



TUC chief thanks our learning reps

TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber praised the work of the union's trailblazing Lifelong Learning in the Workplace programme in his keynote speech at Unity's 'Celebration of Lifelong Learning' event, held at head office on October 27.

He said: "I would like to put on record my appreciation of the work Unity's learning reps are doing in workplaces across the Potteries. Your 'Learning with Unity' and 'Develop with Unity' projects have both succeeded in building a strong network of learning reps within the ceramics industry.

"It's because you have built up this network that you have come such a long way on the learning agenda, supporting members during these tough times. There's a lot to be proud of, and that's what today is all about."



TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber (right) with Geoff Bagnall at the union's 'Celebration of Lifelong Learning' event.

Employers, training providers, learning reps, unionlearn & local politicians heard first hand accounts of the benefits of education. Learners explained how education had improved their self confidence, wellbeing and security, whilst employers emphasised the value of education to

improve the profitability and sustainability of their organisations.

Certificates were presented to employers, training providers and learners, recognising their contribution to Lifelong Learning.

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An important message from General Secretary Geoff Bagnall

Dear Colleague,

Unity's National Executive Council is always trying to provide value for money and to improve the services that we offer our members.

Unity Head Office's most important role is to defend and to improve our members' terms and conditions of employment. Over the last number of years this has been particularly difficult given the prevailing economic conditions. As far as our shop-floor representatives are concerned, their most important role is to give advice and guidance in all industrial relations matters.

It is important to remember that: *IT IS YOUR LEGAL RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED AT BOTH GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS BY A UNION OFFICIAL.*

Any member who is unfairly dismissed from their place of work will also receive advice and representation from one of our experienced employment lawyers. It is worth remembering that there is no legal aid available for claims to an Employment Tribunal.

How you benefit from membership

Obtaining compensation for our members injured in the workplace is also an important part of the service that we offer. Last year Unity recovered £420,000 in personal injury compensation. I can guarantee that in every successful case every penny of that compensation was paid directly to our members. All cases are closely monitored by Head Office and we will pursue any queries that you may have concerning the progress of your case.

In the first week of January 2011 union subscriptions for all adult workers will increase by 15 pence per week. Your National Executive Council were mindful that 2010 has

been a difficult year for all our members, that is why we are determined to keep our subscription rate as low as possible.

Financial

As far as financial benefits are concerned, after you have been a Unity member for twelve months you are entitled to the following financial benefits:

- Unemployment Benefit - £20 per week for 4 weeks (£80 full benefit).
- Industrial Injury Benefit - £25 per week for 6 weeks (£150 full benefit).
- Retirement Benefit - After 10 years continuous union

membership (leading up to retirement) £50 plus £5 for each year thereafter to a maximum of £100.

- Death Benefit - Immediate qualification for this benefit on joining the union - £500.

Unity also provides another range of free benefits through our solicitors including a free will making facility.

At last, the Union has achieved a degree of stability in relation to its membership. At the time of writing our membership stands at 4,730.

Over the last three months we have actually gained 25 members. Most of our members still work in the ceramic

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