

Union partner boosts ILA applications

Retail union Usdaw is working in partnership with ILA Scotland to encourage more people to take advantage of a funding initiative that can help pay for learning.

The union is currently distributing specially created leaflets to all its members, with details of how to apply for an ILA Scotland account. Union project worker Margaret Fleming has been promoting ILA Scotland at workplace roadshows and events all over the country in recent months.

A driving force behind the union's lifelong learning campaign, Margaret said many workers simply don't believe they can get up to £200 towards learning.

"When we explain that all they contribute is a minimum of £10, that they can get up to £200 towards learning and that they don't have to pay the funds back, they are usually very surprised," she explained.

Margaret added: "The offer is of particular interest to the increasing numbers of migrant workers who are extremely keen to learn English."

Udaw (the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers) is the UK's fifth biggest trade union, with over 341,000 members. Most Usdaw members work in the retail sector, but the union also has many members in transport, distribution, food manufacturing, chemicals and other trades.

In the UK

- 12,000 members have returned to some sort of learning
- More than 500 union learning reps have been trained
- Learning is up and running in over 150 workplaces
- Over 30 workplace learning centres have been set up
- Partnerships to access learning have been established with major companies like Morrisons, Littlewoods, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Heinz
- Partnerships with colleges to promote access to learning have been established all over the country

Margaret believes partnerships with learning organisations are the way forward for her union's membership.

"If we can offer good, easy-to-access links between the members, the workplace and the learning opportunities, people are more than keen to start learning," she said.

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