas not thought possible before. Stewards in the transport sector, not known to be interested in training are raising the subject with employers. It helps learners to engage in accept learning if their steward is involved.</p> <p>RCN: The professional facilitator is now an integral part of the RCN structure. 12 new regional posts are planned. Funding strategy has changed so that a portion of membership fees are assigned to fund these posts. Learning resource centres are developing through co-operation between RCN, members and employers.</p> <p>USDAW: The overarching strategy with ULF has been to focus on one sector but engage others. A key publication on Lifelong Learning in the union has been sent to all organisers, outlined the key factors that need to be in place for successful union learning at the workplace. This includes focus on establishing local level steering groups to involve employers and other union reps/officers.</p>
Impact on employers		<p>BFAWU: partnership agreements are being developed and learning provides a clear context within which to develop joint working.</p> <p>LAUT: The main impact has been on improving credibility of the union with the employer around development of the workforce. The union is now contributing to the employers' staff development strategy.</p>
Impact on partners	Impact on providers and other partners	<p>GPMU: Colleges now come to us to be involved in workplace projects and officials now feel confident enough to talk to them about it. Learning reps in the workplace have also been negotiating with colleges.</p> <p>TGWU: Other partners have a better understanding of learning and other issues facing people at work.</p>

- 10.4 In this section we review the issues regarding the impact of the ULF on building union capacity to deliver lifelong learning for members. **Table 10.2** outlines in summary the ten key elements that unions and partner organisations have identified as the key aspects that need to be addressed to ensure that capacity to deliver lifelong learning is developed and sustained.

**Table 10.2:
Ten Key Elements In Building Union Capacity In Lifelong Learning**

1. Base strategies on the needs of members within a sector;
2. Develop 'agents for change' that promote lifelong learning in the workplace;
3. Engage lay reps, officers and committee members, raising their awareness of lifelong learning activities;
4. Develop union policy on lifelong learning through debate across the union;
5. Clarify roles and responsibilities across union structures;
6. Strengthen and extend partnerships;
7. Develop structures and resources internally that support the learning agenda;
8. Share good practice to help build skills and expertise on learning;
9. Evaluate and communicate successes to others;
10. Develop a longer term vision for the future.

- 10.5 In the remainder of this section, we report on the key examples taken from the evaluation that provide illustrations of the ways in which unions have been building capacity and the key issues still to be addressed.

1. Base activities on the needs of members within a sector

- 10.6 ULF projects have been successful in developing programmes and projects that focus on the needs of specific groups of learners within the contest in which they are working. As one union officer notes:

- *“The key thing is that it [ULF] has to be member led and based in the industrial reality, and we have got that with our ULF work” Union sector negotiator.*

- 10.7 In addition, projects that have effectively developed at a strategic level have often been clearly **linked to wider sector strategies** aimed at tackling workforce development. Key examples are as follows:

***BECTU's** ULF projects have addressed lifelong learning through the provision of guidance and advice to freelancers in a sector where non-permanent staff have little access to employer training but increasingly need to continue to develop skills.*

***GMB** and **UNISON** projects in the health sector are helping employers to meet the significant challenge faced in achieving targets for workforce development set out in the NHS plan, through engaging non-traditional learners.*

***NAPO's** project is developing a new qualification in partnership with the NTO, which seeks to help the sector achieve its recruitment targets by developing qualification pathways for a group of workers that do not normally have access to training and development.*

***FBU's** new project helps to underpin the Fire Service's recruitment target, which is seeking to increase the diversity of those interested in working in the sector.*

10.8 Across these projects, union learning activities help to underpin wider workforce development initiatives and skills needs, but focus activities on key aspects of the unions' own agenda of equality and access. For example, the BECTU, MU and NAPO projects work in partnership with the national training organisation (NTO) in their sector. In addition, the CWYU's project underpins objectives with the Connexions strategy, aiming to develop part-time youth workers. Other projects have created linkages to TEC (now LSC) workforce development plans or Regional Development Agency Regional Skills Action Plans. Linking into these area or sector plans provides:

- *a broader context in which unions have been developing specific activities to which they can add value;*
- *better integration of union-led activities into wider networks which in turn helps to underpin the longer term sustainability of activities;*
- *agencies such as RDAs and NTOs with a link into workplace activities and learner outcomes.*

10.9 Ensuring linkages to local (LSC) regional (RDA) or national/sector (NTO) workforce development strategies provides greater opportunities to broker and develop partnership with others such as colleges and employers. However, assigning resources and developing capacity to do this does not form part of the objectives of many projects.

2. Develop 'agents for change' that facilitate access to learning

- 10.10 The development of learning activists in the workplace, such as union learning reps, has been a key innovation in the development of union-led lifelong learning. The precise function and remit of this key activist differs across unions. Not all unions see a role for ULRs within their structures and some have developed different roles for workplace reps from that outlined in the 'standard' model, as defined by the occupational standards that have been developed for ULRs.
- 10.11 A key challenge in sustaining the capacity to promote lifelong learning is the development of structures of support for learning reps, ensuring that once trained, learning reps have access to on-going support and resources to help them achieve their objectives. Key structures include union/**TUC resources for learning reps including web** based and written materials. Support also **includes facilitating networks for ULRs** to exchange information and ideas. Other approaches include, for example, USDAW's model of developing workplace projects which seeks to ensure that all activities in the workplace are **supported by an agreement** between the union and employer either locally or nationally that provides a framework within which activities can develop and which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the union and employer.
- 10.12 There is a need to share the emerging practice around the on-going support offered to ULRs in building databases, resources and networks of support locally, across branches and regions. Some of the large unions may be able to develop these resources alone. In other unions however, these structures will need to be shared and developed in partnership across unions and the TUC.

3. Engage others in the union – make linkages with wider union objectives

- 10.13 A range of activities are needed to help raise the awareness of others in the union of the lifelong learning activities that have taken place. Some need to be convinced of the benefits for the union. Many ULF projects have not yet explicitly made the links to other union objectives such as equality, organising and health and safety. This is beginning to change, as for example, lifelong learning and basic skills are now being mainstreamed into the training of other reps and officials.

- 10.14 The engagement of others in unions has helped to generate a broader range of ideas for lifelong activities and provide opportunities for extending initial activities across regions. However, this 'bottom-up' rolling-out of activities will take time to generate awareness and involvement across significant proportion of the union officials and branches, particularly in the larger unions.
- 10.15 Some projects report that although the concepts and objectives of union learning have a degree of support from others in the union, there are constraints that prevent officers and lay reps in whole heartedly embracing the new agenda. This relates to both lack of understanding of the 'fit' of union learning with other union activities. In a number of cases unions can report on the direct benefits of ULF activities for the union. This includes impacts on organising, equalities and industrial relations. For example within the **FBU**, two officers report that:
- *“the ULF has brought people into learning who were more passive members. They see the union operating in the workplace, the project helps make them better team members and union members”, and*
 - *“the ULF has had a big impact already, when I heard about it I was really excited, it was something for the ordinary fire-fighter. People haven't had access to training like this before. It challenged my way of thinking about what we, as a union, could do”.*
- 10.16 Several projects report the positive impact on industrial relations and partnerships with employers. One branch official noted:
- *“this activity has helped refresh long term agreement which both partners saw as being at risk of becoming stale. The employer has become interested in the use of learning opportunities in mainstream work”.*
- 10.17 Demonstrating the links to wider union objectives in order to engage others is an important aspect of integrating ULF activities into wider union activities. However, there are few mechanisms in place across ULF projects to be able to report on these types of impacts.

4. Develop union policy on lifelong learning

- 10.18 Developing a clear policy on lifelong learning takes time. Within BECTU, a draft training policy is now written, building on three years of discussion within the union. This was built from a key meeting of the Training Committee in 1997 between officials and the NTO, Skillset, which outlined a five year vision for the development of training.

10.19 The development of a union policy on lifelong learning is a key step that a number of unions are undertaking to help move ULF activities to a more central position within the union, and to provide a basis upon which to develop internal structures and frameworks that will support it. For example, ASLEF, states its policy on lifelong learning as follows:

- *“learning and access to learning is an equality issue and it is essential that technology does not become another issue where there is division in society between those that have access to (it) and those who do not. ASLEF will play its full part in ensuring that all our members are able to access learning throughout their lives.”*

5. Clarify the roles and responsibilities across union structures

10.20 Having developed national policy on lifelong learning, there is a need to clarify and develop the roles and responsibilities of others in the union in supporting the policy objectives. Unions report that this is beginning to happen as briefings and training for officials takes place, but this is early days, as, for many unions, policy is still formulating. One project worker noted:

- *“the work that the learning reps have been doing is not commended but the impact (on members) is second to none. There are issues to address such as involving full time officers and senior branch officers within the works to help encourage an ideology of training and development in the membership so that they will be better equipped if redundancy does happen”.*

10.21 This comment illustrates the problem that several projects have faced by having support in the workplace from lay reps or officials who have not been well informed of the aims and objectives of the lifelong learning project. There are a number of examples of the way in which many unions, for example MSF and USDAW, have sought to address this issue through integrating lifelong learning into ‘mainstream’ union activity. This has included:

- *involving branch and regional staff in the delivery of projects;*
- *integrating ULF/lifelong learning into the training delivered to other reps;*
- *working with organising staff to develop local or national agreements with employers on learning.*

10.22 Ensuring that projects continue to develop these linkages and support from others is key to their success.

6. Strengthen and extend partnerships

10.23 The development of partnerships with employers, providers and other agencies has been central to the success of ULF activities to date. Developing new partnerships, however, takes time, and resources are needed to build communication and relationships with potential partners. One project manager reports difficulties in developing new partnerships.

- *“in the early days of ULF we went on the road trying to sell our ideas to employers and other possible partners including TECs and an NTO. However, we did not have much to show for ourselves other than some good ideas. Now we have the proof (of our achievements), but not the time to get out there”.*

10.24 Many of the partnerships that underpin ULF projects are based on existing working relationships with providers and TU Education Centres. New project partners have been identified from within existing networks and recommendations from TUC Learning Services. Some projects have found difficulties in working with providers, especially in establishing new working relationships, where agreeing the cost and scope of provision proved problematic. If a significant increase in activity is to take place, an assessment needs to be made of the extent to which additional activities will require new partners to realise longer term objectives and, if this is the case, what support and strategies are needed to ensure effective new partnerships with providers can be developed.

7. Developing structures and resources internally

10.25 ULF activities have contributed to capacity building through workers gaining experience and developing skills in managing and developing learning programmes. The development of resources and structures have been noted. However, in many cases national education officers, many of whom still have a wider range of responsibilities in managing TU education, continue to carry most of the responsibility for project management and overseeing key project workers, often funded on a temporary basis. Overall, there is less clear evidence that structures within unions are developing to provide an infrastructure within which project managers and workers can develop and expand activities. Certain pressure points are being observed, where an increasing number of project activities are being managed by a core group of individuals.

10.26 The strengthening and consolidation of the TUCs Learning Services teams, both nationally and in the regions, offers an opportunity to provide support and strengthen union capacity to deliver lifelong learning. However, TUCLS can only facilitate this development, and there remains a need to ensure that strategies are developed by unions to build staff resources to support lifelong learning.

8. Share good practice and build skills and expertise

10.27 The development of skills and expertise has been achieved through both:

- *learning by doing;*
- *from the advice given by TUC Learning Services and other partners;*
- *a range of seminars and conferences that have covered Project management, ESOL, Online learning, ILAs and Monitoring and claims.*

10.28 There is further scope to share the good practice that that has been developed to help build skills across those working in union learning. One project worker notes:

- *“We need to explore the area of forming an information/updating forum where respective trade unions can come together and discuss issues around members accessing one another’s provision and look at the delivery of learning together in a less fragmented way. There is so much scope for our work that there is no need for us to compete in this way”.*

10.29 This is a particular opportunity for the TUC to develop networks and approaches for identifying and disseminating good practice. In addition, sharing good practice between practitioners and key project workers needs to be more explicitly built into the design and strategy of ULF project plans.

9. Evaluate and communicate success to others

10.30 Crucial elements in building a more strategic approach have been:

- *the evaluation of achievements, using the feedback from learners, employers and others;*
- *the communication of success and lessons learnt to other learners, partners and potential funders.*

- 10.31 The process of demonstrating both the benefits and lessons learned from activities, helps build credibility with partners. Much of the formal project level evaluation to date has reported progress, but has not evaluated models or developed a more strategic review of activity that can form the basis of further strategic planning.
- 10.32 Communications have included conferences that help to celebrate learners' achievement, articles in publications and seminars, a programme of events and web based communications. There is a need to ensure that communications engage not only those directly involved in the project and its delivery, but the wider audience to help raise awareness of potential partners, particularly the 'new' work of partner organisations such as the LSCs and Learning Partnerships.

10. Develop a longer term vision for the future of lifelong learning

- 10.33 Debating and developing a longer term vision for the way in which a union's lifelong learning activities will develop is also a key process that can form the basis for planning for the future. Those unions that were required to produce a business plan for DfEE, as part of their contract this year, reported the benefits of going through this process.
- 10.34 Despite the guidance being produced relatively late, the quality of the first plans were good, encompassing the range of elements required. Some project plans are clearly set within a broader vision or strategy for lifelong learning. There is a need to ensure that the focus on longer term objectives and planning is continued, and that on-going ULF activities and future bids are clearly placed within this wider context.
- 10.35 The case study example below illustrates how initial activities funded through the ULF led have to the development of structures within the union that can support the further development of lifelong learning activities that attract funding support from employers and other partners. UNISON has an established Return to Learn programme, and lifelong learning is seen by unions as key part of its remit.
- 10.36 However, in many other unions taking part in the ULF, this culture of learning is only beginning to be established. Therefore, building structures to support the on-going delivery and development of lifelong learning within the union will take longer to achieve.

Impact of the ULF on UNISON: Described as an evolutionary process, UNISON staff report how, in Year 1, projects were initially generated from ideas from the teams with main responsibilities for education and learning in the union. In Year 2 projects further developed from ideas generated by people in branches and regions in which initial projects had developed. In Year 3 learning has become a regular part of the agenda for regional organiser meetings. UNISON developed an internal process, that invites proposals for developing ULF activities from within the union and which is managed by the Learning and Organising Services team. This process helps not only to ensure consistency and provides a more strategic approach to the development of bids, but also provides an opportunity to engage others in the union in ideas and the development of projects. Staff report the following impacts of ULF on the union:

- encouraged discussion and collaboration between departments;
- developed collaboration on the invitation, assessment and the analysis of bids against strategic goals of the union;
- increased number of learners;
- helped develop consistency in provision;
- encouraged regions to take a strategic approach to learning;
- the role of the Lifelong Learning Advisor is now accepted in the regions;
there is a more direct engagement of senior staff around learning;
- external funds have been accessed;
- enhanced working relationships with partners such as WEA.

The following is an example of how this has taken place within one project. Working in Partnership with Suffolk County Council, WEA, Ruskin College and the TUC, developed the Learning in Health and Social Welfare ULF project in 1998. The project developed a work-based pathway into professional care for unqualified care staff in local authority social services departments. The learning programme developed as a multi staged, flexible programme focusing on the key skills of learners and offering a route into in-house programmes and a new Diploma in Social work. The project had a three-year plan with commitment from the employer for funding beyond the end of the one year ULF funding. Building on the original investment of ULF, the employer has continued to support the project with funding of £75,000. The project is now the 'property' of the Suffolk Branch who now take the lead in attending meetings with the employer to discuss learning issues and further developing opportunities. In addition, the project has now led to similar projects running in new areas, working with the original employer and with new employers to replicate the programme. Working in partnership with local authorities and NHS Trusts, UNISON has been developing the programme with a further ten employers involving over 50 learners to date and is developing similar initiatives in the Health and Social Care sector.

- 10.37 There is a need to ensure that the focus of the future of ULF encourages and explicitly supports the development of union capacity within a longer term strategy for building lifelong learning into the mainstream activities of the union.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The recommendations build upon the conclusions in the previous section and fall under four main headings:

- *ULF - setting the context;*
- *the administration of the fund – criteria and bid requirements;*
- *building capacity – developing communication;*
- *building capacity - working with providers and involving more unions;*
- *building capacity - developing staff and good practice resources;*
- *integrating union learning in wider workforce development agendas;*
- *developing the monitoring and evaluation framework.*

ULF - setting the context

11.2 The overall objective of the ULF is to build union capacity in lifelong learning. Alongside the announcement of ULF funding for the next four years, we recommend that DfES re-states definitions of the term 'capacity building' and the expectations of the ways in which union capacity will develop in the medium to long term. This will help to set the context of the changing emphasis from the initial period of the ULF of experimentation, to one of **impact** resulting in consolidation and the establishment of sustainable infrastructures that are integrated both into union structures and within wider workforce development initiatives.

Recommendation: DfES states definitions of 'capacity building' for lifelong learning and its expectations of the ways in which union capacity will develop in the medium to long term and that capacity building is a key theme that underpins the DfES's next ULF conference.

The administration of the fund – criteria and bid requirements

11.3 To help underpin this changing focus, we recommend that the criteria for bidding to the ULF is developed to explicitly require project bids to identify activities under the following four headings;

- (1) Basic Skills activities;***
- (2) Start up activities - new unions or innovation projects;***
- (3) Consolidation activities - roll out of activities developed in previous years;***
- (4) Infrastructure development.***

11.4 In addition we recommend that the ULF prospectus and related communications from DfES should encourage projects funded for more than one year to show that projects are developing within the framework of “principles for sustainability” outlined in the ULF Business planning guidance. This includes:

- *demonstrating how the lessons learned from previous projects have been built into the design of further programmes;*
- *setting out the medium to long term vision or the future and how the project contributes to achieving these objectives;*
- *showing that the staff resources and support structures are in place or being developed;*
- *developing an 'exit' strategy from reliance on ULF funding.*

11.5 We recommend that project bids explicitly identify activities that are focused on the development of the union's infrastructure to support lifelong learning. There are already a number of projects that fall in this category and can include:

- *feasibility studies;*
- *the development of resources and support for union learning reps;*
- *research to review the impact of activities on membership, learners and workforce development;*
- *sharing good practice;*
- *communication events; briefing officials and lay reps;*
- *consultation and development of policy, strategy;*
- *staff development for ULF project managers and other key officers.*

11.6 The aim of making explicit reference to these aspects is to help strengthen the message that the overall objective of the ULF is to develop sustainable structures and capacity. A union bid could include activities across all four areas. However, the proposal should show clear thinking as to how individual projects are tied in an over-arching approach with clear outputs expected from each distinct activity. The quality of bids to the fund has improved considerably over the three years, demonstrating improved project planning. However, the quality of some bids remains poor, for example, not setting out clear objectives, outputs or costings.

Recommendation: support for projects continues to focus on advice and support for project managers, but also supports unions to develop bids in the following areas:

- detailed costing, targets and resource planning;*
- partnership development;*
- developing projects in the context of a union strategy.*

Building capacity - developing communications

- 11.7 Further communication is needed with potential new partners to make them aware of progress to date and the opportunities for joint working. However, there is a complex set of relationships that need to develop to help ensure ULF activities are successful and wider partnerships are developed.

Recommendation: Unions and the TUC/TUCLS nationally and in the regions develop communication strategies around their ULF activities. This would help raise awareness of union learning with potential partners including employers, employer networks, learning providers, funders and to other agencies promoting workforce development such as LSCs, Learning Partnerships, NTOs, RDAs and the SBSs.

- 11.8 Within this communication strategy, the TUC and unions need to identify the key individuals involved in national executive committees and regional structures that can **champion union learning** across a number of platforms, both within the union movement and externally across related employment, learning and industrial relations networks. In addition, the DfES needs to develop a strategy in partnership with the LSC to ensure the achievements and issues faced by ULF projects can be communicated **within** DfES and to its key agencies.

Recommendation: DfES develops a strategy for communicating the outcomes and issues faced in the achievement of the ULF aims and objectives to other DfES team and key agencies.

Working with providers and involving more unions

- 11.9 Several projects have identified the great deal of support received from learning providers in helping to establish and deliver learning at or near the workplace. Increasingly, where partnerships between union and providers are working well, joint working leads to real benefits for the provider in increasing the numbers of new enrolments and in building on-going relationships with both unions and employers. However, a number of projects have reported difficulties in accessing provision from providers willing or able to deliver provision at a time and place that meets learners' needs.

Recommendation: Further guidance is developed that encourages strategic and higher level contact with providers to make the business case for working effectively with ULF projects and widen existing networks and partnerships with providers.

- 11.10 There is also a need to support the further development of providers that can offer initial and further training for learning reps. There are initial indications that there are constraints in the supply of this provision and an on-going programme of development is needed not only to update tutors but to increase the numbers of tutors available in the medium term.
- 11.11 The majority of large unions are currently involved in developing learning projects through the ULF. However, there remains a considerable number of smaller unions that have not been involved to date in the ULF. On-going work is needed to help engage a wider range of unions to help ensure that the ULF does not become inaccessible to those unions that have not yet been involved.

Recommendation: the DfES and TUC agree a programme of communication with non-participating unions with the aim of understanding if there are any barriers preventing participation in the ULF. In addition, some part of the ULF fund remains available to organisations seeking to test and explore approaches for the first time.

Developing capacity – staff development and sharing good practice

- 11.12 The delivery of projects has helped build capacity across a range of unions and around a wide range of themes. The increase in the number of ‘ULF’ workers including project managers, project workers, learning reps and key partners means that there is a body of practice developing. TUC Learning Services provide support to projects on a one-to-one basis and also through the development of materials and delivery of seminars. Many of the staff working on these projects have existing responsibilities.
- 11.13 In the light of the prospect of a doubling in size of the ULF fund and consequential increase in activities and new practitioners that will be needed to deliver this, there is a need to further develop structured approaches to the sharing of good practice and supporting staff development of key project workers and managers. Plans are already being generated by TUC Learning Services to develop support to ULF projects in the regions. Activities might also include:
- *TUC Learning Services facilitating networks of practitioners working on similar themes: on-line learning, networks of support for learning reps or working with basic skills materials/providers;*
 - *‘buddying’ more experienced project managers with new ones;*

- *expecting project bids to build in time and resource for staff development and networking;*
- *specific bids within the 'category (4) projects for capacity building activities that focus on good practice sharing.*

Recommendation: TUC Learning Services develops the model of support for ULF unions and:

- consult with unions about their priorities for developing skills and good practice and identify preferred approaches for the delivery of this support;
- set out an annual timetable for events;
- involve practitioners more in the sharing of good practice for example for example through establishing 'action learning sets' around particular themes.

Integrating union learning in wider workforce development agendas

11.14 A number of constraints in realising the potential of the union learning agenda can be addressed internally through building capacity, policy and strategy. However, there is also a need to improve the degree of integration with linked workforce development agendas. Much of this linkage is currently taking place at the operational level with project managers and workers making contact with local agencies and TUCLS team members having specific responsibility to help support links to ILAs, Learndirect and basic skills. However, there is also a need to develop more strategic linkages particularly with the national LSC but also NTO national council and in the regions with RDAs, to help ensure that ULF activities are linked into the wider strategic framework and funding routes.

Recommendation: DfES and the LSC develop an action plan for 2001/2 to prepare for the handover of the ULF to the LSC. The plan should consider actions to improve communications with local LSCs and the wider range of agencies involved in workforce development including NTOs, RDAs, Learning Partnerships and the SBS and consider the potential for information or guidance given to colleges about their role in supporting ULF activities.

Developing monitoring and administration frameworks

- 11.15 The frameworks for monitoring ULF projects have been developed over the last three years. However, these now need to be further embedded within the project management of ULF projects to ensure on-going and consistent reporting. The national evaluation reports how the union movement has established a unique role in promoting lifelong learning at work and has begun to report on employer perception of this impact on the workforce. At the local level, project evaluations vary in their coverage and focus. There is a need to further develop the evaluation frameworks so that the actual impact on employers and learners can be reported more accurately. Consultation began during the year to agree a common set of monitoring information and impact measures.

Recommendation: the process of agreeing the monitoring and evaluation framework is completed and the national evaluation is refocused, within the context of the new framework, to focus on the impact of the ULF on learners and employers.

- 11.16 Furthermore, better co-ordination is required of the information requested from projects by DfES, the external evaluators and TUC Learning Services.

Recommendation: ULF projects are briefed with guidance on the information that they will be asked for from DfES, external evaluators and TUC Learning Services, setting out the key dates and the format in which it will be requested.

**Annex A:
Year 3 - ULF Projects**

		ULF Year 3 Projects	
Union		Project Title	
ACM	Association of College Managers	Professional Development Toolkit for College Managers	
AEEU	Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union	The virtual information resource base at work	
AEEU		Learning Matters	
AEEU		Learning with Electrolux	
AEEU		Learning Champions of Derbyshire	
AEEU		ABB Alstom Power	
AEEU		Skills Build	
AMO	Association of Magisterial Officers	Lifelong Learning for the Magistrates 'courts services'	
ASLEF	Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen	Learning reps in the rail industry	
ASLEF		Improving Basic Skills in the Rail Industry	
BECTU	Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union	BECTU Skillsbase	
BECTU		Basic and key skills in the workplace	
BFAWU	Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union	Basic and key skills in the baking and food industry	
CATU	Ceramic and Allied Trades Union	Pathway to Lifelong Learning: The Next Step	
CATU		Facing Future Together	
CWU	Communication Workers Union	Royal Mail/British Telecom Learning Centre in Preston	
CWU		Basic Skills - Fujitsu	
CYWU	The Community and Youth Workers' Union	Part time youth workers in service training project	
DGGB	The Directors' Guild of Great Britain	The Directors Guild Participation Scheme	
EDAP	Employment Development Association Programme	Grow through learning	
EQUITY		Central School Continuing Professional Development	
EQUITY		Continued Professional Development	
FBU	Fire Brigades Union	Improving Learning Opportunities for the Fire Service	
FEU	Federation of Entertainment Unions	Feasibility Study - Learning Centres/Hubs	
GFTU	General Federation of Trades Unions	Union Lifelong Learning Champions	
GMB		Raising Security Skills	
GMB		Learning Links	
GMB		Springboard	
GMB		Follow on Basic Skills	
GMB		Leicester Learning Links	
GMB		Development of a Learner Representative Network	
Lancashire		Graphical, Paper & Media Union	Providing Learning, retraining and upskilling opportunities in ICT
GPMU			South West Initiative for Graphical Training (SIGHT)
GPMU	Getting the Message Across		
GPMU	Basic Skills (Wessex)		
GPMU	Developing Basic Skills		
GPMU	Print It - The development of a learning resource for the Print industry		
GPMU	Basic Skills for workers in the Print & Graphical Media Sector		
GPMU	Communication Skills for Workers in the Print and Graphical Media		
GPMU	Promotion and Management of a Learning Centre		
IFMA	Institute of Football Managers Association	Skills for Football's Future	
IPMS	Institution of Professionals, Managers and Specialists	Promoting Personal and Career Development for Black and Asian Specialists in SET	
ISTC	Iron and Steel Trades Confederation	Lifelong Learning Support Network	
ISTC		Basic Skills	

		ULF Year 3 Projects
Union		Project Title
KFAT	National Union of Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trades	Communication skills for Knitwear/Footwear Workers in the North West and Midlands
LAUT	Lancaster Association of University Teachers	Supporting Lifelong Learning for Employees of Lancaster University
MSF	Manufacturing Science Finance	Skills Development Programme for HE Technical Staff
MSF		Promotion of Lifelong Learning in a recently merged Acute NHS Trust covering a large geographical area
MSF		Support and Guidance for MSF Learning Reps
MSF		Good Practice in the Implementation of EDPs in the UK Voluntary Sector
MSF		Developing a National Network of MSF Learning Reps
MU	Musicians Union	The Roadshow
NAPO	National Association of Probation Officers	Certificate in Community Justice and Accessible Work: Further Work
NATFHE	The University and College Lecturers' Union	P/T Lecturers and the Institute of Learning and teaching in Higher education membership and staff development needs
NATFHE		"Phase 2"
NCTU	Northern Carpet Trades Union	The Establishment of a Learning Centre & the development of Basic Skills for Textile Workers in the Carpet Trade in West Yorkshire
NUJ	National Union of Journalist	Editorial Computer Skills
NUT	National Union of Teachers	Developing ICT Skills for Teachers 2000/2002
PCS	Public and Commercial Services Union	Promotion of ILAs
PCS		Developing a Regional Network of PCS Learning Representatives
PCS		PCS Learning Services On-line
PCS		Extending the scope of the PCS key skills learning centre
RCM	The Royal College of Midwives Trust	Maximising Lifelong Learning through information management & technology
RCN	Royal College of Nursing	Development of a professional facilitator network
RMT	National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers	Changing Cultures in Virgin Trains
SCP	Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists	Audio-visual on-line learning
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union	Basic Skills for Staff at Heathrow
TGWU		Basic Skills Challenge for Road Haulage Workers in the North West
TGWU		National skills challenge for the Road Haulage Industry
TUC BfS London	Trades Union Congress Bargaining for Skills London	Supporting Basic Skills at the Workplace
TUC BfS NW	Trades Union Congress Bargaining for Skills North West	Basic Skills
TUC NW		Capacity building for workforce development: the trade union role
TUC N	Trades Union Congress, Northern	Advice and guidance on learning
TUC N		Building union capacity and investigating provision models to deliver new learners to basic skills programmes in the Northern Region of the TUC.
TUC Y & H	Trades Union Congress Yorkshire and Humberside	Second Byte- Communication Skills for Humberside
UCATT	Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians	Building Learning - A sustainable future
UCATT		Basic Skills in the Construction Industry
UNIFI		Learning for change
UNIFI		Developing key skills in the workplace
UNISON		Race to train
UNISON		Developing Potential in the Workplace
UNISON		Developing better skills in the workplace
UNISON		Basic Skills

Union		ULF Year 3 Projects
		Project Title
UNISON		Developing Support for UNISON Lifelong Learning Advisers
UNISON		DEVELOPING LEARNING POTENTIAL IN THE WORKPLACE
UNISON		Building Learning Partnerships in London, Southern, Eastern and South East Regions
UNISON		Preparing for the Ufl in Medway & North Kent
UNISON		Workplace Basic Skills - Capacity Building
UNISON		Promoting Access to Learning - Establishing a Learning Centre
UNISON		BASIC SKILLS PATHWAYS IN THE WORKPLACE
UNISON		Learning Together in Health & Social Care
URTU	The United Road Transport Union	Pilot Programme - On the Learning Road
USDAW	Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers	Developing key skills in the workplace
USDAW		Basic skills in home shopping
USDAW		Promoting Lifelong Learning in the Home Shopping Sector

**Annex B:
ULF Funding by Union**

ULF Funds by Union in Year 1 to 3

Union	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total	
	£	n	£	n	£	n	£	n
ACM	£0	0	£0	0	£43,700	1	£43,700	1
AEEU	£124,500	3	£167,065	4	£222,150	6	£513,715	13
ALAE	£0	0	£18,660	1	£0	0	£18,660	1
AMO	£0	0	£0	0	£40,438	1	£40,438	1
ASLEF	£0	0	£50,000	1	£93,250	2	£143,250	3
BECTU	£44,000	1	£40,000	1	£61,075	2	£145,075	4
BFAWU	£49,055	1	£69,950	2	£49,562	1	£168,567	4
CATU	£0	0	£43,482	1	£78,404	2	£121,886	3
CWU	£0	0	£90,000	2	£84,500	2	£174,500	4
CYWU	£0	0	£47,950	1	£45,000	1	£92,950	2
DGGB	£0	0	£0	0	£50,000	1	£50,000	1
Equity	£0	0	£32,369	1	£122,450	2	£154,819	3
FBU	£0	0	£0	0	£50,000	1	£50,000	1
FEU	£0	0	£0	0	£14,000	1	£14,000	1
GFTU	£0	0	£36,370	1	£50,000	1	£86,370	2
GMB	£148,349	5	£187,210	5	£287,836	6	£623,395	16
GPMU	£97,500	2	£158,000	4	£326,148	9	£581,648	15
IFMA	£ -	0	£33,195	1	£47,000	1	£80,195	2
IPMS	£ -	0	£19,090	1	£37,500	1	£56,590	2
ISTC	£60,000	2	£97,250	3	£73,975	2	£231,225	7
ITF	£46,710	1	£ -	0	£0	0	£46,710	1
KFAT	£19,900	1	£28,000	1	£50,000	1	£97,900	3
LAUT	£0		£0	0	£27,730	1	£27,730	1
Learn'g Thru' Life	£50,000	1	£0	0	£0	0	£50,000	1
MSF	£136,135	3	£162,094	4	£232,720	5	£530,949	12
MU	£50,000	1	£52,000	1	£38,366	1	£140,366	3
NAPO	£31,382	1	£50,000	1	£50,000	1	£131,382	3
NATFHE	£ -	0	£48,680	1	£64,462	2	£113,142	3
NCTU					£46,500	1	£46,500	1
NUJ	£50,000	1	£57,000	1	£75,500	1	£182,500	3
NUT	£0	0	£34,200	1	£58,000	1	£92,200	2
PCS	£0	0	£50,000	1	£151,619	4	£201,619	5
RCM	£0	0	£50,000	1	£40,000	1	£90,000	2
RCN	£0	0	£49,366	1	£49,976	1	£99,342	2
RMT	£0	0	£0	0	£50,000	1	£50,000	1
SCP	£0	0	£42,000	1	£50,000	1	£92,000	2
SOR	£22,000	1	£ -	0	£0	0	£22,000	1
TGWU	£161,390	4	£143,080	4	£166,636	3	£471,106	11
TUC	£0	1	£256,494	1	£0	0	£256,494	2
TUC London	£40,000	1	£47,000	1	£52,000	1	£139,000	3
TUC North	£46,350	1	£ -	0	£192,300	2	£238,650	3
TUC North West	£49,800	1	£71,940	2	£111,386	2	£233,126	5
TUC South West	£42,000	1	£49,770	1	£0	0	£91,770	2
TUC Y&H	£0	0	£0	0	£47,000	1	£47,000	1
UCATT	£50,000	1	£52,000	1	£115,000	2	£217,000	4
UNIFI	£73,400	3	£19,000	2	£58,200	2	£150,600	7
Unions in EDAP	£50,000	1	£39,940	1	£49,800	1	£139,740	3
UNISON	£169,700	4	£138,165	4	£482,995	12	£790,860	20
URTU	£0	0	£0	0	£44,000	1	£44,000	1
USDAW	£80,000	3	£94,450	3	£109,500	3	£283,950	9
WayAhead	£ -	0	£38,000	1	£0	0	£38,000	1
Total	£1,692,171	44	£2,663,770	64	£4,190,677	95	£8,546,618	203

**Annex C:
Additional Activities
Generated by ULF Projects**

Annex C
Details of Additional Activities Generated By ULF
Year 1 And 2 Projects That Did Not Seek Ulf Funding In Year 3

ULF Ref	Union	Project Title	Ongoing Activities	Comment	Funding of Additional Activities
10/98	TGWU	The Learning Centre	Y	The centre is established, the volume targets for the projects have been exceeded, and links with employers and colleges are being strengthened all the time. Learning activity continues.	Employers, Union
11/98	KFAT	Information Technology Project	N	The project is not continuing. The time involved in running the project was a strain on the capacity of the Union to support the organisation.	-
14/98 and 07/99	BFAWU	Building Capacity & Distance Learning Support Project	Y	Dissemination of Year 1 activities has helped partnership building with major employer and confidence amongst activists to engage. The distance learning project is on-going and the learning developed will be built into the development of the unions' basic skills projects. The union is now not seeking ULF funding for Education Officer time and additional ULF projects have been developed in 2000.	Union ULF
16/98	ITF	Learning in Captive Time in the Transport Sector	N	Unable to secure further funding.	-
20/98	ISTC	Capacity Building in South Yorkshire	Y	The project is part of an overall strategy being carried out by the ISTC aimed at creating a 'Union for Life' culture. Training and development are very much part of their agenda. While the project has not continued in its present guise, it has allowed the identification of a number of areas that a further application could focus upon.	ULF, Union
38/98	UNISON	Learning in Health and Social Welfare	Y	See case study in Section 7.	Employer
34/98	AEEU	Learning Excellence together	N	Courses ended in November 1999, however, there are long lasting outputs such as the Learning Centre and the materials within it. Based in a single plant, other issues between the union and employer brought the project to a natural conclusion and no further funding has been sought for development activities.	-
35/98 & 26/99	MU	Developing OFL materials & Maestro Project	Y	Year 1 and 2 ULF projects built into the Year 3 project 'The Roadshow', taking materials out to members in the regions. There are now 300-400 visits to the qualifications website a month. The support from the ULF has helped to ensure "lifelong learning is no longer seen as 'flash in the pan' by members and officials.	ULF and European
36/98	TGWU	Developing a portable IT resource	Y	The centre continued to provide IT training for union members across the region. A similar learning centre has been established with another company involving 140 learners in partnership with a local college and drawing down FEFC funding.	Employer FEFC

Annex C
Details of Additional Activities Generated By ULF
Year 1 And 2 Projects That Did Not Seek Ulf Funding In Year 3

ULF Ref	Union	Project Title	Ongoing Activities	Comment	Funding of Additional Activities
37/98	Learning Through Life	Planning to Learn	N	Project activities not continuing. Impact difficult to evaluate at this stage since the project is focused on raised awareness and motivation.	-
47/98	USDAW	Promoting Understanding of Dyslexia	N	Materials completed and distributed and used by learning reps but further work on this project area no longer continuing.	-
19/99	GMB	Employee Skills Development Awareness in the Process of Change	N	Not currently continuing due to other industrial relations issues at the plant.	-
27/99	MSF	Whitehall On-line	Y	Funded for three years, the development of Whitehall online has supported the development of on-line learning facilities for members including creating chat rooms for learners and learning reps, developing links with other lifelong learning sites, putting 'MSF learning news' online, advertising learning reps courses and developing links to branch websites. The project has been extended to develop the network of learning reps in Scotland. A new partnership has been developed with Labour and Society International and the University of Leeds to develop an on-line course in labour studies with funding from DfID.	ULF and DFID
37/99	TGWU	ICT skills for Stagecoach PT reps	Y	The activity is not continuing as a discrete project, but has been integrated into other joint company/union activities, i.e. Stagecoach went on to fund a mobile ICT training bus in Manchester. The project has helped to raise the profile of the union and lead other bus companies to become interested and another employer now supports the development of ICT for union reps. The project has also helped to 'break the mould' of senior reps being 'afraid of IT'.	Employer, College
39/99	TUC BfS London	Learning Support for the Role of Ufi	Y	This project building on developments in Year 1 has trained and developed TU tutors and union learning reps in internet skills. Through regional workshops and events it was underpinned the further development of ULF and other union activities. Specifically through work in London and the rail sector Year 2 projects led to the development of a Learning Centre at Euston (ULF project in 2000) that has engaged over 400 learners, and non-ULF funded learning centres in London and Leicester.	TUC Adapt ULF

Annex C
Details of Additional Activities Generated By ULF
Year 1 And 2 Projects That Did Not Seek Ulf Funding In Year 3

ULF Ref	Union	Project Title	Ongoing Activities	Comment	Funding of Additional Activities
41/99	TUC BfS NW	Developing a TU Employability Service	Y	Supported with TEC, RDA, Employer and college funds the project has developed partnerships with providers to develop an approach to key skills using a computer based self assessment tool and a Key Skills Guide has been produced for learning reps. The assessment tool is being used by ULRs in 20 companies with over 200 learners.	RDA, employers, colleges, TEC
49/99	Way Ahead Training	Developing OL materials	Y	The project developed open learning materials for the Certificate in Frontline Management (CFM). This has helped to enable a wider range of union members to access the CFM course. The development has helped raise the profile of Way Ahead Training (sponsored by EMA/IPMS/CONNECT/MSF) who is working with a range of providers and unions, including European unions, on a range of initiatives.	Union

**Annex C:
Details of Additional Activities Generated by the ULF
Year 3 projects**

ULF Reference	Union	Project Title	Comment	Funding of Additional Activities
87/00	AMO	Lifelong Learning for the Magistrates 'courts services'	Aiming to develop the model in Wales, run at Ruskin and opened up to the other employers in England. Applying for funding for a support network for some more learning reps and a national event and website development	ULF in Wales, ULF
16/00	ASLEF	Learning reps in the rail industry	Developing learning in the rail industry in England, Scotland and Wales. Development of online learning and development of Railway Learning Hub - Railway operating and other companies, trade unions, TUC, RITC, the sector NTO, and Learndirect. Ad hoc committee established and various sites identified. In discussions with Learndirect and a Ufl learning centre project led by RITC in Scotland.	ULF in Wales, ULF in Scotland
17/00	BECTU	BECTU Skillsbase	BECTU has won further funds from the Welsh and Scottish Union Learning Funds to widen provision for the Skillsbase service. As a result of interest in the provision of advice for workers in the 'permanently employed' part of the union, and indeed for non-members, in Summer 2001 BECTU and Skillset will launch a national service 'Skills for Media', building on the experiences of Skillsbase. Ultimately this will lead to Skillsbase ceasing to rely on ULF support, with funding being sourced from a combination of employer contributions, ESF and mainstream Government funds.	ULF in Wales ULF in Scotland DfEE, ESF Union
42/00	BFAWU	Basic and Key Skills in the Baking and Food industry	A partnership agreement with the 17 sites of British Bakeries is currently being developed under the "job security" work the union is promoting. This agreement will ensure that employees have access to on-going training and development. Because of the positive experience with the ULF Basic Skills, British Bakeries have agreed in principle to include Basic Skills provision in this partnership agreement.	Employers, ULF
62/00	GFTU	Union Lifelong Learning Champions	Online Learning Champion - plan to offer again in January 2002.	Union, FEFC

**Annex C:
Details of Additional Activities Generated by the ULF
Year 3 projects**

ULF Reference	Union	Project Title	Comment	Funding of Additional Activities
35/00	GMB	Follow on Basic Skills	EAL Learning: English and basic skills for 45 hospital cleaners/domestics at Bedford Hospital. EAL & Mapping: Islington Council & Contractor mapping training needs across 1000 manual workers, train learning reps & deliver courses and Norfolk County Services: Joint employer and union bid to deliver training to 200-300 manual workers across Norfolk.	Employers, FEFC, college and ULF
31/00	GPMU	Communication Skills for Workers in the Print and Graphical Media	On-going activity linked with "Read on - Write Away" project in Derby and Derbyshire – Euro Funding. Partners in joint CATU/AEEU/GPMU basic skills project and online learning project with learndirect and TUC.	European
22/00	IPMS	Personal and Career Development for Black and Asian Specialists	New employers focus groups and needs assessments are being undertaken in 'new' parts of MOD and will be extended. Working with other unions for example IPMS is a partner to PCS' proposed project to develop learning reps.	ULF
33/00	ISTC	Basic Skills	A basic skills network has been established nationally and the DTi partnership fund to support further development.	DTi
54/00	LAUT	Supporting Lifelong Learning for Employees of Lancaster University	The project has led to the recognition of basic skills needs and access to basic skills resources. The employer and the T&G hope to develop a Basic Skills bid and get access to a Lancs. Adult Ed College tutor to work with Basic Skills learners. Plus negotiating developing basic skills learning into new work areas i.e. cleaning operations. Possible funding from the Lancs. Consortium of Colleges (CMF monies) to get the learning centre developed.	Colleges Consortium, ULF
04/00	MSF	Developing a National Network of MSF Learning Reps	Developing and supporting a network of learning reps in Scotland.	ULF in Scotland

**Annex C:
Details of Additional Activities Generated by the ULF
Year 3 projects**

ULF Reference	Union	Project Title	Comment	Funding of Additional Activities
65/00	MSF	Skills Development Programme for HE Technical Staff	1. Consortium of HEIs developed to promote technical training have committed 50% of funding to carry on the project until Jan 2002 (current end date is Sept 01) and are bidding to HEFCE for on-going support. 2. The project has developed in the North East and is seeking to extend to the Midlands.	Employers, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
76/00	MSF		1. Potentially a learning centre will be established by the employer for staff. 2. A collective learning fund established. 3. The NHS Executive wants to promote the project to all NHS Trusts in the region at a networking conference in Summer 2001.	Employer, Union
06/00	NUT	Developing ICT Skills for Teachers 2000/2002	Developing ICT technical skills for teachers. This is an expanded project to provide basic ICT technical skills for 3000 learners/teachers.	DfEE
07/00	PCS	Extending the scope of the PCS Key Skills Learning Centre	1. Work-Life Balance project run with an employer will integrate PCS work to access a Learndirect centre as part of the wider initiative 2. Union developing a learning centre (ADAPT funded), getting employers to contribute fees and Union investing in development, including a personal development portfolio pack for all members. 3. Learning for Life Foundation staff working for PCS, using their resources for development work.	Employers, Union, ADAPT
99/00	PCS	PCS Learning Services On-line	This activity will continue through union mainstream funding.	Union
27/00	RCN	Development of a professional facilitator network	Other Learning Centres developed regionally. BUPA Hospital Professional Development Manager trained on an RCN professional facilitator course in April 2000, has assisted BUPA nurses establishing learning resource centre accessed by members in the area.	
08/00	SCP	Audio-visual on-line learning	Development of audio-visual and online learning resources in Scotland. Audio-visual recordings of conference to be put on-line for members in remote/rural areas. It will be self funded with 7 employers and up to 1000 learners.	
36/00	TGWU	Basic Skills for Staff at Heathrow	Group Work, working in partnership with London Underground will involve 2 employers and 15 learners	Employers

**Annex C:
Details of Additional Activities Generated by the ULF
Year 3 projects**

ULF Reference	Union	Project Title	Comment	Funding of Additional Activities
37/00	TGWU	Basic Skills Challenge for Road Haulage Workers in the North West	TGWU is seeking to establish a 'Logistics College' for the North West in partnership with sector employers, colleges, the NTO and the NWDA.	Employers, ULF, DfEE
09/00	TUC North	Advice and guidance on learning	A range of activities is on-going including 1. House of Hardy Partnership Programme. 2. Basic Skills Programme to take forward work amongst all unions in NTUC, concentrating on manufacturing and healthcare sectors. 3. Newcastle City Council Learning Centre; a workplace centre in the former Byker Library. 4. Electrolux Learning Programme: employee development scheme. 5. Equity and Actors Centre to improve learning opportunities for Equity members.	
39/00	UCATT	Basic Skills in the Construction Industry	Local Partnerships in London, Epping and Harlow around learning in developments related to safety awareness.	College, CITB, ULF Local Authority, Union, other unions
15/00	USDAW	Promoting Lifelong Learning in the Home Shopping Sector	1. Developed a ULR network in the region, chaired by the regional deputy dir/officer on the regional committee. 2. Employer developing similar activities across 5 call centres and 3 logistics centres. 3. Littlewoods/union partnership board will review LLL activity and set the priorities for further development as part of the company/union policy agreement.	Employers, Union
14/00	USDAW	Developing key skills in the workplace	1. Secured a corporate agreement on lifelong learning with a new employer. 2. ULRs developing workplace activities in a national supermarket retail outlet. A ULR is developing (without the support of ULF or other funding) learning activities to broaden the range of provision on offer and seeking to develop support for basic skills. 3. Extending network of providers i.e. Liverpool Community College.	Employer, Union, DTI Partnership Fund

Annex D
ULF Project Performance Tables
Years 1-3

**Table D.1:
ULF Project by Theme**

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3					
	n=44		n=64		New n=42		Cont. n=53		All n=95	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
ILAs	4	9	28	45	12	29	22	42	34	36
Ufi	8	18	26	41	7	17	9	17	16	17
Basic Skills	5	11	16	25	15	36	15	28	30	32
Learning reps	19	42	25	40	24	57	35	66	59	62
Learning Centres	12	27	15	24	10	24	4	8	14	15
Access/Equality	32	75	32	51	12	29	29	55	41	43
Union Strategy	10	22	20	32	5	12	17	32	22	23
Young Workers	4	9	6	9	0	0	0	0	0	0

* column percentages add to more than 100% as many projects address more than one theme

**Table D.2:
Number of Old, New and Continuation Projects**

Year	Number of projects	Number of Unions
Year 1 'Old'	44	21
Year 2 'New'	45	29
Year 2 'Continuation'	19	15
Year 3 'New'	42	26
Year 3 'Continuation'	53	31
Total over 3 years	203	43

**Table D.3:
ULF Projects by Region**

Region	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
East Midlands	3	7%	2	3%	8	7%
West Midlands	1	2%	5	8%	8	7%
Eastern	1	2%	2	3%	2	2%
London	7	16%	8	13%	17	16%
South East (excl London)	1	2%	2	3%	7	7%
South West	3	7%	3	5%	3	3%
North West	11	25%	12	19%	18	17%
North East	2	4%	2	1%	3	3%
Yorkshire and the Humber	5	11%	7	11%	8	7%
National	10	24%	21	32%	32	30%

Table D.4: Analysis of Partner Organisations						
	Number and % of all projects					
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	N=44		N=64		N=95	%
Colleges	38	86%	42	66%	42	44%
Universities	7	16%	10	16%	8	8%
TUC/BfS	15	33%	21	33%	33	35%
Other Unions	12	27%	6	9%	19	20%
Employers	21	47%	38	59%	43	45%
Employer Associations	7	16%	11	17%	10	11%
Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs)	29	66%	39	61%	16	17%
National Training Organisations (NTOs)	8	18%	11	17%	21	22%
Other Providers (private/WEA)	13	29%	18	28%	11	12%
Others						
- RDAs	1	2%	2	3%	3	3%
- Basic Skills Agency	-		3	5%	4	4%
- NIACE	1	2%	2	3%		0%
- Careers	3	7%	1	2%	2	2%

Table D.5: Links With Other Post-16 Learning Initiatives			
Initiative	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Individual Learning Accounts:			
Number of projects reporting ILA elements	6	18	36
Collective Learning Funds under development	8	2	4
No. of ILAs targeted	600	1300	3955
No. of ILAs achieved to 31/3/01	488	2307	434
No. of additional ILAs projected	250	370	1390
University for Industry/Learndirect	9	27	16
Investors in People	3	4	10
MA	3	1	5
New Deal	3	1	5

Table D.6: Average Outputs per Project			
Outputs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	No.	No.	No.
Number of learners	114	124	128
Number attending awareness sessions	301	429	299
Number of learning representatives trained	46	29	27
Number achieving qualifications	55	44	114
Number of accredited courses developed	2	5	2
Number of other materials developed	4	2	3
Number of employers involved	29	13	19
Number of learning centres established	1	2	2
Number of ILAs taken-up	244	160	120
Number of learning needs analyses	280	152	136

Table D.7: Year 3 Average Outputs per Project		
Outputs	New Projects	Continuation
	No.	No.
Number of learners	60	187
Learning Reps - Initial Training	11	16
Learning Reps - Further Training	39	37
Qualifications achieved	23	148
Number of employers directly involved	4	29
Number of learning centres established	1	3

Table D.8: Cost per Output				
Outputs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Diff (3-1)
	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
Number of learners enrolling	£ 1,614	£ 803	£ 329	-£ 1,285
Number attending awareness sessions	£ 675	£ 238	£ 131	-£ 544
Number of learning representatives trained	£ 1,941	£ 2,187	£ 1,566	-£ 375
Number achieving qualifications	£ 4,304	£ 2,707	£ 361	-£ 3,943
Number of accredited courses developed	£32,636	£26,995	£20,667	-£11,969
Number of other materials developed	£24,283	£26,154	£13,646	-£10,637
Number of employers directly involved	£11,341	£16,265	£ 2,190	-£ 9,151
Number of learning centres established	£38,910	£31,984	£23,108	-£15,802
Number of ILAs taken-up	£ 207	£ 894	£ 480	£ 273
Number of learning needs analyses	£ 345	£ 633	£ 295	-£ 50

**Annex E:
Union Density by Government
Office Region**

Union density, by Government Office Region Department of Trade and Industry (1999) Workplace Employee Relations Survey 1998: Cross-section.¹¹				
Government Office Region	1 East	Union density	Aggregate	25
	2 East Midlands	Union density	Aggregate	33
	3 London	Union density	Aggregate	27
	4 North East	Union density	Aggregate	45
	5 North West	Union density	Aggregate	45
	6 Scotland	Union density	Aggregate	43
	7 South East	Union density	Aggregate	22
	8 South West	Union density	Aggregate	32
	9 Wales	Union density	Aggregate	37
	10 West Midlands	Union density	Aggregate	39
	11 Yorkshire & Humberside	Union density	Aggregate	33
Union density	Great Britain			34
Base	Weighted			135980
	Unweighted			2191
Base: All employees in establishments indicated by column headings				
13 Jun 01				

This tabulation was provided by the ESRC-funded 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey Data Dissemination Service at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. June 2001

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