

**Exploring the relationship between union learning representatives and  
employer-provided training in Britain**

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### Abstract

This paper explores whether the relationship between union learning representatives (ULRs) and employer-provided training is influenced by ULR characteristics and management support. Using linked employer-employee-worker rep data from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey 2004, the results demonstrate that a large proportion of ULRs have not spent any time on issues associated with employee training in their representative role in the past 12 months. They also demonstrate that a significant proportion of ULRs are 'hybrid' reps, fulfilling other representative posts as well as the ULR role. A significant proportion of ULRs do not receive support from management, particularly in the private sector. ULR characteristics vary considerably between the public and private sectors, and different characteristics are associated with employee training in each sector. Training incidence is higher in the private sector where the ULR has 10 or more years rep experience and performs six or more rep activities other than training. Training incidence is higher in the public sector where the ULR performs six or more other rep activities, where the ULR has access to facilities and where the ULR has less than 10 years experience.

### Introduction

It is widely accepted that national systems of vocational education and training play a crucial role in explaining differences in national economic performance between OECD countries (Finegold and Soskice 1988; Grugulis 2007). Given this, many OECD countries have attempted to ensure their competitiveness by reappraising vocational education and training policies in order to increase labour market skills. In the UK, for example, the recent Leitch Review of Skills (2006) has focused attention on addressing weaknesses in the skills base in an attempt to reduce the persistent productivity gap between the UK and competitor nations. It is not difficult to find evidence of the longstanding and continued weakness of the UK's skills base (see Keep and Mayhew 1988). In terms of basic literacy and numeracy, for example, 15 per cent of UK adults (5 million) in 2005 lacked functional (everyday) literacy and 21 per cent (6.8 million) lacked functional numeracy (ibid. 10). Although this poses a substantial challenge for employers, 35 per cent of employers offer no training to

employees, and those that do offer training concentrate their training efforts on the already qualified (HM Government 2007: 37).

The Leitch Review therefore outlined an ambitious plan to increase productivity, improve economic competitiveness and at the same time increase social inclusion in Britain by raising skill levels to those of competitor nations by 2020. In accepting Leitch's proposals, the British Government has committed to a 'skills revolution' (ibid. 7) to become 'a world leader in skills by 2020' by increasing the percentage of adults with functional literacy and numeracy and level 2 and 3 qualifications (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at A\* to C grade and equivalent to 2 A levels respectively) (HM Government 2007).

The British Government insists, however, that employers, trade unions and individuals all have an important role to play if these targets are to be met (ibid. 17). Indeed, in recent years, British trade unions have become more active in the training field and have committed increasing resources to the development of the training and skills agenda. The most notable sign of increased union activity in this area is the recent introduction of the union learning representative (ULRs) role. ULRs are a new type of workplace activist whose role is to promote workplace learning, encourage members to take-up training, and work in partnership with employers to raise skill levels. The first ULRs were initiated and trained in 2000 (TUC 2004) and 18,000 were in post by 2007 (HM Government 2007: 13). Recruitment is well on course to meet a target of 22,000 by 2010 (unionlearn 2007: 3).

The ULR initiative has received notable support from the British government, with the Department for Education and Employment having established the Union Learning Fund in 1998 (DfEE 1998), a key outcome of which was the implementation of over 450 projects by 2004 to train over 10,000 ULRs. In addition, the Employment

Act 2002 provided ULRs with statutory rights to paid time off for five key tasks: analysing training needs; providing information and advice on training; arranging training; promoting the value of training; and consulting the employer over these activities. An assessment of whether, and in what circumstances, ULRs are able to increase training and raise skill levels will demonstrate whether the centrality of the ULR initiative to the government's skills strategy is justified and whether ULRs are likely to assist in meeting the Leitch targets by 2020.

There is, however, increasing debate on this matter. On the one hand the Trades Union Congress (TUC) highlights the success of union-led learning, and points to 'a significant increase in engagement with management and in improving the learning culture at the workplace' (TUC 2005: 11-12), with almost 18,000 ULRs helping over 150,000 employees to access training courses (unionlearn 2007: 6 and 16). The Government shares this enthusiasm, claiming that 'Union Learning Representatives play a vital role in helping employees to develop their skills and gain new qualifications' (HM Government 2007: 59), and that 'ULRs are proving to be particularly effective in targeting people with low skills, or low confidence in their own ability to learn and benefit from training' (ibid. 13). Supporting such claims, Wallis *et al.* (2005: 283) conclude from a survey of 60 ULRs that they 'have been successful in promoting and facilitating employee-centred learning opportunities'. Case studies also report the positive impact of ULRs in securing increased training provision (Warhurst *et al.* 2006), while Wallis and Stuart (2007) point to the positive effects of the partnership approach that ULRs have engendered on employee learning and productivity. It appears that ULRs in many cases may well be helping to meet a latent demand for union-led learning (Findlay *et al.* 2007).

In contrast to these findings, however, Hoque and Bacon (2007), using data from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey 2004 (WERS 2004), failed to identify a relationship between ULRs and employer-provided training among any employee groups except for male non-managers in the public sector. Unionlearn, the TUC organisation responsible for promoting union led training, recognises that many ULRs still face barriers in encouraging higher levels of training (unionlearn 2007: 16). Examples of these barriers include employer unwillingness to negotiate and consult with unions over training (Munro and Rainbird 2004), declining union bargaining power and low union membership density, which is likely to undermine the ability of unions to negotiate with employers over training provision (Claydon and Green 1994). Hoque and Bacon (2007) found no evidence to suggest that these factors influence the relationship between ULRs and training, however. Despite this, it is possible that a range of further factors may well also have an important bearing on the ability of ULRs to influence training outcomes. For example, certain ULR characteristics such as levels of experience, the other rep activities they are involved in and the amount of time they are able to dedicate to ULR activities might influence their effectiveness. Support from management in terms of whether there is a positive working relationship between managers and reps and whether the ULR is given access to office facilities might also prove influential. This paper seeks to shed light on these issues by using WERS 2004 to evaluate the influence of ULR characteristics and management support on the relationship between ULRs and employer-provided training.

The remainder of this paper is divided into four sections. The first section considers the manner in which ULR characteristics and management support might influence the relationship between ULRs and training. The second section discusses

the data and methods used. The third section presents a descriptive analysis of ULR characteristics and the support they receive from management while the fourth section considers the influence of these factors on the relationship between ULRs and training. The final section offers a discussion and some conclusions.

### Influences on ULR effectiveness

#### *ULR characteristics*

A number of ULR characteristics could influence the relationship between ULRs and training. First, not all ULRs will dedicate all of their time as reps to ULR activities. Some may combine the ULR role with other rep duties (convenor, shop steward or health and safety rep, for example) and by implication will only be able to dedicate a proportion of their time to the ULR role. According to one survey, as many as nine in ten ULRs also hold another union post (York Consulting 2000: 10). In such instances, it is possible that concerns for training issues will be crowded out or not incorporated into bargaining agendas. Contrary to this, however, ULRs holding other roles might be more effective in improving training provision because they are more likely to be embedded in a broader network of union contacts on whose resources they can draw in performing their role (York Consulting 2000: 10). They may also be less inclined to identify with the employers' training agenda (Wood and Moore 2005: 37). In addition, employers may regard ULRs holding other roles as more representative of members' views (York Consulting 2000: 10) and therefore be more willing to negotiate or consult meaningfully with them on training issues.

Related to this, a second potentially important characteristic in determining whether ULRs are able to influence training levels is whether they are working as a full-time rather than a part-time rep. This might be particularly important where ULRs are involved in wide ranging activities as discussed above. The potential for role

overload might mean that a part-time ULR may only have limited time to devote to training matters.

A third characteristic relates to ULRs' levels of experience. Many ULRs may be experienced union reps, with others being new to the representative role and having no previous experience of union activism. Early estimates suggested that one in ten ULRs were new activists (York Consulting 2000: 4), although this figure appears to have increased with more recent estimates suggesting that new activists now account for between a quarter (Wood and Moore 2005:11) and a third of the ULR population (TUC 2004: 4; unionlearn 2006: 2). Arguably, more inexperienced activists will be less well placed to influence training outcomes. It is widely acknowledged that active bargaining over skills is essential if unions are to increase the levels of employer-provided training (Heyes and Stuart 1998; Kennedy *et al.* 1994). Where ULRs are new to the role and have not held a previous union post, a lack of experience could limit their ability in this regard. That said, it is possible that more experienced reps will take the ULR title but not wholeheartedly adopt the training agenda. This might occur for several reasons: it may form only one part of their broader union role and thus be crowded out as suggested above; training may be regarded as a secondary issue compared to other bargaining aims; the representative may adopt the title mainly to gain more statutory time off; and existing reps may adopt the role in good faith but lack the time to adequately concentrate on training issues. Given this, new activists taking the ULR role could well be expected to concentrate more fully on training issues and thus have a greater impact on learning and skills.

### *Management support*

While ULR characteristics may prove to be an important influence on the relationship between ULRs and employer-provided training, the support they receive from management could also have an important bearing. Two factors might be central here: the nature of working relationships between ULRs and managers; and whether ULRs are given access to the facilities they need to carry out their role effectively (see TUC 2004: 10). In relation to the first of these factors, one might anticipate that where there are good relationships between managers and union reps, ULRs will be better placed to influence training outcomes. Indeed, given that British legislation does not provide ULRs with bargaining rights, it is perhaps unlikely that they will be able to positively influence training in the absence of a good working relationship with managers, especially in instances where they seek to promote a training agenda separate from employer requirements (Wallis *et al.* 2005). It is therefore perhaps a positive sign that a majority of ULRs in Wood and Moore's (2005: 34) survey stated that a focus on union learning encouraged cooperation between employers and unions.

Second, the relationship between ULRs and training may well be influenced by whether ULRs are given access to facilities. A significant proportion of ULRs have reported that they lack access to basic facilities and administrative support (Wood and Moore 2005: 27). Where ULRs lack such facilities, or where they lack access to email or computer equipment that enables them to relay information regarding training opportunities to constituents or to gather information regarding training needs, one might expect their ability to influence employer-provided training to be limited.

### *ULRs and existing theory on unions and training*

Finally, existing theory also points to reasons why one might expect ULR characteristics and the support they receive from managers to influence the relationship between ULRs and training. The collective voice/institutional response model of unionism (Freeman and Medoff 1984) predicts an increase in training in instances where unions bargain directly over training with employers. Unionised employees may be more likely to demand company-provided general training because the wage effects are greater than for non-union workers (Booth *et al.* 2003). Training may therefore be another form of rent-sharing, with unions seeking to maximise returns to their members. Union presence may also increase the likelihood that managers have implemented formal procedures for assessing training needs and delivering training (Metcalf 2003: 161).

Where ULRs are concerned, one might argue that they will augment the union effects outlined above, given that direct bargaining with employers over training may be more likely to occur where a ULR is present. ULRs may also play a role in encouraging employers to undertake formal training needs assessments (or indeed, undertake such assessments themselves on the employer's behalf). One might expect, however, this effect to be greatest where the ULR has sufficient time to focus on their ULR role, has the experience to negotiate competently with managers over training, has good working relationships with managers and has adequate office facilities to carry out their role effectively.

### *Summary*

As discussed above, there are a number of factors relating to ULR characteristics and also the support they receive from managers that might influence the relationship

between ULRs and employer-provided training. As such, the aim of this analysis is two-fold. The first aim is to provide a descriptive analysis of ULRs' individual characteristics and the support they receive from managers, and to compare ULRs and non-ULR reps along these dimensions. If ULRs possess fewer supposedly desirable characteristics than non-ULR reps, or if they receive less management support, this could be central in explaining why training levels are no higher in ULR workplaces than elsewhere (Hoque and Bacon 2007). The second aim of the analysis is to test the influence of these factors on the relationship between ULRs and employee reports of training activity.

#### Data and method of analysis

This paper uses linked employer-employee-worker rep data from WERS 2004. The WERS 2004 surveys are designed to be nationally representative of workplaces with five or more employees within Standard Industrial Classification major groups D to O (agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing and mining and quarrying are excluded), when probability weighted to take into account the complex nature of the WERS survey design. The worker rep survey is undertaken with the most senior rep in the workplace. It is possible to identify from this whether the respondent is a ULR, their characteristics and the support they receive from management. The management survey enables us to identify a range of workplace control variables, while the employee survey enables us to identify training incidence and a range of individual and job characteristic control variables. The WERS 2004 management survey comprises 2,295 observations with a response rate of 64 per cent (Kersley *et al.* 2005). The worker representative survey comprises 984 observations with a response rate of 77 per cent. In total, 501 observations are used here (with non-union rep

responses being omitted). The employee survey comprises 22,451 observations, with a response rate of 61 per cent. In total, 14,000 observations are used here.

The first stage of the analysis is to use the worker rep survey to present a descriptive analysis of ULR characteristics and the support they receive from managers. Binary measures relating to: the activities the rep is involved in; whether they are full or part-time; whether they have had 10 or more years rep experience; whether working relationships between managers and reps are either good or very good; and whether they have access to office facilities (defined as whether they have access to office space, email, a telephone and a computer), are cross-tabulated with a binary variable where 1 = ULR and 0 = non-ULR rep<sup>1</sup>, thereby identifying the proportion of ULRs that possess the characteristics and management support outlined above and also whether ULRs and non-ULR reps differ along any of these dimensions.

In terms of evaluating the influence of ULR characteristics and management support on the relationship between ULRs and training activity, the key unit of analysis is employees. A series of maximum-likelihood equations is estimated based on linked employer-employee-worker rep data, with the dependent variable being a binary measure of training incidence where 1= the employee has had training, apart from health and safety training, in the last twelve months either paid for or organised by the employer, and 0 = otherwise. This measure – which captures a wide range of training activity, with respondents being asked to include all training for which they have been given time off from their normal daily work duties – is comparable to that used in previous analyses of training activity based on WERS (see, for example: Addison and Belfield 2004; Almeida-Santos and Mumford 2005; Boheim and Booth 2004). The independent variables used are categorical variables relating to ULR

characteristics and management support. These will identify whether training levels are higher in workplaces with a ULR and the characteristic or form of management support under observation than in a range of other workplace types (other ULR workplaces, workplaces with a non-ULR union rep (either with or without the observed characteristic), workplaces with recognition but no rep and non-union workplaces)<sup>2</sup>. The Appendix table describes the variables used in the analysis. The equations also control for a range of workplace and individual characteristics as conventionally used in previous studies of training based on the WERS data. These control variables and their means are also described in Appendix table 1.

#### *Estimation method and weights*

In the multivariate analysis, given the binary nature of the training incidence dependent variable, survey probit analysis is used. The data in both the bivariate and the multivariate analysis are weighted by the inverse of each workplace's probability of selection into the sample. This is essential if unbiased population estimates are to be obtained. Where the employee data are concerned, weighting also accounts for the probability of selection of the respondent's workplace into the main management sample, the respondent's own probability of selection from the employee population at the workplace, and bias introduced as a result of employee non-response. We also account for the clustering of the employee data into primary sampling units (in this case, workplaces).

#### ULR characteristics and management support

The first stage of the analysis is to provide a descriptive assessment of ULR characteristics and the support ULRs receive from management. The starting point

concerning ULR characteristics is to identify whether the ULRs in the sample are actually involved in training activity. The results in table 1, perhaps surprisingly, demonstrate that a large proportion of ULRs did not spend any time on training of employees in their job as a union representative in the past 12 months. Indeed, 51 per cent of ULRs in the full sample did not spend any time on employee training, a figure that rises to 64 per cent in the private sector. ULRs are also no more likely to have spent time on employee training than are non-ULR reps in either the public or private sectors. Although not reported here, the lack of difference between ULRs and non-ULR reps holds when controls for workplace characteristics are added. This suggests that a large proportion of ULRs should perhaps be viewed as ‘inactive’ with regard to involvement in employee training.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

It must be kept in mind, though, that these results relate to the most senior rep at the workplace, so they may not necessarily be representative of ULRs as a whole. Indeed, the low level of reported involvement in employee training among ULRs in the WERS data could be explained by ULRs – who are also the most senior rep in the workplace – having delegated direct involvement in employee training to more junior ULR colleagues. While it is not possible to test for this directly using WERS 2004, it is possible to identify respondents that are the only rep at the workplace, and therefore by implication have no other reps to delegate training activity to. Given this, one might expect these ULRs to be more involved in training activity themselves. The results suggest, however, that in such instances only 43 per cent of ULRs were involved in employee training in the 12 months prior to the survey being undertaken

in comparison with 37.2 per cent of non-ULR reps ( $p=0.743$ ). In the public sector the figures were 52.8 per cent for ULRs and 38.2 per cent for non-ULR reps ( $p=0.502$ ), while in the private sector they were 32.8 for ULRs and 35.4 per cent for non-ULR reps ( $p=0.929$ ). Given that there is no scope in these instances for ULRs to have delegated direct involvement in training activity to more junior reps (as there are no junior reps at these workplaces to delegate to), this provides further evidence that an appreciable proportion of ULRs did not spend any time in the previous 12 months on employee training in their job as a union rep.

As well as demonstrating the proportion of ULRs that are not involved in training, table 1 also suggests that ULRs and non-ULR reps engage in somewhat different activities, though in the public sector it is only where disciplinary matters are concerned that any difference emerges. It also suggests considerable differences in the activities that ULRs in the public and private sectors engage in. In particular, public sector ULRs are more likely than private sector ULRs to be involved in: rates of pay ( $p=0.001$ ); holiday entitlements ( $p=0.000$ ); negotiations over pensions ( $p=0.001$ ); and recruitment or selection of employees ( $p=0.011$ ).

What is also clear from table 1, though, is that in both the public and private sectors, ULRs are engaged in a wide range of activities in addition to employee training. In this sense, they might be described as ‘hybrid’ reps, in that they perform not just the ULR role but a range of other representative roles also. To assess this further, Figure 1 provides a categorisation of ULRs that differentiates between: ULRs that are involved in training and are also involved in six or more other rep activities (hybrid ULRs); ULRs that are involved in training but are involved in fewer than six other rep activities (dedicated ULRs); ULRs that are not involved in training but are involved in six or more other rep activities (engaged/ inactive ULRs); and ULRs that

are neither involved in training nor involved in six or more other rep activities (disengaged/ inactive ULRs). As Figure 1 demonstrates, in the full sample, 32.3 per cent of ULRs fall into the ‘hybrid’ category, while only 16.8 per cent are ‘dedicated’ ULRs. Different patterns emerge in the public and private sectors. In the public sector, 49.2 per cent of ULRs are ‘hybrid’ reps, while only 7.8 per cent are ‘dedicated’ ULRs. In the private sector, however, only 4.7 per cent of ULRs are ‘hybrid’ reps, while 31.5 per cent are ‘dedicated’ ULRs. It is also perhaps notable that over a quarter of public sector ULRs and nearly a third of private sector ULRs fall into the ‘inactive/ disengaged’ category – these ULRs are neither involved in training, nor are they involved in six or more other rep activities.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Either way, the overall limited involvement of a significant proportion of ULRs in employee training as indicated by Figure 1 has significant implications for the ensuing analysis concerning the influence of ULR characteristics and management support on the relationship between ULRs and training. One might expect ULR characteristics (such as the range of activities in which the ULR is involved, whether they are full-time and their level of experience) and the support they receive from managers (whether there is a positive relationship between reps and managers and whether they are given access to facilities) to affect the ULR’s ability to influence employee training levels only where they are actually involved in employee training in the first instance. Given this, the focus from hereon is on identifying the nature and influence of ULR characteristics on the relationship between ULRs and training only in instances where the rep is ‘active’. The first stage of this analysis, therefore, is to

provide a descriptive analysis of the characteristics and management support accorded to 'active' ULRs.

The results of this analysis are presented table 2. What stands out here is that the support given by managers to 'active' ULRs, particularly in the private sector, is limited. Only 15.9 per cent of 'active' private sector ULRs report relationships between reps and managers to be good/ very good, and only 16.4 per cent have access to facilities. Even in the public sector, only 48.6 per cent of 'active' ULRs have access to facilities. Table 2 also points to several differences between ULRs in the public and private sectors. 'Active' public sector ULRs are more likely than 'active' private sector ULRs to be involved in six or more rep activities ('hybrid' reps) ( $p=0.001$ ), to be full-time ( $p=0.001$ ), to have 10 or more years experience ( $p=0.000$ ), and to report relationships between managers and reps to be good or very good ( $p=0.000$ ). This suggests considerable heterogeneity in the characteristics of the ULR population when stratified by sector.

Table 2 also points to several notable differences between ULRs and non-ULR reps. In the public sector, 'active' ULRs are more likely than 'active' non-ULR reps to have 10 or more years experience and are more likely to report relations between managers and reps to be good or very good. Given this, they are perhaps better placed than non-ULR reps to be able to influence employer-provided training positively. By contrast, in the private sector, 'active' ULRs are perhaps in a weaker position than 'active' non-ULR reps, given that they are less likely to be a full-time rep and are less likely to report relations between managers and reps as good or very good. This could potentially explain why training levels are no higher in workplaces with a ULR than elsewhere, particularly in the private sector (Hoque and Bacon 2007). This requires an analysis, however, of whether the full or part-time status of reps and also whether

relations between reps and managers influence the relationship between ULRs and training. It is to this issue that we now turn.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

#### ULR characteristics, employer support and employer-provided training

In this section, we address whether ULR characteristics and the support received from management influences the relationship between ULRs and employee reports of training incidence. The first stage of this analysis is to demonstrate whether training incidence is higher in instances where there is an ‘active’ as opposed to an ‘inactive’ rep. The results, reported in Table 3 suggest that training incidence is no higher in workplaces where there is an ‘active’ ULR than elsewhere. This finding holds for both the public and the private sector.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

While this is contrary to expectations, the lack of difference in training incidence in workplaces where there is an ‘active’ as opposed to an ‘inactive’ ULR could, as discussed above, mask variation depending on whether the ULR: is involved in a lower number of other rep activities; is full-time; has considerable rep experience; reports positive relationships between managers and reps; and has access to office facilities. The influence of these factors is tested in tables 4 to 6. In the full sample (table 4), only one factor has a bearing on the relationship between ULRs and training, with training incidence being lower in workplaces with an ‘active’ ULR that is involved in fewer than six other rep activities (dedicated ULR) than in all the other

workplace categories within the sample. This contradicts the ‘crowding out’ hypothesis described earlier that training levels will be higher where the ULR is involved in a narrower range of activities (dedicated ULRs), as they will be better placed to focus their attention on training matters. Instead, it suggests that ULRs holding multiple roles (‘hybrid’ ULRs) will be more effective, possibly because they are embedded in a broader network of union contacts, are more likely to be seen by managers as representing members’ views and are perhaps less likely to be supportive of management-led agendas.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

Further differences emerge when the sample is split by public and private sector. Turning to the public sector, the results in table 5 suggest that three characteristics are particularly important. First, as in the full sample, training incidence is higher where there is an ‘active’ ULR involved in six or more other rep activities (hybrid ULR) than where there is an ‘active’ ULR involved in fewer than six other activities (dedicated ULR). However, when the equation is recalculated with hybrid ULRs as the reference category, there is no evidence that training incidence is higher in workplaces with a hybrid ULR than in other workplaces. Second, contrary to expectations, training levels are higher where ‘active’ ULRs have less than 10 years rep experience than where they have 10 or more years experience. As argued earlier, one might anticipate that training levels would be higher where there is an experienced ULR who might be better equipped to bargain with managers over training. There is no evidence, however, to support this argument. To the contrary, it would seem that in the public sector, training incidence is higher where ULRs are

newer to union representation. Indeed, if the equation is recalculated with ‘active’ ULRs with less than 10 years experience as the reference category, training incidence is higher in these instances at the 5 per cent level or better than in all categories of workplaces with the exception of workplaces with an ‘inactive’ ULR.

The third characteristic of importance is access to office facilities. Where ‘active’ ULRs are given access to facilities, training incidence is higher than in workplaces with either ‘active’ ULRs or ‘active’ non-ULR reps that are not given access to facilities. Training incidence is also slightly higher (at the 10 per cent level of significance) than where there is an ‘inactive’ non-ULR rep and where there is union recognition and no rep. This suggests that access to office facilities may be important in ensuring ULRs are able to positively influence training levels. One must keep in mind, however, that training incidence is no higher where there is an ‘active’ ULR with access to facilities than where there is an ‘inactive’ ULR, an ‘active’ non-ULR rep with access to facilities, or in the non-union sector.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

Turning to the private sector, two characteristics stand out. The first is involvement in other rep activities. Contrary to what might be expected, but in line with the results for the public sector, the results in table 6 suggest that training incidence is lower where ‘active’ ULRs are involved in fewer than six other rep activities (‘dedicated’ ULRs) than in all other categories of workplace other than where there is an ‘active’ non-ULR rep involved in six or more other rep activities (though significance is only at the 10 per cent level relative to ‘inactive’ ULRs). As in the public sector, this contradicts the ‘crowding out’ hypothesis. It is notable,

however, that when the equation is recalculated with ‘active’ ULRs involved in six or more other rep activities as the reference category (‘hybrid’ ULRs), training incidence is only higher than in workplaces with ‘active’ non-ULR reps involved in six or more other rep activities, and it is weakly higher (at the 10 per cent significance level) than in the non-union sector. Thus, while training incidence is higher in public sector workplaces with ‘hybrid’ rather than a ‘dedicated’ ULR, there is little evidence that it is higher where there is a ‘hybrid’ ULR than elsewhere.

The second characteristic that stands out in the private sector relates to levels of experience. Here, contrary to the findings for the public sector, training incidence is higher where ‘active’ ULRs have 10 or more years rep experience than where they have less than 10 years experience. Training incidence is also higher than in all other instances (though where there is union recognition but no rep it is only at the 10 per cent level). Experience, it would seem, is important if the ULR is to be positively associated with training in the private sector, but not in the public sector.

### Discussion and Conclusions

This paper had two main aims. The first aim was to provide a descriptive analysis of ULRs in relation to their characteristics and the support they receive from managers that might affect their ability to influence levels of employer-provided training. The second aim was to test the influence of ULR characteristics and management support on the relationship between ULRs and training incidence.

Turning to the first of these aims, the analysis revealed a number of key findings. First, it would appear that a large proportion of ULRs did not spend any time on employee training in their role as a union rep in the 12 months prior to the survey being undertaken. To recap, 51 per cent of ULRs overall (43 per cent in the public

sector and 64 per cent in the private sector) did not spend any time on employee training. This is a striking finding, not least given that ULRs are no more likely to be involved in employee training than are non-ULR reps. It would appear, therefore, that a significant proportion of ULRs should be viewed as ‘inactive’ in this regard. This may help explain why one in five ULRs reported that they failed to have a positive impact on learning in their workplace (York Consulting 2000: 23) and one in five who attended a training course to become ULRs are no longer acting in this capacity (ibid. 13). Arguably, the extent of this inactivity calls into question how far ULRs are currently in a position to play a role in helping to achieve the targets outlined in the Leitch Review of Skills (2006).

Second, it would appear that in both the public and private sectors, ULRs are engaged in a wide range of rep activities other than training, and in the public sector in particular, a large proportion of ULRs are playing a ‘hybrid’ role, engaging in both training activities and a wide range of other rep activities. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that involvement in other rep activities crowds out training-related activities – training incidence is higher in both the public and private sectors where there is a ‘hybrid’ rather than a ‘dedicated’ ULR in place.

Third, in instances where the rep is involved in training activity (‘active’ reps), there would appear to be several key differences in ULR and non-ULR rep characteristics and the level of support they receive from management. To recap, in the public sector, ULRs are more experienced than non-ULR reps and are more likely to report relations with managers to be good/ very good, suggesting that they should be better placed than ‘active’ non-ULR reps to influence training levels positively. In the private sector, however, ULRs are less likely to be full-time than are non-ULR reps and are less likely to report good/ very good relations between reps and

managers. This could well help to explain why training in private sector ULR workplaces is no higher than elsewhere (Hoque and Bacon 2007). There is however, no evidence to support this argument. Private sector training incidence is no lower where the ULR is part-time as opposed to full-time, or where the ULR does not report relationships between managers and reps to be good or very good. These factors, therefore, do not appear to influence the relationship between ULRs and training.

It is perhaps notable, however, in terms of the influence of rep characteristics and management support on the relationship between ULRs and training incidence, that different factors stand out in the public and private sectors. In both sectors, training incidence is higher where the ULR is a 'hybrid' rep rather than a 'dedicated' rep. However, it is only in the public sector where facilities are important. Also, while in the public sector, training incidence is higher where ULRs are less experienced, the opposite holds in the private sector. There are a number of ways in which this latter finding might be explained. In the private sector, ULRs may find it more difficult to persuade employers to increase training provision and are therefore only likely to be successful if they have acquired negotiating skills developed through experience in dealing with employers. In contrast, experienced public sector ULRs may regard training as a secondary issue compared to other bargaining aims, or they may have adopted the title mainly to gain more statutory time off. Either way, when these findings are added to the findings discussed earlier ULR differences in the public and private sectors, there are strong grounds to suggest that ULRs are far from uniform either in terms of their characteristics and support they receive from management, or in terms of the influence of these factors on their ability to affect training levels. One might argue that this heterogeneity needs to be taken into consideration in any future assessments of the ULR initiative.

These results, we would suggest, also have significant policy implications, particularly for trade unions looking to recruit and support ULRs. In the public sector, ULRs that have less than 10 years rep experience are more likely to be associated with training than are more experienced ULRs, yet only 11 per cent of ULRs fall into this category. Access to facilities may also be important, yet over half of public sector ULRs lack such access. Thus, it may be worth unions seeking to recruit a higher number of new reps into the ULR role in the public sector, and also to continue to campaign for government regulations to require employers to provide ULRs with facilities. In the private sector, training is higher where the ULR has 10 or more years experience, yet only 7 per cent of private sector ULRs fall into this category. There may, therefore, be an argument in the private sector to encourage more experienced reps to become involved in the ULR role. What seems clear, though, is that in both the public and private sectors, training incidence is higher where there is a ‘hybrid’ rather than a ‘dedicated’ ULR. This suggests that unions could be well advised to encourage existing reps that are already embedded in union networks as a result of their other rep activities to take on the ULR role. That said, the scope for reverse causality needs to be kept in mind. It could be the case that ULRs in workplaces with low levels of training have dedicated themselves to the ULR role specifically because the training record is so poor. It is not necessarily the case, therefore, that the lower level of training in workplaces with dedicated ULRs is the result of shortcomings on the part of those ULRs. Clearly, further research is needed on the relative effectiveness of ‘hybrid’ and ‘dedicated’ ULRs.

In interpreting these results, however, a number of caveats need to be taken into consideration. First, it is notable that while training incidence is higher in workplaces with ‘active’ ULRs possessing certain characteristics and receiving

support from management than in workplaces with ‘active’ ULRs that do not, this is not the case in relation to all workplaces, thus suggesting that the influence of some of these characteristics or elements of management support is weak. This is the case in the public sector with regard to ‘hybrid’ ULRs (public sector training incidence is higher in workplaces with a ‘hybrid’ rather than a ‘dedicated’ ULR, but it is no higher than in other public sector workplaces), and ULRs that have access to facilities (there is no suggestion, for example, that facilities give ULRs an additional effect over and above the effect they give to non-ULR reps). In addition, while training incidence is higher in public sector workplaces with an inexperienced ULR than in six other workplace categories, it is no higher than where there is an ‘inactive’ ULR. In the private sector, training incidence is only higher in workplaces with a ‘hybrid’ ULR than in workplaces with a ‘dedicated’ ULR and in non-union workplaces. It is important therefore, to treat with caution the conclusion that training is higher in instances where ‘active’ ULRs possess certain supposedly positive characteristics or have certain elements of management support. In several instances, training incidence is no higher where an ‘active’ ULR possesses these characteristics or has management support than in other categories of workplace. The exception to this, however, is in relation to private sector workplaces with ‘active’ ULRs that have 10 or more years experience. Here, training incidence is higher than in all other workplace categories, thus suggesting that experience may be a particularly important characteristic in predicting ULR effectiveness in the private sector.

Second, the WERS 2004 worker rep survey is a survey of the most senior rep at the workplace, and not a representative survey of worker reps as a whole. Arguably a broader survey of worker reps might reveal a different picture. That said, WERS 2004 provides the only comprehensive data that allows for comparison between ULR

and non-ULR reps, and should therefore be viewed as a valuable data source in this regard. In addition, one might expect ULR characteristics and management support to affect the ability of ULRs to influence training irrespective of whether or not they are the most senior rep in the workplace. Given this, the fact that the WERS survey is not representative of the population of reps is perhaps less important than it might seem.

A third caveat is that WERS 2004 does not allow for inferences to be made concerning ULRs and non-employer provided training. The preliminary evidence (Wallis *et al.* 2005) suggests that ULRs are playing an important role in advising and encouraging employees to take up non-employer provided opportunities offered by Further Education colleges, union learning centres, LearnDirect and unionlearn, while the TUC estimates that ULRs helped over 150,000 employees to access training courses in 2006-7 (unionlearn 2007: 16). Given this, the influence of ULR characteristics and management support on the association between ULRs and non-employer provided training is clearly an issue worthy of further research.

Despite these caveats, the analysis conducted here has produced some notable findings, not least in relation to levels of ULR ‘inactivity’, the extent to which ULRs are ‘hybrid’ as opposed to ‘dedicated’ reps (particularly in the public sector) and the extent to which ULR characteristics and levels of management support for ULRs differ between the public and private sectors. Also, while not finding that employer-provided training is higher in ULR workplaces than in other workplaces overall, the analysis has demonstrated that some elements of ULR characteristics and the support they receive from managers may well be important in explaining whether ULRs are able to influence training activity. Further research using different methods is, however, needed to explore these issues further, particularly in terms of whether the relationships identified here can be viewed as causal and whether they would hold in a

broader survey of union reps. In addition, while WERS 2004 allows for several ULR characteristics and aspects of management support to be explored, there are a number of further factors that it does not ask about that may well be important. For example, ULRs that have undergone ULR training may well be better placed to influence the levels of employer-provided training. Similarly, ULRs may be better placed to influence training where the proportion of ULRs to workers is higher and their span of control is therefore smaller. Clearly there is scope for research to explore these further potential influences on the ULR role. This, we would argue, represents a fruitful avenue for future research in terms of developing an understanding of whether, and in what circumstances, ULRs are able to influence training outcomes positively.

#### Notes

1. ULRs and non-ULR reps in workplaces without union recognition are excluded here.
2. Workplaces where the manager states there is a ULR present in the WERS 2004 management survey but the respondent to the worker representative survey is not a ULR are excluded from the analysis, in order to clearly differentiate between ULR and non-ULR workplaces. There are four workplaces in the main management survey where the respondent states a ULR is present and a further four workplaces where the worker rep claims to be a ULR but there is no union recognition. These observations are dropped in order to maintain comparability between the ULR category and the 'non-ULR rep' category, which is based on workplaces with recognition. In addition, there are 352 employees in workplaces where there are non-ULR union reps present but there is no union recognition. These observations are excluded from the analysis to clearly distinguish between the union rep categories and the non-union category. The definition for union recognition here is workplaces within which unions have recognition irrespective of whether or not they have members at the workplace.

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**Figure 1 Four types of union learning representatives**

	<b>ULR involved in fewer than 6 other rep activities</b>	<b>ULR involved in 6 or more other rep activities</b>
<b>ULR involved in training</b>	<p><b>‘Dedicated ULRs’</b>                      Overall: 16.8 per cent                      Public sector: 7.8 per cent                      Private sector: 31.5 per cent</p>	<p><b>‘Hybrid ULRs’</b>                      Overall: 32.3 per cent                      Public sector: 49.2 per cent                      Private sector: 4.7 per cent</p>
<b>ULR not involved in training</b>	<p><b>‘Inactive/ disengaged ULRs’</b>                      Overall: 29.5 per cent                      Public sector: 27.9 per cent                      Private sector: 32.1 per cent</p>	<p><b>‘Inactive/ engaged ULRs’</b>                      Overall: 21.4 per cent                      Public sector: 15.1 per cent                      Private sector: 31.7 per cent</p>

**Table 1: Worker representative activity**

	Full sample		Public sector		Private sector	
	ULRs	non-ULR reps	ULRs	non-ULR reps	ULRs	non-ULR reps
Training of employees	49.1	40.6	57.0	43.4	36.2	36.0
Rates of pay	53.0	61.9	75.0	54.4	17.3	74.3***
Hours of work	62.3	55.6	77.3	56.8	38.1	53.5
Holiday entitlements	36.2	44.6	53.9	44.8	7.4	44.3***
Pension entitlements	33.1	37.5	48.9	46.6	7.4	22.3**
Recruitment or selection of employees	22.4	28.7	32.6	37.7	6.0	13.8
Disciplinary matters	78.3	55.3**	83.8	52.1**	69.4	60.6
Grievances	67.4	62.4	75.8	63.2	53.7	61.0
Staffing levels	74.4	46.7**	67.6	59.9	85.4	24.8***
Equal opportunities	51.3	29.1*	61.3	37.4	35.0	15.2
Health and safety	71.5	67.9	75.2	69.6	65.5	65.1
Performance appraisals	44.6	27.7	48.4	33.4	38.5	18.3
<i>Unweighted n</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>411</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>219</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>192</i>

Base: All worker representatives in workplaces with union recognition.

Notes:

Weighted percentages given

\* significant at 10 per cent; \*\* significant at 5 per cent; \*\*\* significant at 1 per cent

**Table 2: Worker representative characteristics and environmental context where involved in training**

	Full sample		Public sector		Private sector	
	ULRs	non-ULR reps	ULRs	non-ULR reps	ULRs	non-ULR reps
Involved in <6 other rep activities	34.3	38.5	13.7	33.0	86.9	49.4
Full-time	38.0	36.2	51.5	39.6	3.5	29.4**
>=10 years experience	66.2	42.0	89.2	49.9**	7.4	26.2
Good/ very good relations with mgt.	69.3	71.1	90.2	61.6**	15.9	90.2***
Facilities	39.5	39.8	48.6	41.7	16.4	36.1
<i>Unweighted n</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>78</i>

Base: All worker representatives in workplaces with union recognition where the rep is involved in training

Notes:

Weighted percentages given

\*\* significant at 5 per cent; \*\*\* significant at 1 per cent

**Table 3: Relationship between worker representative involvement in training and training incidence**

	Full sample		Public sector		Private sector	
<i>Reference category:</i>						
<i>ULR involved in training</i>						
ULR not involved in training	-0.085	(0.138)	0.067	(0.209)	-0.094	(0.206)
Non-ULR rep involved in training	-0.126	(0.109)	-0.197	(0.138)	-0.135	(0.171)
Non-ULR rep not involved in training	-0.043	(0.106)	-0.154	(0.130)	-0.014	(0.162)
Union recognition/no rep	-0.003	(0.124)	-0.181	(0.155)	0.000	(0.180)
Non-union	-0.132	(0.119)	-0.206	(0.209)	-0.108	(0.169)
F	14.26		9.92		9.83	
Prob>F	0.000		0.000		0.000	
N	14000		3626		10374	

Notes:

Coefficients given (standard errors in brackets)

All equations control for the workplace, individual and job characteristics described in the Appendix table

**Table 4: Relationship between worker representative characteristics and training incidence (full sample)**

	Training incidence	
<i>Reference category: 'Active'<sup>1</sup> ULR involved in fewer than six other rep activities</i>		
'Active' ULR involved in six or more other rep activities	0.566	(0.190)***
'Inactive' <sup>2</sup> ULR	0.406	(0.187)**
'Active' non-ULR rep involved in fewer than six other rep activities	0.549	(0.192)***
'Active' non-ULR rep involved in six or more other rep activities	0.315	(0.170)*
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	0.449	(0.165)***
Union recognition/no rep	0.485	(0.167)***
Non-union	0.354	(0.161)**
F	14.05	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	14000	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' full-time ULR</i>		
'Active' part-time ULR	-0.071	(0.182)
'Inactive' ULR	-0.125	(0.176)
'Active' full-time non-ULR rep	-0.200	(0.163)
'Active' part-time non-ULR rep	-0.133	(0.158)
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	-0.082	(0.151)
Union recognition/no rep	-0.042	(0.165)
Non-union	-0.169	(0.162)
F	13.86	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	14000	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR with 10 or more years experience</i>		
'Active' ULR with less than 10 years experience	-0.026	(0.204)
'Inactive' ULR	-0.096	(0.140)
'Active' non-ULR rep with 10 or more years experience	-0.137	(0.125)
'Active' non-ULR rep with less than 10 years experience	-0.136	(0.120)
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	-0.053	(0.109)
Union recognition/no rep	-0.014	(0.128)
Non-union	-0.142	(0.122)
F	13.85	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	14000	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR in workplace with good/very good relations between managers and reps</i>		
'Active' ULR in workplace without good/ very good relations between managers/ reps	-0.019	(0.200)
'Inactive' ULR	-0.089	(0.154)
'Active' non-ULR in workplace with good/ very good relations between managers/ reps	-0.069	(0.135)
'Active' non-ULR rep in workplace without good/ very good relations between managers/ reps	-0.227	(0.134)*
'Inactive non-ULR rep	-0.046	(0.124)
Union recognition/no rep	-0.006	(0.141)
Non-union	-0.135	(0.137)
F	13.91	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	14000	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR with facilities</i>		
'Active' ULR without facilities	-0.080	(0.185)
'Inactive' ULR	-0.108	(0.158)
'Active' non-ULR with facilities	-0.146	(0.139)
'Active' non-ULR rep without facilities	-0.152	(0.142)
'Inactive non-ULR rep	-0.065	(0.130)
Union recognition/no rep	-0.026	(0.147)
Non-union	-0.154	(0.143)
F	13.91	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	14000	

Notes:

Dependent variable is a dichotomous variable where 1= employee has had training in the previous 12 months and 0=otherwise  
Survey probit analysis. Coefficients given (standard errors in brackets)

\*\*\* significant at 1 per cent; \*\* significant at 5 per cent; \* significant at 10 per cent

All equations control for the workplace, individual and job characteristics described in the Appendix table

<sup>1</sup> 'Active' = rep has spent time on employee training in their job as a rep in the last 12 months

<sup>2</sup> 'Inactive' = rep has not spent time on employee training in their job as a rep in last 12 months

**Table 5: Relationship between worker representative characteristics and training incidence (public sector)**

	Training incidence	
<i>Reference category: 'Active'<sup>1</sup> ULR involved in fewer than six other rep activities</i>		
'Active' ULR involved in six or more other rep activities	0.332	(0.152)**
'Inactive' <sup>2</sup> ULR	0.388	(0.217)*
'Active' non-ULR involved in six or more other rep activities	0.134	(0.172)
'Active' non-ULR rep involved in fewer than six rep activities	0.121	(0.140)
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	0.166	(0.118)
Union recognition/no rep	0.139	(0.146)
Non-union	0.116	(0.201)
F	9.99	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	3626	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' full-time ULR</i>		
'Active' part-time ULR	-0.084	(0.250)
'Inactive' ULR	0.023	(0.258)
'Active' full-time non-ULR rep	-0.128	(0.216)
'Active' part-time non-ULR rep	-0.364	(0.204)*
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	-0.202	(0.193)
Union recognition/no rep	-0.234	(0.214)
Non-union	-0.266	(0.253)
F	9.56	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	3626	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR with 10 or more years rep experience</i>		
'Active' ULR with less than 10 years rep experience	0.606	(0.253)**
'Inactive' ULR	0.236	(0.202)
'Active' non-ULR rep with more than 10 years rep experience	-0.013	(0.150)
'Active' non-ULR rep with less than 10 years rep experience	-0.014	(0.140)
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	0.031	(0.122)
Union recognition/no rep	0.004	(0.154)
Non-union	-0.018	(0.206)
F	9.45	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	3626	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR in workplace with good/ very good relations between managers and reps</i>		
'Active' ULR in workplace without good/ very good relations between managers and reps	-0.075	(0.214)
'Inactive' ULR	0.055	(0.233)
'Active' non-ULR rep in workplace with good/ very good relations between managers/ reps	-0.153	(0.190)
'Active' non-ULR rep in workplace without good/ very good relations between managers/ reps	-0.312	(0.180)*
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	-0.176	(0.163)
Union recognition/no rep	-0.205	(0.184)
Non-union	-0.233	(0.231)
F	9.44	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	3626	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR with facilities</i>		
'Active' ULR without facilities	-0.437	(0.197)**
'Inactive' ULR	-0.097	(0.236)
'Active' non-ULR rep with facilities	-0.302	(0.188)
'Active' non-ULR rep without facilities	-0.455	(0.187)**
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	-0.322	(0.172)*
Union recognition/no rep	-0.344	(0.191)*
Non-union	-0.385	(0.234)
F	9.48	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	3626	

Notes:

Dependent variable is a dichotomous variable where 1= employee has had training in the previous 12 months and 0=otherwise  
Survey probit analysis. Coefficients given (standard errors in brackets)

\*\*\* significant at 1 per cent; \*\* significant at 5 per cent; \* significant at 10 per cent

All equations control for the workplace, individual and job characteristics described in the Appendix table

<sup>1</sup> Active = Rep has spent time on employee training in their job as a rep in the last 12 months

<sup>2</sup> Inactive = Rep has spent time on employee training in their job as a rep in the last 12 months

**Table 6: Relationship between worker representative characteristics and training incidence (private sector)**

	Training incidence	
<i>Reference category: 'Active'<sup>1</sup> ULR involved in fewer than six other rep activities</i>		
'Active' <sup>2</sup> ULR involved in six or more other rep activities	0.663	(0.234)***
'Inactive' ULR	0.403	(0.220)*
'Active' non-ULR rep involved in fewer than six other rep activities	0.700	(0.224)***
'Active' non-ULR rep involved in six or more other rep activities	0.264	(0.197)
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	0.478	(0.186)***
Union recognition/no rep	0.488	(0.183)***
Non-union	0.382	(0.174)**
F	9.81	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	10374	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' full-time ULR</i>		
'Active' part-time ULR	0.012	(0.287)
'Inactive' ULR	-0.089	(0.267)
'Active' full-time non-ULR rep	-0.290	(0.251)
'Active' part-time non-ULR rep	-0.019	(0.243)
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	-0.013	(0.230)
Union recognition/no rep	0.004	(0.249)
Non-union	-0.102	(0.242)
F	9.59	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	10374	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR with 10 or more years experience</i>		
'Active' ULR with less than 10 years experience	-0.611	(0.277)**
'Inactive' ULR	-0.363	(0.184)**
'Active' non-ULR rep with 10 or more years experience	-0.400	(0.175)**
'Active' non-ULR rep with less than 10 years rep experience	-0.397	(0.155)**
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	-0.281	(0.134)**
Union recognition/no rep	-0.272	(0.160)*
Non-union	-0.380	(0.147)***
F	9.54	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	10374	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR in workplace with good/ very good relations between managers and reps</i>		
'Active' ULR in workplace without good/ very good relations between managers/ reps	0.202	(0.330)
'Inactive' ULR	-0.055	(0.223)
'Active' non-ULR rep in workplace with good/ very good relations between managers/ reps	-0.031	(0.198)
'Active' non-ULR rep in workplace without good/ very good relations between managers/ reps	-0.226	(0.211)
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	0.025	(0.184)
Union recognition/no rep	0.042	(0.202)
Non-union	-0.070	(0.192)
F	9.64	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	10374	
<hr/>		
<i>Reference category: 'Active' ULR with facilities</i>		
'Active' ULR without facilities	0.319	(0.300)
'Inactive' ULR	-0.026	(0.224)
'Active' non-ULR rep with facilities	-0.113	(0.206)
'Active' non-ULR rep without facilities	0.002	(0.201)
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	0.054	(0.184)
Union recognition/no rep	0.071	(0.202)
Non-union	-0.038	(0.192)
F	9.55	
Prob>F	0.000	
N	10374	

Notes:

Dependent variable is a dichotomous variable where 1= employee has had training in the previous 12 months and 0=otherwise  
Survey probit analysis. Coefficients given (standard errors in brackets)

\*\*\* significant at 1 per cent; \*\* significant at 5 per cent; \* significant at 10 per cent

All equations control for the workplace, individual and job characteristics described in the Appendix table

<sup>1</sup> Active = Rep has spent time on employee training in their job as a rep in the last 12 months

<sup>2</sup> Inactive = Rep has spent time on employee training in their job as a rep in the last 12 months

## Appendix table: Variable means

Dependent variable	Full sample	Public sector	Private sector
Training incidence	0.616	0.765	0.580
<u>Independent variables</u>			
'Active' ULR	0.036	0.115	0.018
'Inactive' ULR	0.022	0.041	0.018
'Active' non-ULR rep	0.118	0.322	0.069
'Inactive' non-ULR rep	0.137	0.328	0.092
Union recognition/ no rep	0.086	0.137	0.074
Non-union	0.601	0.057	0.729
'Active' ULR/ fewer than six other rep activities	0.004	0.004	0.004
'Active' ULR/ more than six other rep activities	0.032	0.111	0.014
'Active' non-ULR rep/ fewer than six other rep activities	0.026	0.069	0.016
'Active' non-ULR rep/ more than six other rep activities	0.092	0.253	0.054
'Active' ULR/ full-time	0.016	0.058	0.006
'Active' ULR/ part-time	0.020	0.057	0.011
'Active' non-ULR rep/ full-time	0.059	0.185	0.029
'Active' non-ULR rep/part-time	0.059	0.137	0.040
'Active' ULR/ 10 or more years experience	0.022	0.073	0.010
'Active' ULR/ less than 10 years experience	0.014	0.042	0.008
'Active' non-ULR rep/ 10 or more years experience	0.055	0.154	0.032
'Active' non-ULR rep/less than 10 years experience	0.062	0.169	0.037
'Active' ULR/ good or very good rels with managers	0.028	0.085	0.014
'Active' ULR/ rels with managers not good or very good	0.008	0.030	0.003
'Active' non-ULR rep/ good or very good rels with managers	0.071	0.182	0.045
'Active' non-ULR rep/ rels with managers not good or very good	0.046	0.140	0.024
'Active' ULR/ office facilities	0.027	0.082	0.014
'Active' ULR/ without full office facilities	0.009	0.033	0.003
'Active' non-ULR rep/ office facilities	0.073	0.203	0.042
'Active' non-ULR rep/ without full office facilities	0.045	0.120	0.027
<u>Control variables</u>			
<u>Workplace characteristics</u>			
<i>Workplace size</i>			
5-24 employees	0.282	0.138	0.316
25-99 employees	0.265	0.226	0.274
100-999 employees	0.370	0.456	0.349
1000 or more employees	0.085	0.180	0.062
<i>Organisation size</i>			
5-99 employees	0.259	0.029	0.313
100-999 employees	0.221	0.170	0.233
1000-9999 employees	0.287	0.406	0.259
10000 employees	0.232	0.396	0.194
<i>SIC major group</i>			
Manufacturing	0.184	0.004	0.227
Gas, electricity and water supply	0.004	0.000	0.004
Construction	0.051	0.034	0.055
Wholesale and retail trade	0.155	0.000	0.192
Hotels and restaurants	0.043	0.000	0.054
Transport, storage and communication	0.063	0.066	0.063
Financial intermediation	0.056	0.000	0.069
Real estate, renting	0.159	0.022	0.192
Public admin., defence, social security	0.056	0.288	0.001
Education	0.057	0.213	0.021
Health and social work	0.126	0.315	0.081
Other community, social, personal	0.046	0.058	0.043
Public sector	0.191		
Single independent workplace	0.244	0.084	0.281

Many competitors	0.430		0.531
<i>Financial performance</i>			
No competition/ data	0.069	0.097	0.062
Above average financial performance	0.509	0.416	0.531
Average financial performance	0.353	0.448	0.330
Below average financial performance	0.070	0.040	0.077
<i>National ownership</i>			
UK owned	0.870	1.000	0.839
North American owned	0.064	0.000	0.079
Non-UK EU owned	0.049	0.000	0.061
Rest of World	0.017	0.000	0.021
<i>Workplace age</i>			
0-4 years old	0.074	0.064	0.076
5-9 years old	0.114	0.062	0.126
10-19 years old	0.204	0.151	0.216
20 or more years old	0.608	0.723	0.581
Proportion workforce female	0.469	0.613	0.436
Proportion workforce part-time	0.240	0.314	0.223
Proportion workforce ethnic minority <sup>1</sup>	0.071	0.068	0.072
Proportion workforce 21 or under <sup>1</sup>	0.085	0.033	0.097
Proportion workforce disabled <sup>1</sup>	0.010	0.013	0.009
<u>Individual characteristics</u>			
<i>Employee age</i>			
16-21 years old	0.072	0.020	0.085
22-29 years old	0.172	0.121	0.184
30-29 years old	0.255	0.239	0.259
40-49 years old	0.249	0.307	0.235
50-59 years old	0.204	0.263	0.190
60 or more years old	0.048	0.050	0.048
<i>Marital status:</i>			
Single	0.245	0.172	0.263
Widowed	0.012	0.016	0.011
Divorced/ separated	0.078	0.089	0.076
Living with partner	0.664	0.723	0.650
<i>Highest academic qualification</i>			
None	0.178	0.124	0.190
'Other' academic qualifications	0.067	0.065	0.068
GCSE grades D-G	0.102	0.072	0.109
GCSE grades A-C	0.260	0.243	0.264
A levels	0.146	0.151	0.145
Degree or above	0.248	0.345	0.225
Any vocational qualification	0.583	0.695	0.557
Disabled	0.117	0.135	0.113
Ethnic minority	0.060	0.054	0.061
Dependent child	0.378	0.419	0.368
Female	0.473	0.606	0.442
<u>Job characteristics</u>			
Part-time	0.210	0.251	0.201
Temporary/ fixed term	0.073	0.094	0.068
<i>Job tenure</i>			
<1 year	0.174	0.128	0.185
1-<2 years	0.136	0.129	0.138
2-<5 years	0.275	0.255	0.280
5-<10 years	0.182	0.179	0.182
>=10 years	0.233	0.309	0.215
<i>SOC major group</i>			
Managers and senior officials	0.128	0.076	0.140
Professional	0.098	0.180	0.079
Associate professional and technical	0.149	0.248	0.126
Administrative and secretarial	0.177	0.212	0.169
Skilled trades	0.086	0.036	0.098

Caring, leisure and personal service	0.061	0.119	0.047
Sales and customer service	0.092	0.012	0.111
Process, plant and machine operators, drivers	0.091	0.026	0.107
Routine unskilled	0.118	0.091	0.125
N	14000	3684	10374

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Notes:

Weighted means given

<sup>1</sup> missing values for these variables are set to the mean, given the number of missing observations in these cases.