



**Central Executive  
Council Special  
Report**  
Review of GMB Rep  
Training



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# Introduction

At Congress 2016 we stated that we would get straight on with the job of reviewing the training that we offer Workplace Representatives to ensure that GMB reps are in the best possible place as part of a 21st Century Union.

The review has been completed and a number of steps already taken to start to change and improve the training available to reps. This CEC Special Report details what has happened since Congress 2016.

The review of training was agreed by the adoption of the CEC's Special Report to Congress. Its aim was to ensure that GMB reps – who are the bedrock the union is built on – are trained and supported in the best possible way.

The review focused on the key areas laid out by the Special Report:

- What GMB wants reps to be able to do at the end of their IST and 10 day induction
- How the IST and induction can be aligned to deliver the above
- How we ensure that the induction and IST are delivered in a way that helps bind new reps to the aims and values of GMB and the organising principles behind GMB@work
- How we can ensure a stable platform for GMB rep training in difficult financial circumstances that will withstand the inevitable pressure of cuts to trade union education funding
- How we can ensure we have the right tutors delivering the right content
- Improving the link between classroom training and on the job support and coaching provided by officers
- The wider provision of training opportunities for reps

The review has taken place in light of two main factors:

- A reduction in Government funding of Trade Union Education from 100% funding for providers to 50%. This means that the number of colleges offering trade union courses is reducing and that we will face charges to put on courses that were previously run for free.
- Our reps' experience of training varies significantly across the GMB Regions and, additionally, there are a number of challenges that face us including attacks on facility time, changes to working hours, and making the most of technology.

Visits were made to every Region to discuss the review with Regional Secretaries, Regional Education Officers and admin support staff. Meetings were also held in each Region with groups of newly trained reps, more experienced reps and GMB Officers. Various people at National Office, including the three National Secretaries, were also met. The full schedule of meetings and who has been interviewed are detailed in the table on the following page.

	Number of Experienced Reps	Number of New Reps	Number of Officers	Total
Birmingham	3	2	7	12
London	3	2	5	10
Midlands	5	4	6	15
Northern	6	3	7	16
North West	4	5	2	11
Scotland	3	3	6	12
Southern	6	3	3	12
Wales & South West	6	7	6	19
Yorkshire	5	1	4	10
National Office			11	11
CEC	2			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>130</b>

Each meeting followed a pre-agreed format, which ensured that all meetings followed a broadly similar line of questioning with room for the chair to go with the flow of the discussion where appropriate. Typically, each meeting lasted for 90 minutes amounting to about 200 hours of consultation.

GMB is not alone in facing the difficulties caused by the change to the funding arrangements and liaison took place with other Union Education Officers and the TUC to try and get a clear picture of what will happen to TU Education funding in the medium to long term.

This report sets out the following:

- The findings of the consultation exercise.
- Progress made so far in delivering these recommendations.
- Recommendations for further action.

# Findings of the review and putting them into practice

The following findings emerged from the review and were agreed by GMB's Senior Management Team.

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## Initial Support Training

1. Reaffirm the purpose of the IST and standardise the IST across GMB in terms of the checklists and guidance to Officers but keep it flexible so that Officers can deliver it in a way that best fits the rep concerned.
2. Develop materials to support the IST such as a "quick start guide" for reps.
3. Re-think the pre-course mapping exercise and replace it with a number of options that the Officer can ask the rep to complete before their induction course; e.g. survey a small number of staff, refresh the noticeboard, etc.
4. Brief/train Officers on how to make the most out of IST sessions.
5. Consider introducing a system that "signs off" of a rep as competent at the different stages of their development.
6. Build in securing release from the employer and support for future training into the IST session.

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## Induction Course

7. Rewrite the materials for the 10 day course to focus on the fundamental building blocks that a new rep needs and to go deep on the basics (The role of the rep and their place in the union, representing members and resolving issues, organising and building GMB).
8. Modularise the course into the following core subjects:
  - Role of the rep and their place in GMB – 3 days
  - Representing members and resolving issues – 3 days
  - Organising and building GMB – 2 days
  - Health and Safety – 2 days
  - Union Learning Rep – 2 days

This would allow, for example, a ULR to do the role of the rep and ULR modules ensuring that their training is focused on their specific needs. It would also allow Regions to choose their own timetable for delivery and would make it easier to run courses in light of any cuts to funding.

9. Focusing on the fundamental building blocks and modularising the course would mean embedding other elements of the training currently provided such as equalities, politics, public speaking, etc; i.e. ensuring the subjects are, in the main, covered throughout the training rather than as stand alone units.
10. Have a fresh look at resources provided to reps on courses including the WO Toolkit.
11. Establish standards for effective delivery (for both external and internal tutors) and agree

how to monitor the quality of training – e.g. system of compulsory briefing for all tutors, post-course evaluations, tutor observation, etc. And agree how external tutors should be supported, monitored and managed.

12. Ensure that systems are in place to support officers so they are engaged with reps especially in relation to post-course action plans.
13. Provide a named mentor (who should be another rep) for each rep who completes the induction course.
14. Enrich the materials to make them more engaging and to reflect different learning styles, e.g. with video, use of IT, images, etc

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## Other

15. Liaise with the National Health and Safety Officer and Regional Health and Safety Officers over how we can best deliver effective health and safety training.
16. Develop web based learning options so we have an online offer for reps and the ability to run blended courses (that supplement our existing courses).
17. Identify development pathways for different rep roles and how this can be made available in a flexible way across all regions through a variety of routes. This should allow all reps to access appropriate higher level training.
18. Introduce a training passport, logbook or Learning Management System that can manage each individual rep's development and sign them off as competent at various stages. This would also help keep track of what could become complicated patterns of attendance on courses.
19. Establish how we can develop training courses to meet specific requests by reps such as mental health awareness, positive action courses, environment reps, tutor training, branch officer courses, etc.

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## Funding

20. Agree what constitutes a GMB tutor in terms of the commitment we can expect from an external tutor in order for us to allow them to run our courses.
21. Explore alternative funding options such as a relationship with a single college but only tap into funding only when it doesn't distract from our agenda.

# Progress so far

The following progress has been made on the recommendations above.

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## Initial Support Training (IST)

The “Quick Start” guide for new reps has been finalised and is available for Regions to use immediately after Congress 2017. This guide contains sections on attending your first course (and securing release to do so) and on the tasks a new rep can complete before attending this course.

A guide for Officers on running IST sessions is being produced and will be available in Autumn 2017.

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## Induction Course

The re-write of the induction course has started and it will be launched in September 2017. See annex 1 for a summary of the course.

The new course will ensure that every new rep has a thorough understanding of:

- their role, how to get involved in GMB and where to go for support.
- how to represent members in a variety of circumstances (individual grievance, collective grievance, consultative bodies, disciplinary – conduct, capability and attendance).
- how to build GMB in terms of profile, membership, communications, etc.
- how to ensure members are protected at work through in terms of their health and safety and how to organise around health and safety issues.
- the role of the Union Learning Representative and the learning opportunities available to GMB members

The resources needed to support this new induction course are also being prepared and will be ready in time for the launch of the new course. This will include a wide range of material including video content and the use of IT.

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## Other

A series of webinars (web based seminars) on Pensions has been piloted and was well received by those reps who took part. A comprehensive series of webinars open for reps to attend will be available for the remainder of 2017. GMB webinars will be notified by email to reps and will feature on [www.gmb.org.uk/webinars](http://www.gmb.org.uk/webinars).

A web based Learning Management System (LMS) will be piloted in a number of regions by the end of 2017. The LMS will enable reps to check their own training progress via the web and will guide reps through the most appropriate course programme for them to follow. It will also help build the link between what is covered in the training room with what happens in the workplace, including consolidating learning and ongoing support by other reps and officers.

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## Funding

Agreements are in place with a number of Colleges to help provide GMB rep training,

which will see courses being run by “embedded” tutors who are hand picked by GMB. These agreements have secured funding for GMB courses and ensured that such provision is available for the future.

The roll out of the new course materials will include a range of measures to ensure that all tutors running GMB courses do so to a high standard.

# Summary

Since the adoption of the CEC Special Report in 2016 a thorough review of rep training across GMB has taken place and a number of recommendations have been agreed by the SMT.

Significant progress has been made on many of these recommendations with new materials already available and new training programmes being rolled out in September.

The main focus so far has been on the training and development of new reps and further work is planned on identifying what needs to be put in place for existing reps.

# Recommendations

A lot has already been achieved but there is still more to do. The following recommendations are intended to continue with the work so far and ensure that we build on what has been done:

- Ensure that the findings of the review are fully implemented.
- Introduce revised IST and induction training programmes as soon as possible (launch in September 2017).
- Publish new materials and resources during 2017 to support the new training programmes.
- Continue to ensure that tutors running GMB courses are well briefed and are delivering to a high standard.
- Identify development pathways that will open up new training opportunities so that existing reps, as well as new reps, can access the training they need in order to be effective in their role.
- Ensure that these development pathways include a training programme for Safety Reps and those reps who want to understand more about health and safety.
- Determine how additional training can be provided and roll out such a programme (see 19 above).
- Continue to deliver a series of webinar based training and to look at what other e-learning opportunities we can make available for reps.
- Learn lessons from the pilot of a Learning Management System and establish if this can be rolled out across all regions. This would allow GMB to have a system where all reps know what training is open to them (and the best development pathway to follow) with access to some training online. It would also mean that GMB knows where each rep is at in terms of their development and what activities they are able to carry out on behalf of GMB members.

## Annex – Outline of induction course

	Aims – by the end of the module, reps will have:	Overview
Role of the Rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an understanding of their role, where to go for support and how they can get involved in GMB</li> <li>• established their status as a GMB rep and how to deal with employers</li> <li>• looked at how they can resolve problems that members face</li> <li>• explored how to build GMB and encourage potential members to join</li> </ul>	<p>This module is intended to help a new rep get started in their role.</p> <p>It will look at how we work as a trade union and how reps can be effective.</p> <p>It will also equip reps with an initial understanding of how to represent members.</p> <p>The module will also introduce a recruitment exercise that will run for the duration of the whole course.</p>
Representing Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a thorough understanding of how to represent members in a variety of circumstances</li> <li>• identified the process by which to ensure a favourable outcome for members</li> <li>• examined in detail various situations where members need the support of GMB</li> </ul>	<p>This module will go through several scenarios where members look to GMB to represent them.</p> <p>By the end of the module each rep will have had experience of representing members in life like situations.</p> <p>It will introduce ways of working to help reps organize themselves to be effective in representing members.</p>

<p><b>Building GMB</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• established how to organise their workplace to build membership and ensure that issues are addressed</li> <li>• an understanding of how to map their workplace</li> <li>• identified how to build the profile of GMB and have a plan for communication with members and potential members</li> </ul>	<p>This module will look at how reps can organise their workplace and build a strong union.</p> <p>It will equip reps with the skills and knowledge needed to help persuade potential members to join GMB.</p> <p>Reps will have an action plan as to what they need to do for GMB to be effective in their workplace.</p>
<p><b>Health and Safety</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a thorough understanding of the rights and responsibilities of a Safety Rep</li> <li>• explored the trade union approach to health and safety</li> <li>• established how to enforce solutions to health and safety issues</li> </ul>	<p>In this module, there will be a focus of the legal rights that Safety Reps have under the SRSC Regulations.</p> <p>It will also look at how we can organise around safety issues and ensure that safety concerns are addressed.</p>
<p><b>ULR</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• established the role of the Union Learning Representative and how to link this with other areas of GMB</li> <li>• identified how to help members get into learning</li> <li>• developed how to support apprentices and to get the best deal for them</li> </ul>	<p>This module will help new reps understand how GMB can play an active role in helping our members get the training and development they need.</p>

**Join GMB now online at**

[www.gmb.org.uk/join](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join)

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