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***Will the next drivers of educational inequality be poverty, income and wealth?***

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## Background

- Trade unions have education at the very heart of their history
- Primary education
- Open University
- Union Learning Fund



## Access to learning – an equality issue

- One in five has a first degree qualification.
- One in six has no qualifications and lacks basic functional skill literacy.
- Those with low or no skills are likely to be older, disabled and from particular ethnic minority groups.



## Low wages inequality

- 1.6 million without any qualifications
- When in work, often trapped in low skill, low pay environment
- Half of all low/no skilled are unemployed
- 90% of all jobs are now advertised solely online
- Changes to Universal Credit



## Everyone can use the internet, can't they?

- In the North East an average 29% of adults have never been on the internet.
- In Newcastle upon Tyne 770 public sector workers don't use the internet.
- In Cumbria an estimated 11,875 children don't have access to the internet at home
- In Darlington almost 25% of communities have a negative attitude to the internet.



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- The estimated consumer benefits to those offline in Newcastle upon Tyne is £20.2 million
- Research has shown that the annual online financial benefit to consumers is: £365
- The average UK population % of those online who shop and transact on line is: 80% -  
So if **69,319** currently offline in Newcastle upon Tyne went online, and 80% then shopped online, the total annual benefit would be £20.2m



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***“Universal Credit – will rejuvenate Britain’s ruptured welfare system and give millions of people the tools to escape poverty”***

***The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)***



## Barriers to learning

- **Social and cultural barriers**
- peer pressure; family background.
- **Practical and personal barriers**
- transport; time; disability; childcare
- caring responsibilities finance
- cost; age; language; lack of access to information.
- **Emotional barriers**
- lack of self esteem or confidence due to low skills levels
- negative personal experience of learning
- previously undetected/unaddressed learning disabilities
- social problems such as unemployment, abuse or bullying.
- **Workplace**
- time off; unsupportive managers; access; shift work; discrimination





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- **Training and support for employers to better support increasing diversity, efforts to tackle occupational segregation and focus on skills utilisation**



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- **Better advice and guidance on opportunities, delivered within communities of interest**



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- **Employment support is critical for disabled workers**



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- **Better advice to potential school leavers and children from an early age to avoid occupational stereotyping**
- **Monitoring of strategies to increase diversity in apprenticeships and learning participation**



## Tackling inequality through policy

- Most people living in poverty in the North East are working parents, not people on benefits.
- Campaigns such as The Living Wage, Regional Pay
- Minimum wage



## What else can employers do?

- Recognise and support union learning reps (ULRs), giving them
- time to work across the whole workforce
- Support a learning culture in the workplace
- Ensure learning and training opportunities are flexible to enable access across all shifts and grades
- Recognise learners' achievements
- Actively seek to support the most vulnerable
- Consider incentivising engagement with learning
- Look at your whole workforce plan with the union
- Develop and improve learning agreements.



## Further information from TUC publications

- *Representing and Supporting Members with Mental Health Problems*
- *Sickness Absence and Disability Discrimination*
- *Disability at Work: a trade union guide to the law and good practice*
- *Domestic Violence: a guide for workplaces.*
- *Tackling Racism in the Workplace - negotiators' guide*
- *LGBT Equality in the Workplace: A TUC guide for union negotiators on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues*
- *TUC Guide to Equality Law*
- *TUC-CIPD Guide to Managing Age Diversity in the Workplace*
- *TUC Equality Duty Toolkit.*