
BFAWU ULR Network meeting October 2024

ULR Committee overview

An overview of this quarters discussions at the national committee was given, looking at what we want to achieve in 2025, how we get the ULRs back engaged and encourage more people to step into the role, do we run a session at conference to introduce people to the role and how do we ensure we have all the information to hand about the role, the educational resources available and support ULRs better.

The role of a ULR

This was discussed at length, whilst the role is supposed to be self-sustaining, the reality is that ULRs have become overly reliant on project workers, this issue was highlighted when the fund in England was ended and the ULRs found it difficult to continue the role, whilst we are waiting to see if the new Government will re-establish a new version of the ULF fund, we need to decide how the role may look going forwards and whether it can then be tweaked to fit funding criteria, for example how can we engage learners to then become activists in the union, rather than just learners and paying members..

Guidance around what responsibilities a ULR has is important, for example is it a ULRs responsibility to push for training on workplace specific roles, it was agreed that workplace training is the employers responsibility, negotiating release for training on skills to help upskill a workforce would fall under the remit of a ULR as would signposting members to educations sources to support their own plans for further education.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to have correspondence with ULRs about issues that are relevant to them more frequently so they can engage and use the resources and information available to them and that videos and documents about the role would be helpful.

ULR Handbook

The English project put together a handbook, this was being updated when the fund in England was removed, part of the work of the national committee will be to review the handbook, tweak what needs updating and get it rolled out for new and existing ULRs to be able to utilise, we discussed the additional possibilities of running induction sessions online and adapting the handbook to be an induction book, or having a separate one for that, whilst updated training courses are developed

Learning Needs Analysis survey

There was a general agreement that we need to know what the learning needs of our members are, the best way to do this in the first instance is to run a general survey to find this out, that being able to identify a members branch will help the local ULRs support their members, but having a picture of the needs of our members will also help when we are talking publicly about them, when we are sourcing education resources and courses for members to sign up to and when we are talking about barriers and issues our members are facing.

Learning Agreements

Some branches have learning agreements, we need to establish which ones are still relevant, whether they need updating and what future agreements may look like, this could be something the committee look at during their next meeting too, we can then circulate a template agreement to branches to help introduce learning again on JCC and equivalent agendas.

Resources and opportunities available

A document is being put together on what learning platforms, colleges and other organisations have available for our members to access and utilise, there was a request to the ULRs to add to the document if they have knowledge of any local colleges or facilities that provide education.

This led to a discussion around branches being able to put in bids for funding for specific things, or whether the union nationally was able to do this. Capacity is a barrier to doing this, but branches could, especially those that have people experienced in writing bids, do so as long as we are aware and can evidence the funds have been used for the purposes of the bid.