



The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers

National Chair: Mark Fairhurst
General Secretary: Steve Gillan

Headquarters:
Cronin House
245 Church St.
Edmonton
London N9 9HW
t. 020 8803 0255
f. 020 8803 1761
e. general@poauk.org.uk
w. www.poauk.org.uk

North Regional Office
1 Linden House
Sardinia St.
Leeds
LS10 1BH

t. 01132 428833
f. 01132 429075
e. adminnro@poauk.org.uk

Northern Ireland
Castell House
116 Ballywalter Rd.
Millisle Co Down
BT22 2HS

t. 02891 861928
f. 02891 861839
e. adminni@poauk.org.uk

Scotland
21 Calder Rd.
Edinburgh
Scotland
EH11 3PF

t. 0131 443 8105
f. 0131 444 0657
e. adminscot@poauk.org.uk

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Dear Colleagues

POA SUPPORTS TUC CAMPAIGN TO SAVE UNION LEARNING

As you may be aware, POA Learning is funded by the Union Learning Fund, a government fund with the aim of supporting trade unions to widen access to learning and training in workplaces whilst also supporting community members to build key skills.

On Tuesday 6 October 2020, POA Learning received a letter from the Department for Education saying that without any negotiation Ministers have decided to end the Union Learning Fund from March 2021. This fund is key to maintaining our project; without it, unfortunately, POA Learning, under the Union Learning Fund, will no longer be able to continue.

In 2019–20, the ULF was worth £12m. It supported more than 200,000 learners in workplaces across England – both union members and non-members. This decision will effectively end union-brokered skills training and will undermine key government skills and retraining priorities at a crucial moment for our economy. The TUC and unions believe this decision is counterproductive and must be reversed.

As a POA member, you will be aware of the impact that the POA's ULF project has had within establishments around the country, and of its success over the years. I am asking if you will support the POA's campaign to seek to overturn this government decision? We are asking all branch members to:

- Contact your Governor/Director, requesting them to sign an employer letter of support to send to the Education Secretary.
- Contact your local Governor/Director to ask for a quote to be used in the TUC and POA's joint campaign.
- Provide any examples of how union learning has impacted members and staff at your place of work.
- Write to your local MP expressing your concern - ensuring to copy in the following three people:
sec-of-state.ps@education.gov.uk
CEU.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk
fogrady@tuc.org.uk

- Highlight how you have benefited by accessing one of our courses, workshops or webinars (preferably providing a quote regarding the impact it has had on you).
- Be named as supportive of the ULF in the TUC's press release, and potentially give a quote for the release.
- Sign the online petition:
<https://www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/uk-gov-don-t-cut-union-learning>

All information supplied/questions should be directed to
campaigns@poalearning.org.uk

The campaign will be a positive, non-partisan campaign focussed on the benefits of the Union Learning Fund to workers, employers and the wider economy. We believe this decision to be mistaken, and out of kilter with the direction of the government's skills policy and believe it can still be reversed.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely



STEVE GILLAN
General Secretary

Yours sincerely



MARK FAIRHURST
National Chair