

Learning Works

» News from unionlearn South West Winter 2006

TUC in Pole position

Migrant workers warned of dangers of UK exploitation

The head of the South West TUC has flown to Warsaw to encourage thousands of Polish workers to find out about UK employment law and trade union membership before they set off for our shores in search of work.

Regional Secretary Nigel Costley ran the TUC stall at the British Days Jobfair, which was attended by more than 10,000 people over two days in October.

He said: "It's vital that Poles and other migrant workers know their rights before they come to work in the UK, otherwise they become sitting ducks for employers who delight in making money out of exploiting vulnerable workers."

"We want them to know that the best protection they can have against unscrupulous bosses is to join a trade union the moment they get here"

Nigel identified two distinct groups of people who visited the stall: casual workers previously employed in the UK and keen to return if they needed more money, and professionals sounding out their options.

"The second group were graduates looking round the world for work," said Nigel. "They were interested in what the UK had to offer because they'd heard it was a nice place to live, was interesting culturally, and many of them spoke good English.

"They were environmental engineers, health professionals, dentists, architects and so on, so had specific careers in mind. They were the cream of Polish youth.



L-R: Wanda Wyporska (unionlearn press officer), Nigel Costley (South West TUC Regional Secretary) and Dave Richards (Migrant Support Officer) in Warsaw

"For many the UK is attractive because they can make more money over here than they can in Poland. Because of the legacy of Communism, most people living in Warsaw were born in Warsaw, they have the same religion, so this is their chance to go out and see the world."

The TUC believes the UK should welcome Polish workers because of the positive contribution they make to our economy.

"They're doing menial jobs we don't want to do, such as night shifts in meat processing plants, or picking vegetables in cold weather," Nigel said. "They are also doing other jobs, such as bus driving, where British companies find it hard to recruit."

But Nigel admitted there were negatives.

"That's why we went to Warsaw. We know too many foreign workers are being exploited because they don't speak good English, they don't know their rights and they don't want to complain.

"Hopefully the trip will prevent more of the horror stories we sadly hear so much

about, of workers being mistreated, paid illegal wages, made to work excessive hours, and having extortionate deductions made from their wages for the privilege of living in squalid accommodation.

"We want Polish workers to know how they can seek work confidently, safe in the knowledge that they are aware of their rights and know where to turn if things go wrong.

"We also want them to know that the best protection they can have against unscrupulous bosses is to join a trade union the moment they get here."



IN THIS ISSUE » TUC rep changes gender » Germans visit Plymouth » Ageism is outlawed

German 'boys clubs' condemned

“Too few women in trade unions” says rep as minimum wage debate takes off



South West TUC staff and Executive Committee members with the German trade union delegation

Women are under-represented in German trade unions, members of the South West TUC executive were told in October.

Doris Meissner, from the chemical and energy union IG BCE, was speaking to regional trade union officials and activists in Plymouth.

“Trade unions in Germany are like boys clubs,” she said. “Not many women join and even fewer reach senior positions.”

English trade unionists told her about how we encouraged women to join, and become involved in our trade unions, by a variety of means such as having women’s sections and providing childcare during meetings.

Whilst equality was featured on the agenda, the main topic of discussion was the minimum wage because Germany is one of only four countries in the European Union not to have one.

German trade unions had opposed its introduction because they did not want the

state, which already legislates on minimum leave regulations and working time, to do the same on wages.

“Trade unions in Europe need to learn a lot from one another. They need to know how each other works, and how they respond to certain situations”

But, as Jurgen Dehnert, press officer for the general union Ver.di, explained, trade unions were now talking about it.

“There is no unanimous view within our TUC,” he said, “because many unions would rather prioritise collective bargaining agreements, but the discussion has changed.”

Colin Rose, from Amicus, said the minimum wage in the UK had been a success

because it put down a marker to assist in collective bargaining.

“We’ve looked at the minimum wage, then decided where our skills are, and then demanded pay accordingly,” he said.

Returning to the equality theme, Liz Ring, Vice Chair of the South West TUC, said the minimum wage had made a big difference to women, especially to those who worked in non-organised workplaces.

The discussion then turned to globalisation and the ‘blackmailing’ of German workers.

Wolfgang Kehr of the metal workers union IG Metall, said companies were keeping wages down by threatening staff that their jobs would be given to people in Eastern Europe who would work for less.

Speaking after addressing the South West TUC’s Regional Council, delegation leader Dietmar Muscheid, from the DGB West union, said the visit had been a success:

“Trade unions in Europe need to learn a lot from one another. They need to know how each other works, and how they respond to certain situations. We certainly want to take part in the debate on the minimum wage.

“One thing that has done well in Germany is that trade unions are independent from party politics, which means they are better able to put their own positions to government.”

Well bread!

A test centre in the South West has itself received top marks following a recent audit.



It is the second consecutive year the L@BB Test Centre at British Bakeries Test Centre in Plymouth has been awarded an ‘A’.

In her audit report, the British Computer Society’s Heather Pitch commented: “I met with Centre Manager

David Massey and was able to chat informally with one candidate. Once again, I’m very pleased to report that David manages this centre in an exemplary manner.

“He is frequently visited as a model of best practice (by, for example, Fujitsu and Sainsbury’s) on the recommendation of the TUC and the unions. I have absolutely no hesitation in awarding another Grade ‘A’. Very well done.”

Centre Manager, David Massey, whose post was originally funded by unionlearn’s ‘Learning Works for All’ Fund, said: “The first time we had an audit I wasn’t sure what to expect. I thought we’d get a good mark

because I was confident we were doing well, but I was surprised when it was an ‘A’.

“This time it was less of a surprise, but no less an honour. I knew we’d do well because we hadn’t changed anything from the last time.”

The Test Centre is part of the on-site Learning Centre, through which more than 300 learners have passed since March 2004, completing various courses such as IT, numeracy, literacy, English and business management.

“I’m glad we got an ‘A,’” said David. “I think it’s an award that reflects the hard work carried out by everyone in both centres.”

New Hope for Danny



South West union learning rep Danny McLellan (right) met with Skills Minister Phil Hope at TUC Congress in the autumn.

Danny, the Amicus convenor at Delphi Diesel Systems in Stonehouse, discussed with the Minister how to ensure Gloucestershire does not fall behind in the race to improve skills levels.

He said: "I've been facilitating training on site well before it was fashionable through Amicus, the TUC and Delphi, but with the advent of Union Learning Reps (ULRs), we finally have recognition. Industry is now beginning to accept that trade unions have an important role to play in training in the workplace."

"Although a lot of people here are very good at their job they have problems with literacy and numeracy"

After the meeting, Phil Hope commented: "I'm delighted to back unionlearn and the excellent work ULRs are doing to help people to improve their skills."

"Speaking to Danny has given me a better idea of the good work going on in this area and what an important role union-led learning is playing."

Liz Smith, Director of unionlearn, was also at the meeting. She said: "This was a wonderful opportunity for the Minister to hear the voice of someone in the workplace who has been doing so much to raise the skills levels around them."

"Thanks to unionlearn, Amicus and Delphi, Danny has really worked hard to help his colleagues to improve their skills. This has

improved staff morale, increased the skills levels and ultimately benefits both business and the UK as a whole."

Danny, who also runs a small tool store at the Delphi site, began inquiring about learning five years ago.

"I looked into the idea of training here because I thought it was a good opportunity for recruiting, whilst helping people learn new skills," he said.

"You might think that because people are working in a high-tech environment they would have basic skills, but although a lot of people here are very good at their job they have problems with literacy and numeracy."

"I was nearer to them than the company was, so the company asked me to identify them, because they wanted to help them as well. I said I could probably pick them out because I worked with them."

"We started off with numeracy and literacy skills, ran a couple of IT courses at the TUC centre in Cheltenham and did a sign language course here, which was very successful."

Danny currently runs an English course, which has proved popular with Polish staff.

"About 20 names went down on the list as soon as I publicised it," Danny said. "It's a full year's course that runs every Friday and it's going well. The Poles think it's great because they know there's a qualification at the end of it. It helps them have a good rapport with us too."

Danny finds promoting union learning is also a good way of introducing people to the trade union movement.

"The Poles don't all understand about trade unions because they're between 21 and 30 and to remember Lech Walesa and Solidarity, you need to be over 40."

"When I tell them how much it'll cost to join, they think of the price in Polish money, which is a lot, but I just tell them over here it's just a pint of beer a week and for that you get insurance cover to and from work, we can negotiate on your behalf, and the usual list of things."

Contact the Project Worker in your area to find out what courses are available locally

» Contact BEVERLY ALLEN

E & S Somerset

m: 07788 414582

e: beverlynallen@aol.com



» Contact GRAHAM GRINDLE

Gloucestershire

m: 07920 016796

e: graytgrindle@btinternet.com



» Contact ANN HALL

Dorset

e: ann@chalcoth.freemove.co.uk



» Contact ALAN SHEARN

Former Avon area

m: 07899 966384

e: alan@ashearn.freemove.co.uk



» Contact JULES O'NEILL-SHAW

Swindon & Wiltshire

m: 07771 713467

e: jo_ns_tuc@btinternet.com



» Contact DEE ROGERS

W & N Somerset and N Devon

t: 01984 623595

e: deeswtuc@aol.com



» Contact GEOFF HALE
or ROB GARRETT

Cornwall

Geoff Hale m: 07890 997009

Rob Garrett m: 07899 966358

e: ghale@tuc.org.uk

e: rgarrett@tuc.org.uk



» Contact CLAIRE JONES

South & West Devon

m: 07899 966375

e: claireswtuc@tiscali.co.uk



Flying the flag for equ

It took 40 years for Lindsey Ward to come to terms with her situation: she was a woman trapped in a man's body. She tells **Tim Lezard** of the pressure to conform and of her relief when she finally changed gender.



“I knew from when I was four or five-years-old that I felt different from everybody else, but I suppressed it and conformed to what was required within society.

“I just knew I was the wrong gender. I felt I was a woman but had a man's body. Living as a man was very difficult. When I went through puberty it was particularly difficult because my body was changing and I got facial hair, and I just found it alien but I had to suppress it to fit in with what was expected.

“I met my partner at 18, got married at 20 and had a child. But as I was getting older, when our second child was on its way, the pressure of trying to suppress my feelings got harder and harder as time went on.

“I used to cut out newspaper articles about people in a similar position because I thought I was the only one. I didn't

understand it at all. I was keeping these cuttings in a folder at home, and my wife found them and asked: ‘What on earth's going on?’ That's when it all came out.

“It was really bad timing and she reacted with total horror. She was very upset about it, asking me: ‘We've been married for so long, got two children, surely you must have known about this earlier? Why tell me now when it's too late?’

“I put my feelings to the back of my mind and concentrated on my work and family but I realised the feelings were too strong, and weren't going to go away”

“I did know about it but I always thought if I could suppress these feelings then they would go away.

“My wife was the first person I told and it was tricky because we didn't know how far it was going to go. We went to see a marriage guidance group, they were quite supportive and tried to set boundaries, to keep the marriage but with me living part-time in a female role.

“Gradually the female role was becoming a greater part of my life because once I'd expressed it, it was harder to go back into the male role.

“We went to America for a couple of years and when I came back I used my job as a crutch. I put my feelings to the back of my mind and concentrated on my work and family but I realised the feelings were too strong, and weren't going to go away. It didn't matter what I did, they wouldn't go away.

“I had such a conflict in my head that eventually this led to a breakdown. I realised I couldn't carry on in the role I was doing,

so we gradually increased the feminine side of my life in order to try and reach a compromise situation between us.

“With the help and guidance of my gender counsellor, I started living more in the female role, but only in my own home.

Once every Saturday night in three I'd go out as a woman. I was worried about the reaction and the effect it might have on the family. I love my wife and children and have always tried to put them first.

“We tried to set up the boundaries of living between male and female, but I was being a female for longer periods and because of my job I was travelling a lot and spending a lot of time away from home.

“That had a knock-on effect with family life. I was seeing them less, which was causing more conflict. I still wanted to be with them but couldn't do it within a male role.

“So six years ago we decided to give it a go, for me to change full time but stay within the family, and we've worked on it ever since.

“As soon as the family and I decided to go ahead with the transition, my anxiety attacks stopped overnight.

“As far as the physical process went, I started hormone therapy to feminise the whole body. I had to get rid of the facial hair, which obviously results in quite a lengthy process of laser treatment. I had an operation to remove the Adam's Apple, I had breast augmentation and I had full surgery in January this year and I feel fantastic. I've never felt better.

“I work at Airbus in Bristol and people there have been absolutely fantastic. I told my manager about my situation (he knew something was wrong because I'd been off for so long with depression and anxiety attacks)



Equality in the South West

and he was very supportive, asking me how I wanted to proceed with it.

“I said I wanted to change full time, starting in January the following year and that’s what we did. We contacted the HR department and they went through a procedure of defining a process from scratch, how to contact people, how to communicate the impact, how people should meet and greet me when I come in as a female role. I came back as a female in January 2001.

“My colleagues were very good. My close friends were very supportive. A lot of them knew anyway, so it wasn’t news for them, but within Airbus you’re talking 6,000 people on site.

“I knew a lot of them through my role in recruitment and training, so for them it was a big shock. I did feel a bit isolated at first, because people stopped speaking but in time I realised - they told me - it wasn’t something personal, it was that they didn’t know how to acknowledge the situation, how to speak to me in case they said something wrong or accidentally call me by my male name, which I fully understand.

“If you know someone for 15 - 20 years and all of a sudden they change their name, it’s automatic you’d refer to them by their old name.

“I’ve been involved with trade unions for many years. I’m Amicus’s senior workplace rep within Airbus and I represent them on the South West TUC’s executive committee.

“I’m also secretary of Unions Out West, a body that works within the TUC to support LGBT activities.

“With Unions Out West, I’m challenging the Gender Recognition Bill as this now gives me the right to change my birth certificate, but unfortunately I would have to annul my marriage.

“As it stands, my birth certificate will have to remain unchanged until the Bill is amended.

“If there’s one thing Unions Out West could achieve, it would be

“When I completed my transition, I changed my Christian name and my surname. My family also changed their surnames too. Their support has meant everything to me - I wouldn’t have managed without them”

to provide greater awareness of issues within the transgender community - not just at work, but at home too, making sure there’s a support network for families.

“I found there wasn’t much there when I changed gender, there was a gap within the support structure. There was medical support, but actually what do you get within the workplace, what do you get with family life, within your partnership? I thought: ‘Let’s get organising to see how we can change the culture so people have more of an understanding of gender recognition’.

“Having such a network would have made it far easier in the workplace because we’d have had a process in place to support me,

“Even though I worked for a large company

and there must have been other people who had gone through this, I felt as though I was the first. That was daunting. I felt like a guinea pig.

“It would have helped with the family, too: what do you tell people, what treatment you’re expecting from other people, what support the family can get to help them come to terms and adjust to a new situation whilst trying to keep them together. That was very important for me because even though I was changing gender, I still wanted to keep the family together.

“As a result, I’ve been very lucky because I was speaking to a counsellor about it and they said they’d never known anyone with such a supporting family.

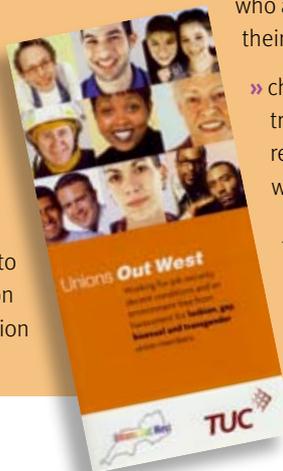
“When I completed my transition, I changed my Christian name and my surname. My family also changed their surnames too. Their support has meant everything to me - I wouldn’t have managed without them.

“I might have fulfilled one side of my life by changing, but that might have resulted in me leaving home which would have been a significant loss to me. In myself I’m really happy, and I’m happy I’ve got my partner and two children as well. Basically, I’m very lucky to have the best of both worlds.”

Unions Out West provides a joint meeting with all key LGBT contacts in order to:

- » network with other LGBT groups to co-ordinate strategies and disseminate areas of best practice
- » support regional consultation events on defining future legislation such as the Single Equality Bill and Gender Recognition Act
- » represent joint equality TUC meetings with other minority groups in order to offer support and liaise on equality issues in the region

- » participate with regional events such as Pride and Respect festivals
- » offer and encourage the use of training packages to deal with homophobia and transphobia in the workplace and trade union movement
- » offer support and advice to members who are unable to access this through their own union
- » challenge homophobia and transphobia and promote mutual respect and equal treatment in the workplace



Unions Out West can be contacted by email at unionsoutwest@hotmail.com

HSE slips up as cases fall

Last year an estimated 13,000 workers were injured in the South West, and across the region 12 people were killed at work.

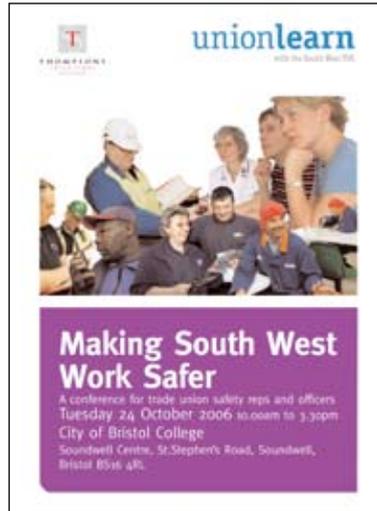
The shock figures were revealed at the successful second Making South West Work Safer conference, held in Bristol in October and attended by more than 100 people.

Causes of injury ranged from slips and trips, falls, RSI, stress and back strain to exposure to toxic chemicals or injury due to violent assaults.

Despite the high numbers of injuries being reported, the number of HSE prosecutions has actually fallen, and a further cut in the number of inspectors is expected shortly.

In this climate, the role of trade union safety rep has never been more vital to ensure the safety of people at work. Statistics consistently show that unionised workplaces are safer workplaces.

In the South West alone, the TUC trains almost 400 safety reps per year on a



range of free health and safety courses, equipping them with the skills they need to tackle health and safety issues at work.

They help assess risks and work with good employers to improve conditions. Half of

Despite the high numbers of injuries being reported, the number of HSE prosecutions has actually fallen

them spend up to an hour a week on their role, but most felt they needed more time to do the job even better.

At the conference, 62 per cent of reps felt stress was the main hazard at work, with workload and staff cuts the main causes.

Bud Hudspith, National Health and Safety Officer for Amicus, called for more rights for safety reps.

“Employers say they welcome the role of safety reps but are reluctant to give them the time to train, inspect the workplace and enforce safety rules.”

Exel excels at learning

People at Exel DHL come into work on their days off to visit the learning centre. ULR co-ordinator Chris Rose tells Tim Lezard why...

“Our learning centre was opened in 2004 – it used to be a reception area – and learndirect has only been going a couple of months, but already we’ve had lot of interest, specifically in IT skills.

“In the first two weeks I signed up 12 people. LearnDirect has made a real difference because we had to have full classes of eight for City of Bristol to provide tutors and we couldn’t always do that, but with learndirect people can learn independently.

“There are 700 people on site and the centre is open during lunch breaks and at the end of shifts. It’s also open during night shifts.

“People are keen to take it up because it’s all here. It’s much easier for them to come up here to their courses then go straight back down onto the shop floor and finish their shifts.

“I think people just generally want to learn. I don’t think they do it because they want to get promotion, although some might want to in the long-term. They’re just interested in learning new things.

“There’s a massive demand for IT and with learndirect, it will be possible to meet it. There’s also a few people who are learning

English and Maths so they can help their kids with their homework.

“The boss allows time off for people to learn basic skills so they come up here for a couple of hours and then go back downstairs and finish their shift at the usual time.

“You have to do the other courses in your own time, but bosses are flexible and generally allow you to attend a class as long as you make that time up. It’s just that little incentive to get up here and once they’re here, they enjoy their class. It’s been brilliant.”

The Exel DHL learning centre in Bristol opened in 2004 with support from unionlearn LWFA Fund





Ageism gagged by new law

Workers will have to think twice about sending 'humorous' birthday cards to their colleagues in the wake of new anti ageism legislation, warns the TUC.



Sarah Veale

Many cards make 'amusing' references to age and the impending arrival of senility, but the TUC's Head of Equalities and Employment Rights warns the joke will fall flat if the recipient is offended.

Speaking at unionlearn's An End To Ageism conference at Exeter in September, Sarah Veale said: "All this ha-ha-ha banter - like a birthday card saying 'You're so old, I can't believe you can get out of bed in the morning' - has to stop.

"If the person doesn't mind it, it doesn't matter but if they do mind - and I think a lot more do than admit it - they would have to stop, or else they could be taken to a tribunal."

Sarah said this, admittedly extreme, scenario should act as a warning to employers to take seriously their responsibilities towards their staff. And she said trade unions would be watching them to ensure they obeyed the law.

"It's going to be quite hard work for us because there are so many get-outs," she said. "For example, there's 'objective justification', where employers can argue discrimination wasn't on purpose, even if it was the result."

'Objective justification', Sarah explained, could be used by the boss of an airline firm who, worried 80 of their pilots were over 50, wanted to employ younger staff so they wouldn't all retire at the same time.

At the other end of the scale, hospital managers would be permitted to turn down a 21-year-old applicant for a job as a doctor because doctors need seven year's training.

In summing up, Sarah said the TUC welcomed the new laws and the equality framework, but said: "It must be better than

the sum of its parts. It must refresh the law and make it more effective, easier to use and understand."

She was followed by Rob Johnson, the Regional Director of ACAS, who said the legislation "covered older workers, younger workers and workers in between".

Advocating a change of culture in the workplace, he said: "It's important that people know respect. None of the new equality strands will work unless you respect your colleagues because legislation isn't enough on its own."

He said the legislation was already having an impact, with employers changing application forms and job adverts, and many reviewing their policies and procedures, although he



was disappointed their initial reaction was defensive.

"It's sad they see the difficulties first, but I hope they'll see the advantages of a diverse workforce and they can't ignore people's talents any more. It has to be the organisation that changes because it can't rely on individuals to change the culture."

Lindsey St John, Project Director for SWOOP, welcomed the legislation, telling delegates of the trauma older people experienced applying for jobs.

"The biggest problem people have is to accurately represent what they have to offer," she said. "Once older people become unemployed - most not by choice - the longer they are out of work, the quicker their self-esteem and confidence goes out of the window."

What do the new age regulations mean?

In summary it will:

- » ban age discrimination in terms of recruitment, promotion and training;
- » ban unjustified retirement ages of below 65; and
- » remove the current age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights

It also includes:

- » a right for employees to request working beyond retirement age and a duty on employers to consider that request;
- » a new requirement for employers to give at least six months notice to employees about their intended retirement date so that individuals can plan better for retirement, and be confident that 'retirement' is not being used as a cover for unfair dismissal.

The law covers direct age barriers and indirect barriers for all aspects of employment relationships, eg recruitment, selection, pay and benefits, promotion, dismissal, redundancy, retirement and training.

At present, the legislation does not include:

- » discrimination in goods and services such as differential insurance rates, financial services or health services;
- » education or voluntary unpaid work; duties on public bodies to promote age diversity

For more information about the legislation, look at www.worksmart.org.uk



Festive felicitations for fab four



**Maggie Fellows,
Project Manager,
Learning Works
for All**

As the festive season draws near, four union-led learning projects are celebrating after winning support for their proposals from unionlearn's 'Learning Works for All Fund' (LWfA).

The fund, managed by unionlearn, is provided

by the South West of England Regional Development Agency to support learning partnership work across the region.

Following the first bidding round in LWfA's second phase, the four projects have started work:

The NASUWT will be developing work/life balance policy and practice for Cornwall school staff through a second phase of the 'Cornwall Schools Work/Life Balance for All' Project.

The project, which has eleven partners has been granted £35,400 and will run from October 2006 until July 2008.

The 'Somerset Union Learning Project' will develop a network of school based union learning representatives and offer learning opportunities to staff

Another project focusing on the needs of school-based staff is the NUT-led 'Somerset Union Learning Project' which will develop a network of school based union learning representatives and offer learning opportunities to staff. Working with six other unions and Somerset County Council this project is another example of partners coming together to make things happen.

But you don't need to be working in a school for your union to pursue funds to support your learning. USDAW has won £45,000 from the fund to support its regional 'Check-Out Learning' project. This project, working with the Workers Education Association and Cornwall College, will bring learning to retail

and distribution workers in Sainsbury's and Co-op Retail Logistics.

Christmas is a festive season, but if you are facing redundancy it is an especially challenging time. The LWfA fund is pleased to be able to assist in these situations and has sponsored the 'BAE Land Systems Redundancy Support Project', which will offer training support to up to 130 workers being made redundant due to plant closure.

The project is TGWU-led and partnered by Bridgwater College, Nextstep and BAE Systems, with support from Prospect and Amicus. The project began in early September and will run until March 2008.

Results of the second bidding round will be with projects in early December, so as we go to print, another six projects are keeping their fingers crossed that they too will be toasting success in time for Christmas.

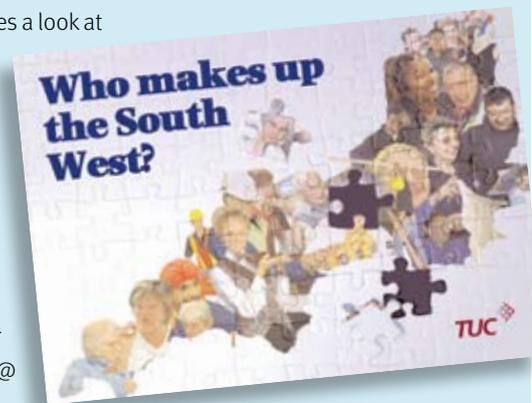
The next bid deadline is Friday, February 16 2007. For more information about the Learning Works for All Project: www.unionlearn.org.uk/southwest

Race book reprinted

The South West TUC's popular 'Who makes up the South West?' has been re-printed due to popular demand.

The 20-page full-colour booklet takes a look at race in the region, busting myths about asylum seekers and migrant workers as well as hearing some of their stories. It also looks at the far right political parties trying to exploit ignorance of these issues and explains how their racism can be combatted.

If you would like free copies for your workplace, please email southwest@tuc.org.uk or call 0117 947 0521.



Next year sees the third annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) History Month.

The event, which runs throughout February, involves a wide range of organisations including trade unions, libraries, schools, colleges, churches and community groups.

Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the TUC, said: "Lesbians, gay men and trans people may not have the law on their side, but there is still much to do to change social attitudes.

"Homophobia is still a long way from being banished in the UK, and events like LGBT History Month are intended to show that there is much we can learn from the bravery of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people who refused to be silenced in days gone by."

More details are available from www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

All TUC publications may be made available for dyslexic or visually impaired readers, on request, in an agreed electronic format or in accessible formats such as Braille, audio tape and large print, at no extra cost. Contact the South West TUC on 0117 947 0521.

