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Trade Unions
Greening the Workplace

EU Forum: Impact of Climate Change on Employment, Brussels, 22 June 2009

Sarah Pearce – Green Workplaces Project Leader, TUC

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UK Context

- UK Policy – Climate Change Act
- GreenWorkplaces – employee participation to tackle climate change
- Gap between policy and practice
- New skills and competences

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Greenworkplaces – why?

- 2009 TUC survey - widespread failure by many employers to act
- Lack of training:
  - Only 7% able to reskill/upskill on climate change
  - Only 14% had undertaken trade union environmental training
- Evidence from TUC greenworkplace projects for union reps as catalysts for behavioural change

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Aims - Union Modernisation Fund

- Extending the consultation agenda
- Working in partnership
- Sustained dialogue
- Reducing carbon emissions

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Employers and rationale

- Employers: *e.g. United Utilities; Corus; Scottish Power; Leicester City Council; Great Ormond St. Hospital; National Library of Scotland...*
- Unions: e.g. *UNISON, Unite, GMB, Prospect, PCS, UCU, FDA, RCN, BMA, Community, NUT...*

- For examples of best practice:
  - potential to cut CO_2 and for active engagement, a strong branch, high membership density, commitment.

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Key activities

- Training – staff trained on environmental issues, energy audits, awareness raising.
- Open days –
  - "Most interest we've ever had in a union event..." (Amicus rep, Friends Provident)
  - Quarter of staff attended British Museum event.
- GWP Surveys – under 25% of staff knew company's sustainability or energy policy
- Establishing joint environmental committees and negotiating agreements
- Link to fuel poverty

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Training

Changes in skills and competences:

- Experience of trade union education
- Understanding climate change as a trade union issue
- Technical: energy/CO_2 relationship
- Leadership and behavioural changes
- Influence and persuasion skills
- Communication skills and confidence
- Research skills
- Planning and executing positive campaigns

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Key outcomes

- Employers recognising the value of union led employee participation
- Huge appetite and enthusiasm: behavioural change - “bottom up” approach
- Environmental committees
- Facility time agreements
- Transformation in industrial relations
  - Negotiated for –
    - capital ‘green’ investment
    - procedural changes & accountability
    - time off for training & facility time for union representatives

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Making it happen

- Active strategy
- Facilities and facility time for union environmental representatives
- Untapped potential – crucial expansion to meet carbon targets
- Funding for Europe-wide green workplace projects
- Employers recognising the value of union participation

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Any questions?

Sarah Pearce
spearce@tuc.org.uk
+44 (0) 207 467 1230

Keep in touch:
www.sustainableworkplace.co.uk or
www.tuc.org.uk/environment

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