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Greener Deals: Negotiating on Environmental Issues at Work

1. Introduction

This guide is aimed at trade union reps and members with an interest in having a practical impact on environmental issues in the workplace, and in particular climate change. It offers advice on mapping union organisation around green issues, negotiating with your employer on environmental issues and encouraging other trade unionists to get active at work.

Cutting carbon, not jobs

In the current economic climate, unions are under pressure to focus on other priorities like saving jobs and cutting costs. Many argue that slower economic growth will lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions anyway. But the costs of failing to act on climate change are severe. In 2006, the Government's Stern Review concluded that failing to act now could lead to a reduction in global income of between 5% and 20%.

With many employers facing tight budgets in the coming years, union action to green the workplace can help ensure that financial savings from resource and energy efficiency ease the pressure on other costs and saves jobs. The need to strengthen the link between sustainable workplaces and sustainable jobs has never been more urgent.

Climate change and workplace action

The scientific evidence for climate change, the warming of our climate system, is now indisputable. Despite what the skeptics will have you believe, climate change is the greatest environmental threat we face today with the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere pushing up global temperatures. It is predicted that the UK will face damage to infrastructure from storms and flooding, regular periods of drought and an increase in heat related deaths due to dangerously hot summers in our cities. It will harm living and working conditions, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest.

Half of UK carbon emissions are produced by work activity. Workplaces burn energy, consume resources and generate waste and travel. They are an obvious place to focus action on climate change as organisations are better placed than individuals to install cost-effective green measures.

2. Why is climate change a trade union issue?

Trade unions have a long history and proven ability to deliver progressive change on working conditions, health and safety, and equality. Climate change will affect us all, whether we live in developed or developing

nations, hitting our quality of life. As trade unionists, we must speak out for workers everywhere in the fight for social and environmental justice. Climate change issues link strongly to union policies on international development.

The TUC and its affiliates are calling for a just transition to a low carbon economy: for the costs and benefits of new environmental measures and the inevitable economic restructuring that will occur, to be shared out fairly. The work of union environmental reps is a key part of our just transition strategy. There are a wide range of benefits to unions and workers if environmental issues are included in the collective bargaining agenda:

- *The bottom line* is that making workplaces sustainable saves money, and helps to make jobs sustainable. Energy inefficiency in businesses and organisations means that extra costs are passed on to consumers and service users. Trade union members will be hit with a double whammy.

"Our GreenWorkplaces project encourages the employees to work with managers to identify areas where a reduction in CO_2 emissions can be achieved without sacrificing employees' jobs, pay and conditions" *(Phil Thompson, UNISON branch convenor and green rep, Leicester City Council)*

- *Extending the union consultation agenda* helps a union anticipate future changes and priorities and provides an increased awareness of external pressures on an organisation, for instance, any non compliance with environmental regulations, or financial penalties and fines.
- *Changes in working procedures* need to be assessed for their environmental impact. By working closely with branch reps and members, green reps can identify any concerns that are at odds with other employee interests and ensure change is fairly negotiated.
- *Working practices may need to be adapted* to cope with more frequent experience of higher temperatures. Dress codes, uniforms and equipment all need to be suitable for workplace conditions under a changing climate, and shift patterns and breaks may need to be reconsidered by employers and renegotiated.

NUT reps have negotiated a code of practice and guidelines for schools, nurseries and children centres on thermal comfort in Ealing, London:

"What we are pleased about is that there is an acceptance that staff or their union reps can request to close the workplace where thermal discomfort is registered by a majority of employees using the HSE checklist. This of course does not give the same rights as apply statutorily to minimum temperatures or any hazardous or risky situation identified by safety reps. But it is as near as we could get for the moment" *(Nick Grant, Ealing NUT secretary and health and safety advisor).*

- *Costs savings* can be fed into staff bonus schemes or ring-fenced for investment in environmental improvements.
- *Union renewal*: unions need to be seen as modern and relevant organisations that

deal with the big issues of the day. You don't get much bigger or more important than global climate change.

Prospect's Audit Commission branch has produced their own environmental sustainability policy setting out the branch carbon footprint, strategy, targets for reducing CO_2 and monitoring strategy:

"The most significant contributory factors are vehicle emissions arising from attendance at branch meetings and car travel to represent members involved in personal cases. We want to be an exemplar of best practice. We will set car emission reduction targets that exceed those currently set for the Audit Commission's fleet to demonstrate our commitment" *(Andrew Kewell, Prospect green rep, Audit Commission Branch).*

- *Environmental improvements* can maximise natural daylight, improve heating and ventilation controls and improve air quality, making workplaces healthier, safer, less stressful and more comfortable places to work.
- *Green jobs*: encouraging employers to focus on green issues can lead to the creation of new green jobs.
- *Staff engagement*: many employers have their own environmental champion schemes, but TUC GreenWorkplaces projects have found that workers on the frontline are often unaware of these. Union environmental reps by comparison, are answerable to union members.
- *Recruitment spin-offs*: union involvement in the environmental agenda can bring new members and reps into the union.

"There has been a far greater appetite amongst rank and file members to get involved with tackling environmental issues than there is for the other traditional trade union work areas. We have no problem recruiting green reps and even had a waiting list initially. Aligning ourselves with the green agenda has meant we now have another direct line to senior management through a corporate environment group" *(Steve Crawshaw, UNISON Chair of Bristol City Council's Green Reps Committee)*

Employers are failing to act

A TUC survey of over 1300 union reps about the environment and climate change was conducted by the Labour Research Department (LRD) in 2009. It showed that many employers are failing to make the necessary changes to improve the environmental impact of their workplaces. Reps reported that over a third of employers had done nothing to reduce waste, only 12% had taken comprehensive measures to insulate and glaze their premises, just 14% had installed more energy efficient heating systems and less than half had taken action on water conservation or introduced green purchasing.

"UK businesses are collectively missing out on combined cost savings of as much as £10 million per day by failing to maximise the potential of water efficiency" *(Envirowise, May 2009)*

With many employers failing to act, a collective and strategic response involving trade unions is vital. Even if some employers

do have environmental policies in place, there can be a failure to implement them. Unions have a pivotal role in:

- providing staff input to environmental policies
- monitoring the effectiveness of policies
- obtaining staff support for effective workplace measures.

Legal rights for trade union environment reps and training opportunities

The TUC is campaigning for statutory rights for Union Environmental Reps, to help them influence the environmental agenda at work. The campaign includes the call for a statutory right to a reasonable amount of paid time off to carry out their role and to attend training.

The TUC wants the law changed to allow amendments to be made to the ACAS Code of Practice, *Time off for Trade Union Duties and Activities* to recognise the role of unions in formal consultations with the employer on "sustainable production and consumption". The TUC is calling for a minimum 10 days of accredited training for green reps in the 12 months immediately following their election or appointment.

But even without these new rights unions are pushing ahead and negotiating at a local level for environmental issues to be included in the bargaining agenda.

For information on the TUC's free training course for trade union reps, "Trade Unions and the Environment" visit: www.unionlearn.org.uk/courses/index Online courses are also available.

Unions negotiating on green issues

In 2005, the TUC's *Greening the Workplace Report* highlighted a handful of union examples of action in the workplace. By 2009 over 1300 union reps replying to the LRD survey gave practical examples of how they are tackling climate change in their workplaces. The survey found over 200 examples of health and safety committees discussing climate related issues, over 150 working parties on the environment or climate change and 80 examples of joint management-union environmental committees.

Read the latest GreenWorkplaces case studies at: www.tuc.org.uk/extras/greenworkplacesreport.pdf

3. Why employers should green their workplaces

Employers need to recognise that more efficient use of resources is a long-term investment in their organisation's future rather than just a short-term cost.

Financial pressures and incentives to go green:

- *Economic competitiveness and reducing overheads* – with energy prices rising, cutting expenditure is a priority. Sound environmental management can lower landfill costs, water bills, transport costs and lower the costs of consumables, hardware and repairs

A 20% cut in energy costs represents the same bottom line as a 5% increase in sales in many businesses" *(Carbon Trust, Better Business Guide to Energy Saving, 2008).*

- *Tax incentives* – workplaces can save tax by going green, for example: exemptions from the Climate Change Levy for energy intensive industries adopting good environmental practice; Enhanced Capital Allowances (ECAs) that enable businesses to buy energy and water efficient equipment. Employers can also gain from reduced landfill tax, reductions in fuel duty, vehicle excise duty and air passenger duty through environmental measures.

Ninety-four per cent of British firms surveyed in a study of business attitudes towards environmental tax and regulations expect climate change to affect the way they conduct business in the next two to three years. Four in five are unclear as to what environmental tax incentives exist and how to apply for them *(Pricewaterhouse Coopers, June 2010)*

- *Subsidies and grants* – these include: unsecured, interest-free energy efficiency loans available from the Carbon Trust, businesses can borrow £5,000 to £100,000 for up to four years; feed-in tariffs (FIT) for electricity generated from small-scale renewables and other low-carbon generation technologies, visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk for more information; subsidised eco training for drivers and advice on fleet management to help lower running costs and reduce vehicle emissions, visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/business/Business/Transport-advice
- *Investment in the value of workplace infrastructure***.** Energy Display Certificates are now required whenever a building is built, sold or rented. The certificate provides an energy rating for the building. The seller or landlord is responsible for ensuring a certificate is available to all prospective buyers or tenants. Improving the energy efficiency of premises will boost the value of a company's assets.
- *Reducing insurance premiums* – in some sectors, such as the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, environmental audits are needed before insurance companies will provide cover. With extreme weather events expected to become more common, companies face a loss of business and increased insurance premiums.

Reputation – Investor, consumer and employee pressures:

- *Attracting customers and green investment* – customers, businesses in your supply chains and government all prefer companies with a clean and green record.
- *Improved recruitment, retention, morale and productivity* – 60% of UK employees say it's important to work for a company that has an active policy to reduce its carbon emissions (YouGov survey of 1,217 employees across the UK, 2007)

Ethical spending in the UK has jumped by 81% since 2002 **(the Co-operative Bank, Ethical Consumerism Report, 2007)**

Legislation from UK and Europe

- *Compliance with legislation and preparing for new laws* – the UK's Climate Change Act 2008 sets a target for an 80% reduction in CO_2 emissions by 2050, and by 34% by 2020. This means that organisations are under ever increasing pressure to comply with new laws and regulations in relation to environmental protection

- *Carbon Reduction Commitment* **Energy** *Efficiency Scheme (CRCEES)* – this new mandatory UK emissions trading scheme came into effect on 1 April 2010. It is expected to cover around 20,000 organisations (all those on half-hourly electricity meters who initially report to the scheme) and approximately 5000 of these (employers spending roughly £500,000 per year on electricity) will have to buy allowances to cover their annual emissions and participate in a Carbon Reduction Commitment League Table. It will cover large energy users in the public and private sector: hospitals, councils, colleges and universities, government departments and agencies, hotel and restaurant chains, retailers, banks, insurance companies, large warehouses and other major service employers. There are tough penalties and fines for non-compliance.

- *EU directives and regulations* – these cover a host of environmental laws on issues such as water quality, waste disposal, air pollution and vehicle emissions. For more information visit: www.netregs.gov.uk

- *Emissions trading scheme* – under this scheme for heavy industrial employers, participants can sell spare emission permits if they reduce their emissions.

"We have benefitted from a two-pronged approach. First, the targets and policies coming down from the UK and Scottish Governments have meant that we can get these items into policy documents through our sustainability steering group. The second prong is to get people involved through the library's green group and union" *(Prospect green rep, Tom Proudfoot, National Library of Scotland, TUC GreenWorkplaces Project)*

Unions and the CRCEES: National Library of Scotland.

Estates Architect and Prospect member, Linda MacMillan highlights how important the CRCEES has been as a driver for action at TUC GreenWorkplace, the National Library of Scotland:

"The CRC scheme has been a serious consideration for us. Even though we are not currently required to buy emission allowances, the fact that we must make an Information Disclosure means we are very focussed on the need to stay below the CRC threshold for full participation. We have used this to highlight to managers the need to reduce energy consumption in order to ensure that we continue to remain outside full participation. The bottom line is that the scheme could take money away from spending on NLS services if we don't cut our energy usage now."

The NLS Carbon Management plan emphasises the role of the trade union in encouraging staff engagement in energy reduction and is endorsed by the TUC GreenWorkplaces' project. It states:

"It is in the NLS interest to remain under the CRC threshold for full participation. Failure to do so at current emissions would incur a charge of at least £38k p.a., equivalent to the post of a skilled member of staff. Investing in infrastructure maintenance is preferred to having to buy carbon allowances."

Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme

Under the CRCEES, from day 1, employers are encouraged to consult with recognised trade unions and provide training and advice on energy savings.

Employers are encouraged to consult staff:

- either through providing energy management training to the majority of employees, or
- by having active employee working groups on energy management, which report to senior management, and take forward initiatives to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions, or
- where independent trade unions are recognised for collective bargaining purposes, energy management issues are considered in joint discussions and members actively take forward initiatives to reduce the organisations carbon emissions

Trade unions will need to put energy use and the CRCEES on the joint union-management agenda.

To download the TUC's guide to the scheme visit:

www.tuc.org.uk/extras/crc-ees.pdf

4. Making the case for trade union involvement

The Carbon Trust estimates that each year £2.4 billion, 21% of the total spent by UK businesses on energy, is wasted and that most businesses could easily save between 10-20% of their energy costs through simple low-cost and cost-free measures. But, to do this, workers on the ground must be involved. Staff will not be able to deliver changes if they don't understand and support the reasons why they are being introduced. The TUC's GreenWorkplaces projects demonstrate that employers need to see unions as part of the solution. Union involvement can lead to business benefits through improved environmental performance. Visit the British Museum case study at www.bis.gov.uk/files/file51155.pdf

"Although one individual may be responsible for energy efficiency, the involvement and commitment of all staff is crucial to achieving success", *Carbon Trust, Better Business Guide to Energy Saving, 2008)*

Points to consider:

- Union environmental reps can play a key role in securing workplace consultation and the active participation of union members in environmental initiatives at work. Union communication networks and consultative arrangements can offer ready-made links with employees on the ground that employers find hard to reach
- Unions have the confidence of their members, so union involvement in environmental projects will reassure employees that their interests are being taken into account and that the latest green campaign isn't just "greenwash"
- Setting up joint management and union environmental committees and negotiating framework agreements with employers can embed workforce engagement on carbon reduction and environmental sustainability into the way organisations work. Obtaining senior management buy-in is crucial to making a difference.
- If an organisation manages its environmental performance via an Environmental Management System (EMS), union involvement will strengthen the EMS and can form an important part of the evidence employers use to gain accreditation. Visit www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf (pages 27-29).
- The TUC GreenWorkplaces project found that joint work on environmental issues between management and unions helped to develop a mutual appreciation of the benefits of carbon reduction and improved industrial relations

Only 10% of UK consumers trust the green credentials of business and government **(AccountAbility and Consumers International, www.consumersinternational.org/shared_asp_files/GFSR.asp?NodeID=96683, 2007)**

Unions are best placed to:

- provide staff input to environmental policies and monitor their effectiveness
- gain staff support for changes to workplace practices
- use existing union structures and procedures to influence and develop

members' thinking and actions

- raise staff awareness and encourage behavioural change
- improve operational procedures.

For all these reasons, employers in the TUC's GreenWorkplaces projects have supported union involvement.

"True sustainability is a team effort and cannot be achieved without the active co-operation and interest of all. The unions have a strong history of helping BT and its people in meeting the challenges brought about by our modern world. I am pleased to see their active involvement in the challenge of making a significant reduction in our carbon footprint" **(Phil Dance, MD at Adastral Park, BT's research and development headquarters and a TUC GreenWorkplaces Project).**

Mapping union organisation

Finding people to take on the role of a green rep needs planning and publicity. A systematic approach can help:

- Draw up a list of any existing reps and members who have expressed an interest.
- Map the key sites and departments that require a union presence.
- Identify the existing gaps between activists and locations.
- Plan an intervention in each of the areas where there is no representation.

To do this you may need to:

- ask workers if there is anyone working in their area who has expressed an interest in environmental issues
- distribute union material asking for volunteers, with a contact point for follow-up
- plan an event to raise interest among that group of staff. For advice visit www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf
- publicise any successes to show the union can make a difference.

Where individuals have expressed an interest, there should be a discussion around what they are willing and able to do and arrangements for training and facilities. Initially, the person may only want to be a point of contact for the union on environmental issues. This may involve distributing leaflets and reporting any concerns. Over time, and as new reps gain in confidence, this role can be expanded.

Recruiting new reps to take on the green rep role will avoid overburdening existing union reps.

Sarah Lewis, UNISON branch secretary at Great Ormond Street Hospital TUC GreenWorkplace gives some sound advice on organising union reps: "it's vital to keep the momentum going and keep in touch with reps. I make sure new recruits only take on the tasks they want to. Some reps volunteer to do far too many environmental audits, especially when they start! So I try and keep things realistic and don't overload them".

5. Negotiating on climate change

If your employer has no local or national agreement on union environmental reps, you'll need to convince them that green reps have a role to play. Evidence from TUC GreenWorkplace projects show that setting up formal negotiating structures and getting time off for green reps can help to build effective campaigns. Consider:

- checking for any existing environmental policies or sector documents
- finding out if existing policies make reference to staff engagement or involvement
- identifying a range of points that could be put to management to illustrate why involving the union is the best way to achieve better environmental standards

  highlighting how unions can help the employer to manage risks in relation to:

  - economic requirements – significant savings can be made if resources are managed effectively
  - legal requirements – the large and growing number of statutory requirements as well as civil judgments arising from environmental laws
  - community requirements – the workforce and local community need to have confidence that employers are fulfilling their obligations to control environmental risks and combat climate change.

Use examples of where union involvement has improved environmental and business performance. If you can't find anything for your industry or company, use relevant examples from TUC GreenWorkplaces projects, or from the LRD 2009 survey, and contact your own union for examples of best practice. For case studies, see the further reading section at the end of this guide.

For further advice on making a business case for a carbon reduction project visit www.carbontrust.co.uk/Publications/pages/publicationdetail.aspx?id=CTV039

Drawing up a strategic plan

Before meeting management you need to prepare the ground:

- Draft up a negotiating plan with other reps
- If possible, involve other unions at your workplace: often management feels less threatened at union involvement when a joint union approach is made.
- Include the item on a union committee agenda. Give an initial report and get agreement on making this a priority issue. Ask for ideas on developing the plan. Anticipate any barriers management may put in the way of trade union involvement and have some counter arguments ready.
- Raise staff awareness through your communication channels and indicate that the union intends to prioritise the issue.
- Identify someone in management who may be prepared to support the union position, and discuss approaches that are more likely to lead to a positive response.
- Try to establish some short- and long-term

objectives. To start with, you may only get agreement on involvement on a few issues, but once you've proved your success, an extension of the role with facilities and paid release may emerge.

- Start with a non-contentious issue that is easy to get approval for and make a short-term impact. You cannot afford to select anything but a winner at this point: you need the employer's backing, a positive response and a quick win to highlight the value of union involvement. You could look to further, more substantial projects that need more funding, once the union has a reputation for delivering environmental success.

Unions involved in TUC GreenWorkplaces projects approached management jointly with a clear, concise proposal including an action plan and timetable. This helped them to overcome any suspicions on the part of management and helped employers see union involvement as largely non-adversarial.

Any written proposal needs to have the complete story, in simple terms, on the first page. Consider also that an energy or carbon project, may be unfamiliar territory for some managers. If they don't understand your objectives, their safe option is to reject it. Your greenworkplace project will have to satisfy employer objectives but possibly individual ambitions as well. Identifying a management "sponsor" could be particularly worthwhile.

Things you may want to find out:

- Who is responsible for environmental issues on the management side. They could be an important ally.
- Are there any existing forums or committees where the issue is discussed? If so, get copies of minutes and agendas. Again, use relevant contacts in management to help you gather this information and consider sounding them out on their views about environmental performance within your organisation
- Find out if your employer is already signed up to environmental targets. If they aren't, you can use examples from other companies to indicate the type of target that may be achievable
- Has an environmental staff survey been carried out for your workplace? If yes, try to obtain a copy of the survey and results
- Has an environmental inspection been carried out? try and obtain a copy of the form used and the results.

Establishing a committee

In most cases, you will need a forum to meet management. This may be a sub-committee of an existing structure like a health, safety and environment committee, or a separate arrangement.

Either way you will need to consider:

- *Membership* – the management side should be represented by a senior manager and include roles like facilities, purchasing and any staff with a specific environmental management role. The staff side should consist of union reps from recognised unions. Additional involvement may be needed on an ad hoc basis. For example, the HR department or specific staff who deal with particular aspects of policy and implementation.

- *Conduct* – establishing procedures on how the committee will function. For example, frequency of meetings, who will chair it and its relationship to other bodies
- *Terms of reference* – this should outline the range of issues to be discussed.

> "The Green Forum at National Museums Liverpool involves staff from different grades and paybands to make the most of all workers' expertise" *(Clara Paillard, PCS branch secretary, National Museums Liverpool)*

Negotiating a joint environment or climate change agreement or policy

The TUC has produced a model agreement in our handbook for green reps, *Go Green at Work*. Visit www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf This includes tips on the contents of policies (pages 19–20).

The agreement or policy should cover the main issues, such as waste management, but make sure it also cross references any other more detailed policies that exist which may include specific targets and action points.

For further advice on negotiating on climate change see www.tuc.ord.uk/extras/targetingclimatechange.pdf

6. Union concerns about environmental issues

The LRD 2009 survey identified a number of union concerns about environmental issues.

Some of the problems that reps reported included:

- Greenwash – an environmental claim that is unsubstantiated or irrelevant. The most common complaint was that employers used "green" arguments to impose car parking charges or reduce car parking provision, without consultation, and without even considering either employee needs, or greener alternatives such as car sharing or public transport improvements. Other concerns included shutting down offices and cutting staff under the guise of reducing carbon footprints, or paying "lip service" and introducing "token measures", for example, displaying "token" solar panels, in reception areas that generated only a fraction of the power being used.
- A lack of investment in green measures, even if management are supportive of green ideas.
- Widespread redundancies while opportunities to save energy costs are ignored.
- A lack of commitment on green issues by management unless forced into action by regulations.
- A lack of any joined-up approach, for example, new energy efficient measures being cancelled out by the introduction of new power-hungry technology.

How you deal with these problems will vary from workplace to workplace and you can seek advice from your union. You may want to consider the following points:

- Carrying out an impact assessment of any proposed green measure. Working closely

with members and all branch reps will help to identify impacts at an early stage and ensure that environmental concerns are not at odds with other employee interests. For example, green travel plans can offer a range of benefits but may have implications for shift workers and for other terms and conditions of employment. Imposing additional charges for car parking or removing car parks could have a financial consequence for staff

- Greenwash could sabotage a union's environmental campaign. It's vital that unions are able to negotiate and lobby for effective environmental measures and communicate the facts to staff, not the fiction
- Keeping up to date with the latest changes in environmental policies at www.netregs.org.uk
- Asking other reps for help and logging onto the environmental bulletin board at www.unionreps.org.uk. where other reps may be able to offer online advice
- Working closely with health and safety reps. Some environmental issues are covered by health and safety law in the UK. Visit www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf (page 24)
- Keeping union members up to date with any contentious issues. Management need to know that environmental change stands a better chance of winning the support of staff, if staff are fully consulted through their recognised trade union. Involving staff at all levels, makes the most of worker expertise and can highlight implications that may have been overlooked

This guide outlines the benefits of a green workplace for both employers and unions, more in-depth resources are available at www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/index.cfm?mins=87&minors=4&majorsubjectID=2

A word about the "green police"

Union green reps can come under pressure to police staff behaviour, to use more of the stick approach and less of the carrot. Individual actions, such as turning off computers and photocopiers at night, are all worthwhile, as a first step forward. But many other changes may be necessary. Employers must be tasked with the duty to reduce the workplace carbon footprint. As well as asking each staff member to turn their computer off, it makes economic and environmental sense to invest in technology to automate energy saving processes. That's why green issues need to feature on the collective bargaining agenda.

We know unions are best placed to encourage work colleagues to change their behaviour, but changing a habit is difficult. Behavioural change really happens through education and raising awareness. Only then will we switch off electrical equipment through a genuine concern for our environment and our jobs. It needs to become socially unacceptable for us to leave work with all the lights blazing.

7. Communication and getting active

Without action – the climate sceptics have won – they just need people to sit back and do nothing. Unions need to get people active. But how can we encourage others to take action?

"Climate change is no longer a scientist's problem - it's a salesman's problem. Threats of climate hell haven't seemed to hold us back from running headlong towards it" (Futerra Sustainability Communications, www.futerra.co.uk)

Communication is key. Even when employers have environmental policies in place, staff are often poorly informed about them, if at all. Unions need to evaluate the communication and the information provided by the employer.

Union communication also needs to be two-way, through meetings, events, committees, surveys, posters, newsletters, intranets and online staff forums. Communicate success and the role of the union. Once people see positive changes, they are less likely to be cynical. People will only believe they can make a difference if results are fed back to them. Use your union logo on all environmental material.

Unions must get their message across in a way staff can relate to and in a way that is as clear as possible. Don't set yourself up as an expert: keep your focus on your role as a union rep.

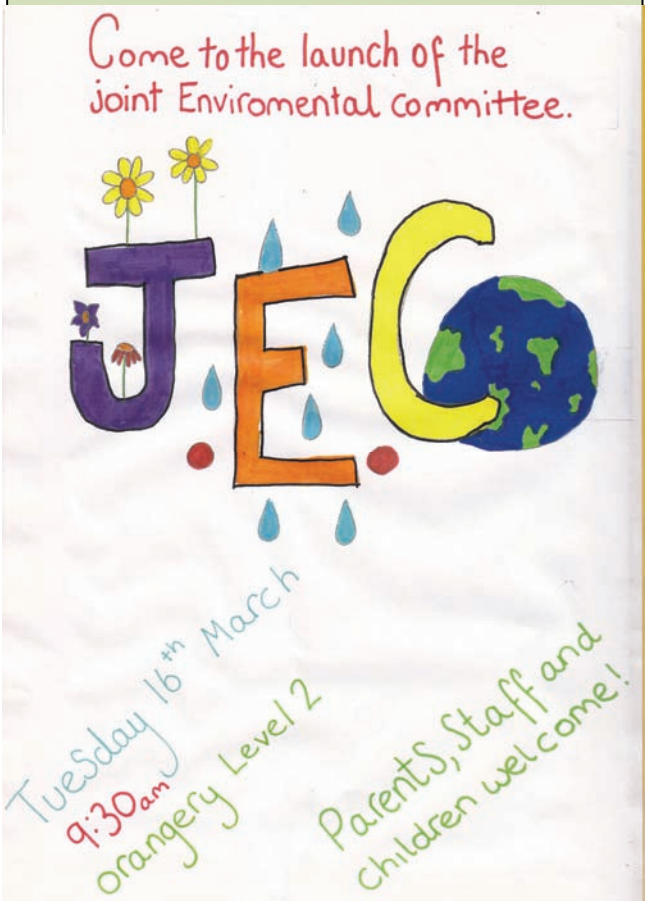
Consider the barriers to active employee participation. No one should be made to feel guilty about climate change, so instead focus more on removing the blocks to behavioural change. You may consider the following points in designing a communication strategy:

- To overcome staff apathy requires education and awareness raising. People are influenced by commonly held views, so make your campaign highly visual to encourage employee participation and convince people that the union is taking environmental issues seriously
- Climate change messages can be dull, depressing or doom-laden, so instead, stress the real opportunities for pressing for positive change in your campaign. Make your messages and slogans punchy, and varied, to interest different people
- People can suffer from information overload, they tend to look at subjects or issues that interest them and ignore the rest, so it's important to use focussed communications. Making campaigns local can make them more meaningful
- Tell people what's in it for them and highlight tangible benefits. Perhaps a safer, healthier, cleaner and less stressful workplace with improved transport arrangements and better heating and ventilation. At the National Library of Scotland's GreenWorkplace project, Prospect reps linked utility bills to jobs, telling staff that one year's worth of utility savings would equal in cost, 32 members of staff, including salary, pension and national insurance contributions.
- Think about what your audience wants, not what you want them to want. People are often motivated by clear opportunities or threats to their personal interests. Rational arguments alone don't always work – people still smoke cigarettes!

Jane McCann is GMB senior rep at Worcestershire County Council and gives union environmental work a high profile:

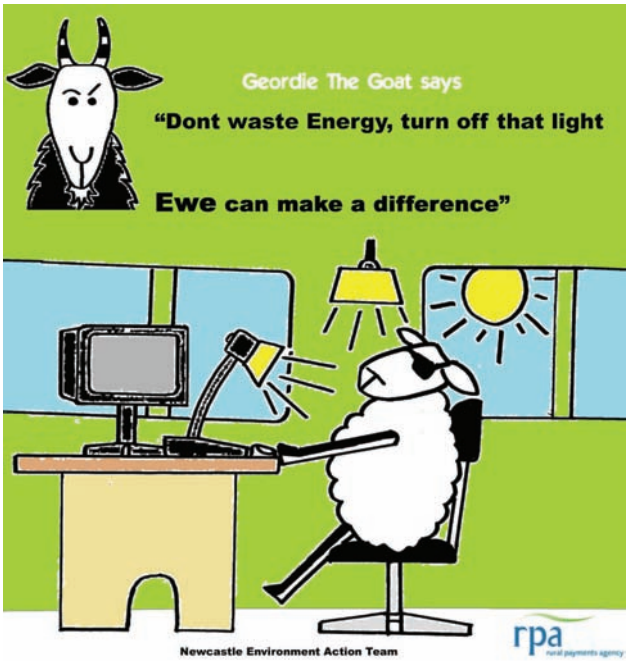
"I try to keep sustainability issues real and relevant and firmly rooted in industrial relations. I keep things simple and to the point and often use slogans of my own like: 'The Green Future is Now' and 'GMB...moving from putting it right ...to making it right' to emphasise being proactive"

Union reps at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children launched a poster campaign to publicise their green event, aiming to raise awareness of their newly formed joint management-union environment committee. Children at the hospital's school and staff crèche designed logos for the committee and received energy saving gadgets as prizes. The event was attended by over 300 staff, patients and families. As a thank you, the school children were given recycling bins for their classroom. **See below for Eloise's poster!**



- Try to avoid too many dates, percentages and figures in your messages. Using pictures is far easier for people to grasp than reams of statistics
- Talk about how climate change affects you personally. Use passion and humour.

COIN (Climate Outreach Information Network) run training courses for trade unionists and are working with trade unions to set up climate action groups in local communities. For more advice on climate change communication and to get involved visit www.coinet.org.uk.



Above: Imaginative poster designed by PCS rep Andy Davis, Rural Payments Agency

8. First steps

If you are new to trade union involvement in environmental issues you might want to look at training courses first. Visit: www.unionlearn.org.uk/courses/index . Get in touch with your union, some unions provide their own environmental training for reps.

Other actions and points to consider:

- Check your union website: Is there an environment page? If yes, check for resources.
- Has your union got a policy on green reps, have any attempts been made to get recognition at a local or national level?
- Map your union organisation and potential activists.
- Consider organising a green event in your workplace. For more advice visit www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf (page 83). Talk to the union learning rep and take up opportunities to link events with training initiatives like continuous professional development (CPD) programmes.
- Consider carrying out an environmental survey to get staff opinions and identify staff concerns on environmental issues in the workplace. This will highlight ideas and solutions, give staff ownership of the project and raise the profile of the union's environmental work. For a model survey visit www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf (page 86).
- Check the resources available to union environmental reps at the TUC GreenWorkplaces website, in particular the TUC's handbook for union green reps, "*Go Green at Work*". Other briefings, reports and case studies are available online or through TUC publications. Visit www.tuc.org.uk/environment
- Sign up for the TUC's GreenWorkplaces monthly newsletter at www.tuc.org.uk/newsroom/register.cfm

TUC Green Reps Network

Look out for the TUC's green reps network due to launch in autumn 2010. It will help to put you in touch with other green reps in your sector, and will host regional and national events for union environmental reps

9. Case studies: Green Unions at Work

A&P Marine, Falmouth

A&P Marine in Falmouth is a large dockyard employing over 450 staff and many more casual workers. The company's main business is the refitting and repair of large vessels, many from the Ministry of Defence, but also from private companies. It has now branched out to work with renewable energy companies to develop wave power generators to be used at Cornwall's Wave Hub, the UK's first offshore facility to act as a test site for different devices that can convert wave power into energy.

A&P have a workplace energy team, which has identified various energy saving initiatives across the large site. These have included: replacing the compressor system, (a system

that provides the docks with compressed air used to power tools) with a more energy efficient model, a £100,000 outlay that paid for itself within 18 months, as well as installing a new energy efficient pump for one of its three dry docks at a cost of £12,000. This pays for itself every nine months.

The South West TUC's GreenWorkplaces Project has been working with the GMB learning rep and the workplace energy team at A&P at the invitation of Gary Palmer, a GMB project worker. The energy team wanted to widen the reach of their projects by involving the wider workforce with on-site energy saving.

To do this, an agreement was reached for the South West TUC GreenWorkplaces project to deliver an energy saving at work training session for staff from different workshops and departments across the dockyard. The initial pilot session was attended by both GMB and Unite members from various departments across the site.

> "It's hoped that the successful pilot session on raising awareness will lead to all employees attending future courses about energy saving and environmental issues" **(Gary Palmer, GMB project worker).**

During the training session, employees identified how they felt the company could save money on energy, how best to engage the workforce in doing this and highlighted some if the initiatives already put in place. The workshop also looked into how staff could use the ideas from the day to save energy, and costs, at home.



Union reps at A&P Marine discuss energy saving options. Picture by Ania Kondera

"These courses" said Gary **"**arranged by the GMB and the South West Green Workplaces project will, we hope, lead to developing a long term culture within the yard of undertaking simple energy saving actions. These really can make a difference in both reducing energy usage for the company, and in developing a culture of energy saving which could lead to reductions and savings in energy costs for staff in their homes."

BECTU, Venues in the South West

Performance venues can be huge energy users, with high wattage stage lights, dressing rooms and brightly lit front-of-house areas.

The South West TUC Green Workplaces Project has teamed up with BECTU to offer events aimed at helping theatre & performance venue staff to save money and reduce carbon emissions at venues across the region. Training sessions were open to casual, part-time or freelance technicians in the entertainment industry and managers & directors of venues and arts centres.

Over two separate sessions, Martin Roberts, BECTU Learning Organiser and Chief Technician at Torquay's Princess Theatre, took nearly 40 theatre technicians, managers and freelancers from 20 different workplaces on tours of the Northcott Theatre in Exeter and Bristol's Old Vic.

He pointed out how low-energy systems could be deployed, including actions such as: installing motion sensor lighting, setting lights on timers, and even sourcing high quality low energy lights for dressing rooms, a back stage option that enabled technicians to score an initial "quick win" in terms of energy saved for minimal cost. This approach can help to quickly demonstrate the financial gains from energy saving projects and help build an argument for further investment to cover the cost of more expensive energy efficient lighting options for stage and front of house.

Martin has saved nearly a £1000 a year in reduced energy costs at the Princess Theatre in Torquay. He said: "This sort of training day lets people see firsthand that, by making small changes as you go through the year, a venue can go green, saving money, as well as the environment. We also looked at ideas that can be planned with bigger investment in the future".

This approach can be rolled out across any workplace using lighting rigs: museums, schools, universities, arts centres, halls and festivals, as well as theatres. With the Arts Council's original budget for 2010/11 being reduced by £23 million, from £468 million to £445 million, employers in the arts and culture sector face huge cuts. As a result, saving energy as well as carbon has the potential to make jobs more secure (www.artscouncil.org.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=1042&NewsAreaID=2).

The South West TUC project team is now putting together an information pack available to venue staff. For more details contact South West GreenWorkplaces on 0117 947 0521 or email southwest@tuc.org.uk.

Bristol City Council

Unions at Bristol City Council have negotiated a joint environmental agreement with their employer, thought to be the first full formal green reps agreement with any local authority in the UK.

Backed by the South West TUC's Green WorkPlaces Project, the unions: Unison, Unite and the GMB, have set up a green reps committee, gained recognition for green reps and signed an agreement for facility time to take action and to access training. The agreement covers 12 green reps, two per department, each spending up to 24 days a year working on environmental issues.

Frances Robertson, South West TUC Green Workplaces Project coordinator, describes how this victory was won. "The unions invited us to help get the environmental agreement ball rolling. Reps were unanimous in their support for the introduction of green reps at the council and I spoke at their joint health and safety committee and their joint executive committee comprised of union reps, management staff and city councillors".

Once an agreement was agreed in principal, the trade union side recruited green reps from every department and reps have attended the *TUC Trade Unions and the Environment* three-day accredited course.

Steve Crawshaw, UNISON, elected chair of the committee, explains how the group recruited green reps. "I emailed known shop stewards

across the council asking them to get involved or to spread the word to potential volunteers" he says. "Recruiting green reps was certainly easier than finding shop stewards or health and safety reps".

"I've had new union members tell me that they only joined the union because they wanted to become a green rep" **(Steve Crawshaw, UNISON Chair of Bristol City Council's green rep committee).**

The committee's work programme focuses on four priority areas:

- Implementing a standard approach to waste and recycling in all major council buildings
- Replacing all large bottled water dispensers with filtered, cooled mains water where practicable
- Developing a waste management policy for all council-organised festivals and events
- Running an eco-driving scheme targeting high mileage drivers at the council.

The committee has already implemented a programme of eco-driving training, training 60 drivers so far. "The training should help deliver fuel savings of at least £350 every year for each diesel van covering at least 25,000 miles in a year" says Steve, "it should also help to reduce stress by encouraging employees to drive with a more relaxed and calm attitude".

UK Road Safety Limited quotes a 10% fuel saving where operators actively monitor and manage their fleets post training. There should also be a reduction in the costs of vehicle maintenance. Crucially, the scheme has important health and safety implications with the potential to reduce exposure to risk from road traffic accidents.

To download the Bristol City Council Joint Environment Agreement visit: www.greenworkplacessouthwest.org.uk

BT, Adastral Park, Ipswich BT

Union members at British Telecom are greening Adastral Park, BT's research and development headquarters near Ipswich through the TUC's national GreenWorkplaces Project. The park is home to 3,500 BT staff plus 500 non-BT employees and houses more than 30 companies.



Suffolk County Council's Slim Your Bin campaign at a union environment day at BT's Adastral Park. Picture by Robin Gape

The main goal is to involve the workforce in reducing the Park's environmental impact, initially by engaging staff in site-wide carbon impact assessments covering energy, water and waste.

Consultations between onsite Prospect (formerly Connect), CWU reps, senior management and the TUC led to a union environment day and workshop being arranged in November 2009 to coincide with a 'Connect week' and a range of union activities.

On union environment day, employees were able to visit the Energy Saving Trust's 'energy doctor' for one-to-one advice and try out a driving simulator to practice eco-driving techniques. Union stands provided further green advice, books, plus an energy efficient light bulb and energy meter try-it-before-you-buy-it service.

Two key suggestions arising from the TUC workshop were to formalise the environmental agenda, boosting frontline employee

involvement by setting up an environmental forum, and also to increase employee ownership through greater union participation.

The first meeting of the Adastral Park environmental forum took place in mid-January 2010 and consultations will continue to negotiate its role and responsibilities with the site management team. It meets monthly with occasional ad-hoc meetings in-between as required. This work complements that of the union health and safety reps who are operating in conjunction with both unions on site.

All staff who registered for the training have joined the forum, and carbon impact assessments are underway. Following a review by union environmental reps, a plan has been approved to replace 59 bottled water units with plumbed-in tap water chillers, avoiding the need to produce, deliver, store and lift more than 3,500 18 litre water bottles a year.

With support and training from the union, Andrew Cassy, Prospect (formerly Connect) environment rep has been able to expand his role and become the official site-wide sustainability champion on behalf of senior managers.

> "I have found the union support and resources invaluable for my own personal development and awareness on environmental matters, which has directly fed into my employment activities. The full range of union resources have been used, from online information feeds, training events, local, national and even international conferences, green camps and booklets through to local branch representation and support" **(Andrew Cassy, Prospect, formerly Connect, union environment rep, BT).**

Bury St Edmunds Fire Station, Suffolk

After attending a TUC conference on how to "Go Green at work", a FBU rep is raising the profile of environmental issues at the fire station where he works.

Paul Turner, FBU rep at Bury fire station in Bury St Edmunds, has introduced recycling, composting and energy efficiency measures into his workplace and has been working with management regionally to improve the service's environmental impact. Initial actions include:

- Discussions with management on making new build fire stations and refurbished stations in the region more energy efficient
- Identifying energy efficiency measures to improve the environmental performance of other stations across the region,

beginning with those stations with the greatest room for improvement

- Getting agreement that the Brigade improve the communication of its environmental goals and objectives by making its Directorate Environmental Action Plan (DEAP) more reader friendly. The brigade aims to raise the profile and train the workforce on DEAP. The union has highlighted that simple clear communication of aims and objectives to staff will need to be prioritised
- Gaining agreement from management to recycle condemned fire hoses at Bury Fire Station. The hoses used to be sent to landfill but are now being turned into designer bags and belts. The company involved has agreed to donate 50% of the profits to the Fire-fighters Charity and the scheme will reduce the amount of landfill tax the service has to pay. The union aims to get neighbouring fire authorities to join the scheme
- Lowestoft and Bury fire stations have successfully bid for compost bins and staff at each station will be given priority to take part in a composting course
- An environmental audit of the FBU's own regional office in Essex

Paul has recognised how much more he could achieve with facility time and has asked for union green reps to be granted facility time within DEAP: "Union members in other fire stations have said they would be keen to act as a contact point for me on green issues. Getting facility time would mean I could visit other stations in the region".

Paul is organising an eco-fair at Bury Fire Station attracting a multitude of charities, organisations and businesses from across the region to participate. The event has provided an opportunity to get other union members involved in environmental issues. Proceeds from raffles and donations are being given to the Fire-fighters Charity and East Anglia's Children's Hospices which is building a purpose-built children's hospice in Ipswich. Funds raised at the eco-fair are being ring-fenced to pay for its sedum roof.



FBU rep Paul Taylor with condemned fire hose now to be re-engineered into designer bags and belts

"There are many colleagues in my station who are now offering assistance especially with the Eco-fair. I am really encouraged by the way they have understood what I am doing" **(Paul Turner, FBU rep, Bury St Edmunds Fire Station).**

To make the most of communication and publicity networks, Paul has joined forces with local green campaigners to publicise the event to a wider audience using the internet and local radio.

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust, London

At Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust (GOSH), union members identified the potential for a systematic approach to cutting resource use in the workplace. In line with the NHS carbon management programme, the hospital has an initial target of a 15 per cent reduction in its carbon emissions between 2008 and 2012.

With work underway to redevelop and refurbish the hospital site, the UNISON branch submitted a project brief to the staff involvement forum (SIF), the chief joint management-union negotiating body at GOSH, for a union led greenworkplace project.

The initiative won the support of all other unions and professional bodies – the British Dietetic Association, the British Medical Association, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Royal College of Nursing and Unite – as well as the Chief Executive of the NHS Trust.

Joint consultations with the environmental services manager took place and the unions issued a staff survey on workplace environmental issues to find out which issues staff thought should be prioritised.

A green fair, organised by union reps followed, with a welcome from the Chief Executive of the Trust, outside speakers, films and stalls. At the event, staff signed up for two training sessions provided by the TUC's national GreenWorkplaces project.

Following the training, a joint management-union environment committee (JEC), including senior management and union representation, was established. The 30-member strong committee meets every six to eight weeks. The main focus of work is a rolling programme of environmental audits of every department and ward using environmental checklists designed by the committee. With its remit agreed by the trust's management board, all members are granted reasonable time off to conduct official committee business during work hours and carry out environmental audits.



The union-management environment committee at Great Ormond Street Hospital show off their environmental mascot 'Envirolump'.

To help spread the environmental message in a fun, child friendly manner, the JEC has re-launched the hospital's children's mascot – 'Envirolump' (pictured) and with its help, committee members have introduced the union's environmental work to staff at departmental away days and to patients and families across the hospital at green events.

Sarah Lewis, UNISON branch secretary and chair of the Joint Environment Committee highlights what motivates staff to get involved: "The NHS creates one million tons of carbon emissions every year. If the NHS shaved 15% off its energy consumption, it would save £50 million per year on its energy bills. That's equivalent to 7,000 heart by-pass operations. We need to do our bit at Great Ormond Street, and help share good practice throughout the NHS."

For more information on the TUC's Greenworkplace project at GOSH visit: www.tuc.org.uk/extras/greenworkplacesreport.pdf

For a model environmental checklist to adapt for your workplace contact TUC GreenWorkplaces at spearce@tuc.org.uk

HM Prison Guys Marsh, Shaftesbury

At HM Prison Guys Marsh, a PCS green rep has established a project to turn food waste into energy.

The prison provides 1,700 meals a day to its 570 prisoners and all the scraps that prisoners and staff leave behind, as well as metal food tins, used to be thrown into a big skip and sent to landfill.

But now, PCS green rep Wayne Walters, has set up a system known as an anaerobic digestion plant to convert food waste into electricity. The project has saved prison management, and the taxpayer, about £1,500 a month. That's £18,000 a year just to clear plates.

In the system, food waste is used to generate electricity. The food waste is converted into methane gas used to run a generator that in turn powers the machine that converts even more waste into electricity, that powers the plant...and so the cycle continues. Soon, the system will require no external power source. Solid waste from the process is used as fertiliser on the prison gardens.

"As far as I know, the anaerobic digestion plant is the only such system in the prison service, it may even be the only one in the civil service" **(Wayne Walters, PCS green rep, HMP Guys Marsh).**

Wayne, who has been working with prison management, says: "I employ eight prisoners at the moment, who help me to collect waste and run the plant, and this will be increasing to 12 in the near future. It's a great thing for the prisoners to be involved with, and we are leading the way in showing prisoners what we can do with waste material and how we can use this as energy".

As well as turning waste into energy and producing fertiliser for the prison grounds, the prison is now:

- installing a new boiler to burn wood chips instead of diesel
- recycling metal food cans, furniture and prisoner clothes
- collecting rainwater from its roof
- growing vegetables in prison greenhouses
- maintaining an onsite wildlife conservation area
- holding wing-based competitions around energy and water use with prizes for those who reuse and recycle

- discussing with the 100% renewable energy company Good Energy, the opportunities for selling the energy generated at the prison, to the company.

Potential future plans include:

- offering qualifications in recycling for prisoners
- turning a disused house on the grounds into an eco-centre that would be open to the public as well as acting as an educational facility for prisoners.

The environmental improvements underway at Guy's Marsh could be introduced across the prison service. Wayne says: "I would really like to see other prisons start to recycle a lot more of their waste. This is something that most could do and that would not only save running costs but would also help save our planet for the future".

Wayne wants to expand his role as PCS green rep and has attended the TUC *Trade Unions and the Environment* course through the South West TUC Green Workplaces Project.

In June 2010, a guest from the American trade union movement, Barbara Byrd, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) in Oregon, visited the prison. Clearly impressed with the initiative at Guy's Marsh, Barbara commented "I can see great potential for this type of facility in the US".

HMRC Benton Park View (BPV), Newcastle

In April 2008, the PCS branch at HM Revenue and Customs at Benton Park View (BPV) in Newcastle set up its own environment committee. The committee has played a crucial role in helping the Department work towards its own Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate"(SOGE) targets. Set by central government, SOGE targets aim to reduce the environmental impact of government departments.

All members of the committee are health & safety reps and any new recruits attend the PCS two day "*Introduction to Health and Safety*" course. At BPV, the branch has found this approach suits them explaining: "We find it's useful to have health and safety reps on the environmental committee as there is a close overlap between health and safety and sustainability issues, particularly the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) regulations".

Two members of the committee sit on the Benton Park View Local Environment Officer forum (or LEO forum). This was set up by management a number of years ago, under its sustainable development team.

The LEO forum is responsible for encouraging waste segregation and recycling across the site. Staff from HMRC, the Department for Work and Pensions and other employers meet once a month. The site has achieved ISO 14001 environmental accreditation and the sustainable development team recruit internal auditors from the LEOs. Two members of the PCS HMRC branch environmental committee have now completed internal auditor training.

In discussions with local management, the environment committee has used the government's SOGE targets to identify waste created by new working practices, in

particular, the rise in the use of paper which often duplicates electronic communication.

The environment committee has also secured a seat on the site-wide sustainable development steering group and asked the steering group to revise HMRC's SOGE targets to include plastic as a specific waste category. With HMRC shifting to the use of plastic bags for its internal mail, instead of brown paper multi-purpose envelopes, this could have a significant impact on waste arisings.

Communication is key to success. Following initial problems getting information on progress towards targets and waste management, (the sustainability development team sits within the larger estates business unit in HMRC), the union environment committee is now engaging more effectively with management.

The BPV environment committee says:
"You need to be aware of where power actually lies within an organisation, it may not always be with the first committee you come to".

The environment committee sees its main priorities as developing concrete proposals around other HMRC sustainable development targets such as transport and getting these on the bargaining table with local management. Current plans to link into a wider regional community transport users committee, evolving from a recent local campaign to prevent the privatisation of the Tyne and Wear light rail passenger system, the Metro, are seen as one way forward here.

HMRC Lillyhall, Workington

PCS reps at HM Revenue and Customs at Lillyhall in West Cumbria have set up a climate action group with help from their union and the Climate Solidarity Project Group.

The group have been focusing on how to reduce their carbon footprint in the workplace and at home, taking action to reduce the amount of food waste they generate in a carbon crunching activity called "*waste not want not*".

Angela Harrison, PCS Branch Learning Co-ordinator at HMRC Lillyhall, explains how the project worked: "We basically had a week where we chose to eat out and buy takeaways at meal times". This initial week of overloading may not have done much towards tackling climate change but it did offer a valuable insight into typical eating habits, the real motivation behind the seven day feast. "Buying lunch everyday rather than packing your own or small things such as always buying a coffee from the machine aren't uncommon in a normal week" said Angela.

The following week the group began planning meals in advance and sticking to their shopping list. They budgeted and brought in their own lunch and coffee. Angela says: "I was really shocked by the healthier lifestyle and savings that could be made just by putting a bit of thought into our meals".

An average family can waste up to a quarter of their food in a year, the equivalent of about one and a half tonnes of CO_2.

Angela attended Climate Solidarity Action Group training in Newcastle run by PCS working closely with the Climate Solidarity Project and then set about involving her colleagues. "'I approached two learning reps

first, Glenn and Andrew, and the group quickly expanded to six". Angela found looking for like-minded people helped the group to establish itself and gain momentum. They publicised their activity to union members through a poster with the headline *'A Grand in Your Hand'* which asks, '*What would you spend a £1,000 on*?', one thousand pounds being a realistic saving that can be made through small changes to food consumption habits over a year.

Crucially, the group have also used their actions to engage with local management at Lillyhall to make an impact in the workplace and are working with PCS nationally to promote future activities more widely. In June 2010, the group will promote a *Smarter Commuting* activity by cycling to work as part of *National Bike Week* (the poster jokingly paraphrases George Orwell, 'Two wheels good, four wheels bad').

The branch will also be hosting a Learning at Work Day in September and hope to use Climate Solidarity materials. Over seventy PCS branches used similar resources for their Learning at Work Day in May. Following the enthusiastic take up an entire range of Climate Solidarity resources and event packs are being commissioned.

If you would like to follow the Lillyhall Group's example or find out more about Climate Solidarity please visit www.climatesolidarity.org.uk or contact the Climate Solidarity Project Worker, Ben Venables : ben@pcs.org.uk | 020 7924 2727 ext 2392

National Museums Liverpool

National Museums Liverpool (NML) is a group of museums and galleries comprising eight venues across the city. Prospect reps at NML kicked off a GreenWorkplaces project in late 2009 and invited the on-site PCS branch to join forces with them. Both unions presented a proposal to the NML management team for the museums to become part of the TUC's national GreenWorkplaces project.

With executive management approval gained, unions and management worked jointly to organise a staff awareness event at the end of November 2009. At the event, Director of Estates Management, Ian Williams outlined to staff the museums electricity, gas and water consumption, and energy costs, and staff signed up for TUC environmental training. Course participants were drawn from human resources, museums, art galleries, administration, collections management, information systems and energy and facilities management. The Director of Exhibitions, who had recently started work on a sustainability action plan for NML, also took part.

"People's enthusiasm for the project was shown by the fact that 20 volunteers expressed an interest in attending the training course" **(Alyson Pollard, Prospect rep, National Museums Liverpool).**

Both unions at NML are working together to follow up on the success of the training day, leading on sourcing more recycling bins from NML's waste management company and contacting the charity Groundwork Merseyside for information on joining its waste minimisation scheme.

Other training participants have set up a central meeting for admin staff across NML sites and included green issues on the agenda.

The intention is to obtain staff feedback on recycling arrangements that can be fed into sustainability plans.

Initial successes include:

- A switch-off campaign, focusing particularly on NML's back office functions at its site in Dale Street
- Setting computers in the Development and Communications Directorate to automatically print on both sides of paper and the human resources department's photocopier to double-sided copying.
- Investigations into best practice relating to print and publications, for example using recycled paper for printing.

NML has since set up a green forum with representatives from management and unions, and key representatives from across the workforce, including staff of different grades and from different departments attend.

Plans to conduct a joint management/union staff survey are being considered, so one of the first tasks for the forum would be to discuss the survey, review its results and identify organisational priorities on sustainability.

The group has agreed to work together to formulate NML's long-term sustainability action plan and produce a green policy, consider NML's internal and external communication strategy, as well as reviewing the action plan and setting targets. Tasks for the future also include gathering information on current recycling arrangements, improving staff awareness of recycling schemes and investigating locally based stationary suppliers who can provide products made from recycled materials.

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

A prospect union rep at the National Library of Scotland (NLS) has played a pivotal role in getting the library to establish a carbon management plan and agree to a 30% reduction in its carbon emissions by 2015.

When the position of Prospect green rep at NLS fell vacant, Tom Proudfoot volunteered to take on the role and lead on the branch's participation in the TUC's national GreenWorkplaces project.

As part of the project at NLS, agreement was reached for staff to have time off work to attend a green fair in February 2009 and a TUC environmental workshop the following month. Union reps, union members and members of the library's green group joined together to organise the event at which over 20 staff signed up for a place on the TUC workshop.

Following the fair, agreement was reached with the senior management team to create a sustainability steering group. Tom, who has been granted reasonable time off for his duties as a union green rep, sits on the group alongside senior management, members of the green group (which he chairs), staff from estates, security, procurement and ICT.

Since the TUC workshop took place, the group has arranged tours of the estate to help staff understand how buildings work and to appreciate the link between energy production, and how staff behaviour affects energy use.

Successes so far include:

- introduction of a bike-to-work scheme with 10% of the workforce now cycling,

onsite visits by "The Bike Doctor" and green travel advisors

- a comprehensive recycling scheme, incorporating 18 different waste streams. Food waste is now composted, working alongside a local social enterprise scheme; craft materials are now being sent for re-use to Bits and Bobs, another social enterprise; and used Perspex is being returned to the manufacturer to be made into new Perspex
- online access for all staff to see hourly energy consumption on a building by building basis
- Fairtrade products in the NLS café.

NLS has also signed up to the 10:10 campaign, under which organisations pledge to reduce carbon emissions by 10% during 2010.

A survey and quiz was issued to staff in December 2009 to identify energy waste, find out what motivates staff to save energy and gauge staff knowledge on energy use and energy costs at NLS. Nearly half of employees responded and staff identified a host of issues to be incorporated into checklists to be used for a programme of energy audits. These will feed directly into the library's carbon management plan established with the help of the Carbon Trust's Carbonlite programme.

"Connections with the TUC GreenWorkplaces Project … together with the filling of the Prospect Green Representative role …has revitalised the Green NLS group, which is proving key to releasing the energy and ideas of staff to make a permanent, positive change in the way in which NLS operates sustainably, including, carbon reduction and energy minimisation" **(NLS Carbon Management Plan, April 2010)**

The next campaign focuses on behavioural change with the launch of an "*I'm Switching Off*" campaign, a green suggestions staff email address and environmental newsletter. Articles are planned for inclusion in NLS's magazine "Discover" available at the library and in some public libraries.

The library is applying for a cycle friendly employer award and entering the Chamber of Commerce Green awards.

The possibility of introducing energy efficient lighting is also being investigated as is the potential to work with other Edinburgh-based organisations on joint heating/cooling schemes. Meetings have taken place with Prospect members at the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, to see how union members at NLS can lend support to their neighbours to help get green ideas off the ground.

Western Power Distribution, South West and Wales

Unions at Western Power Distribution (WPD), which supplies electricity to the south west and Wales, have persuaded management to recognise the role of union green reps. Austin Philp, Prospect green rep, has been instrumental in getting agreement on union involvement on environmental issues at WPD and alongside Austin's appointment as a green rep, the company also created a new green job, employing a new dedicated environmental manager.

"The company agreed to talk to me about this if I involved reps from the other unions in the workplace: UNISON, Unite and the GMB" says Austin "so I got them together and we approached the company jointly".

> "Above all, the green reps want to do things that can influence the company overall and encourage good practice throughout" **(Austin Philip, Prospect green rep, Western Power Distribution).**

The unions now have two environmental reps in the west and two in the south-west all with facility time to attend meetings and training.

"Now we have an environmental manager, Jill Griffiths, based at our head office in Bristol. She came from outside the firm and has a lot of good ideas. We have had a couple of meetings with her to discuss how progress can be made".

The unions are keen to persuade team and district managers to introduce green targets as part of the company's key performance indicators and also to encourage the company to seek external environmental accreditation, ISO14001, which indicates that meaningful green targets are being achieved.

"Environmental indicators could focus on reducing energy use in offices and depots. It's not top of everyone's minds to turn out lights, or turn off computers" says Austin, "even simple things like introducing movement sensors and efficient lighting can make a difference".

The Prospect branch AGM in November 2009 passed a motion agreeing to campaign for the company to achieve its *'keen to be green'* motto by going for this accreditation.

Worcestershire County Council

At Worcestershire County Council, the GMB is emphasising the link between environmental issues and job security. Jane McCann, senior GMB rep at the council and children's social care worker outlines the challenge workers in local government will have to cope with: "The council is facing £45 million of budget cuts over three years, as well as the impact of cuts to be imposed via the coalition Government, and we are trying to make savings wherever possible".

> "I have used green issues to help keep members in jobs – that's my main priority" **(Jane McCann, senior GMB rep, Worcestershire County Council)**

Improving communication has been key to getting environmental issues on the bargaining agenda at the council. In 2007, Jane received the GMB National Daniel Dennis Award Silver Badge for Health and Safety at TUC Congress. It was Jane's track record on health and safety that led the council to invite her to sit on its Corporate Sustainability Stewards Committee (CSSC), a strategic committee overseeing ten other environmental committees and covering all manner of operational matters. As secretary to the joint panel of trade unions for corporate health and safety, Jane had played a key role in restructuring the council's numerous health and safety committees, enabling a more proactive approach to health and safety issues and increasing trade union input. The CSSC was willing to look at basing its own restructure on the health and safety model.

Working through the CSSC, Jane managed to get reconditioned laptops provided to mobile and flexible workers within children's social care. Obtaining laptops from organisations such as local charities meant that the money

saved from the budget could be subsequently diverted to salaries. For many children's social care workers, laptops are essential, being the only serious means of communication with line managers, colleagues and internal systems. Staff have to hot desk and use laptops at touchpoints where ever they are in the county. "This is an example of successful cooperation between employer and trade union," says Jane, "we are using sustainability issues to try to ensure our members are able to remain in their jobs during this time of austerity and cut backs".

Other inventive actions include: distributing unwanted books from the authority's libraries to needy teams in children's social care and adult and community services, and getting agreement to base a GMB calendar on the green achievements of schools throughout the county.

The branch has also arranged meetings between the GMB's National Health and Safety/Green Officer and council management to discuss how the council operates its buildings' Energy Management System. Controlled remotely from county hall, this system has helped reduce energy costs by at least 15% every year. It is hoped that best practice can be shared throughout the union and with other branches facing similar challenges.

10. Further Reading

TUC GreenWorkplaces websites and publications:

TUC Environment web pages:
www.tuc.org.uk/environment

National TUC GreenWorkplaces:
www.tuc.org.uk/economy/index.cfm?mins=604&minors=402

South West TUC GreenWorkplaces Project:
www.greenworkplacessouthwest.org.uk/

Go Green at Work handbook:
www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf

Targeting Climate Change, TUC Education workbook for trade unionists:
www.tuc.org.uk/extras/targetingclimatechange.pdf

Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme briefing:
www.tuc.org.uk/extras/crc-ees.pdf

GreenWorkplaces monthly newsletter:
www.tuc.org.uk/newsroom/register.cfm

Unionreps bulletin boards:
www.unionreps.org.uk/login.cfm

Changing Work in a Changing Climate – A TUC report on adaptation to climate change in the

UK and the implications for employment
www.tuc.org.uk/extras/adaptation.pdf

(Check your own union's website for further negotiating advice, newsletters and resources).

Training Resources:

- TUC Training courses: www.unionlearn.org.uk/courses/index.cfm/sb/14/
- *Targeting Climate Change*, TUC Education workbook for trade unionists: www.tuc.org.uk/extras/targetingclimatechange.pdf
- COIN (Climate Outreach Information Network) courses and materials aimed at trade unionists: www.coinet.org.uk/core_work/training_for_trade_unionists
- Climate Solidarity Project www.coinet.org.uk/climate-solidarity

Check with your own union for other training opportunities. UNISON and PCS have produced resources for running branch training sessions for members.

Case studies:

- *GreenWorks,* TUC GreenWorkplaces Project Report 2008-10 www.tuc.org.uk/extras/greenworkplacesreport.pdf
- *Objectives and Outcomes Report* TUC GreenWorkplaces Project 2006-7 www.tuc.org.uk/extras/green0607.pdf
- *Reps in Action*, May 2009 (see page 8) www.bis.gov.uk/files/file51155.pdf
- TUC GreenWorkplaces newsletter articles at www.tuc.org.uk/economy/index.cfm?mins=604&minors=402
- *Unions and Climate Change* – A guide for union reps, findings from the 2009 survey: www.lrdpublications.org.uk/publications.php?pub=BK&iss=1464

Climate Change Communication:

Climate Outreach and Information Network: www.coinet.org.uk/

Futerra Sustainability Communications: www.futerra.co.uk/

Other useful resources:

- Carbon Trust publications can be ordered free of charge. They include fact sheet and sector reviews. They also provide posters and leaflets: www.carbontrust.co.uk

- WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) provides Government funded material resource efficiency support to businesses, industry and consumers in England: www.envirowise.wrap.org.uk

- Free environmental guidance for UK businesses at www.netregs.gov.uk

- For more information about the TUC GreenWorkplaces Project or to join the TUC's Green Reps Network contact the project leader Sarah Pearce at spearce@tuc.org.uk or tel: 020 7467 1230

11. Acknowledgements

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