



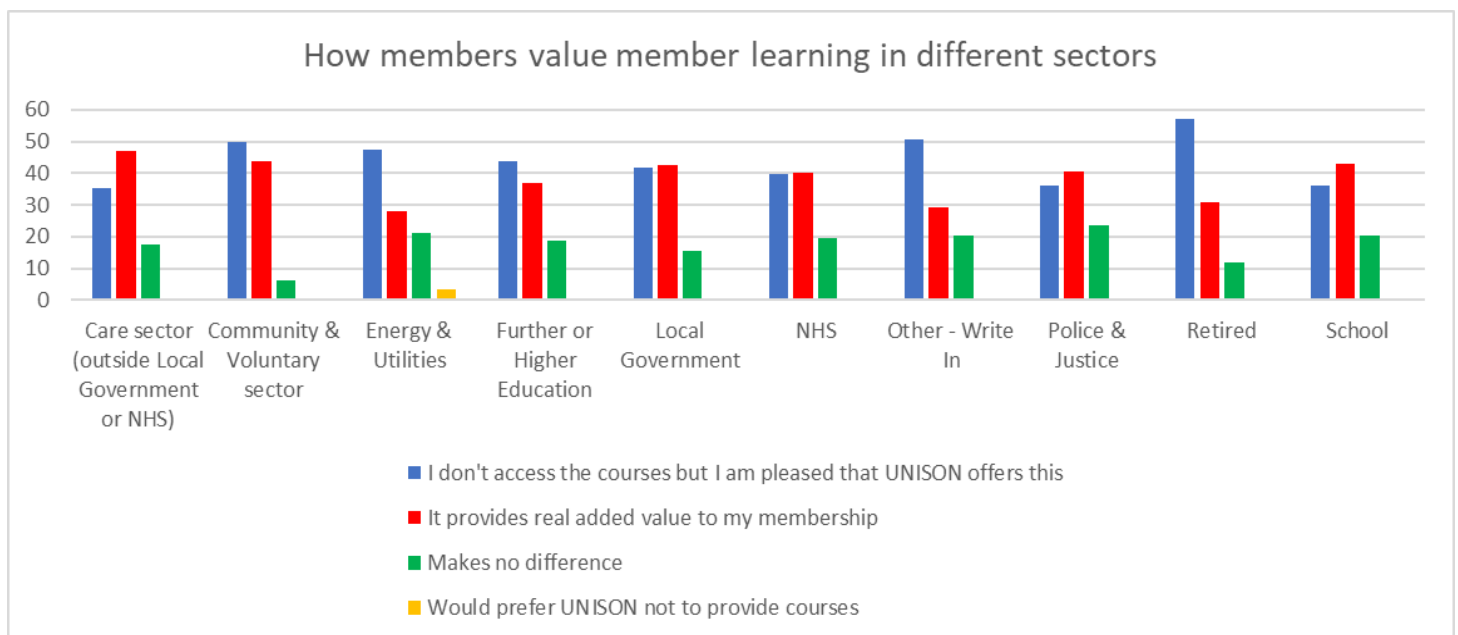
This survey was conducted as part of Learning at Work Week 2023. It is the fifth East Midlands 'all-member' learning survey and seeks to:

- Identify member awareness of UNISON's learning offer, and compare to previous years
- Understand the learning members require
- Examine training being provided by employers
- Look at the value members place on member-learning

Key findings

The response to the member-learning survey 2023 was extremely positive with almost 2500 members taking part. This allows us to speak with confidence when discussing member's learning needs, how they feel about 'UNISON Learning', and the barriers they face.

Knowledge of what UNISON offers remains mixed. 79% of respondents stated that they were aware of UNISON courses (up 4% on 2022) but only 24% knew about learning grants and 45% knew about the support of the ULR (both are reductions on the previous year). Much more encouraging is the overwhelming positivity about UNISON Learning. 42% of respondents state that it provides 'real added value' to their UNISON membership. However, it is not completely uniform across sectors with 47% of members in the private care sector stating that it provides real added value but only 28% of members in Energy.



Members were then asked to provide explanation and these can be grouped into common themes:

- Value for money; previously saw their membership as 'just' insurance but this offers much more
- Reason to continue membership during the cost of living crisis
- A feeling that the union cares about them and their development
- It has improved our reputation amongst members
- Opportunities, in life and work, have opened-up as a result
- UNISON is the only opportunity for many to develop themselves
- Not something that is offered by other unions
- It provides a real benefit socially and helps address mental health

Just some of those quotes:

"It is fantastic to find out UNISON offers these incentives and avenues for its members to further their education and expand their skill base! I am thankful for finding this out. It has been yet another positive informative notification that the union helps members in other ways along with all the great work and support it offers its members"

"My team are all members and we regularly discuss training needs together and UNISON helps with this when their training new bulletin comes out"

"I was advised to join a union many years ago just in case I ever needed legal support. Fortunately I never have, but that makes it feel like membership is purely insurance. Getting access to so many excellent courses shows immediate return on the investment of monthly fees."

"As a young member I find your courses really useful as an add on to the training provided by work, especially since in some jobs I have received little to no training so professional development has been left in my own hands. It also allows me to learn things outside of my job role!"

"It offers options for me to improve my work when at work, specifically IT. I am 68yrs old, IT frightens me."

"Sometimes a union can feel invisible and if it offers support with learning and you partake in it, it makes you feel more included with the membership"

"I didn't know anything about this. I think if people knew it would encourage more people to join UNISON. I've been paying for years and not really used it"

"Although now retired I owe a great deal to trade union sponsored education. It literally changed my life after leaving school with no qualifications. It was the greatest benefit of my union membership throughout my working life."

"Because I'd really like to learn and progress with my career and my employer doesn't care about training their staff."

"Didn't know what UNISON offered. As a student I pay £10 a year but if I wasn't I wouldn't of liked to be paying the current rates with what I knew before (nothing) now I know there's courses etc available it makes the price worth it"

Learning needs

Personal Development

The survey notes a very similar response to 2022 with sign language (40%) being the most popular. However, it is notable that basic IT skills, crafts and languages have all risen around 10%. This is possibly because of a greater awareness that UNISON has offered these through our county-forums but it also corresponds with a later question that found that 58% of all respondents (1272 members) would like support with Mindfulness/Anxiety. The scale of stress within public services is possibly leading to members looking at informal learning as an alternative way to deal with this. Those who feedback on UNISON courses often note that the course has benefitted their mental health.

Mental Health and Anxiety is also prominent in responses to those requesting learning to support children. 184 respondents mentioned this when asked for more detail. This is incredibly high for a field which requires members to write in and indicates how concerned members are about their children or those they care for. It may suggest that UNISON consider offering different Mental Health courses to different audiences and it does recognise that, as parents, many members are struggling to support their families.

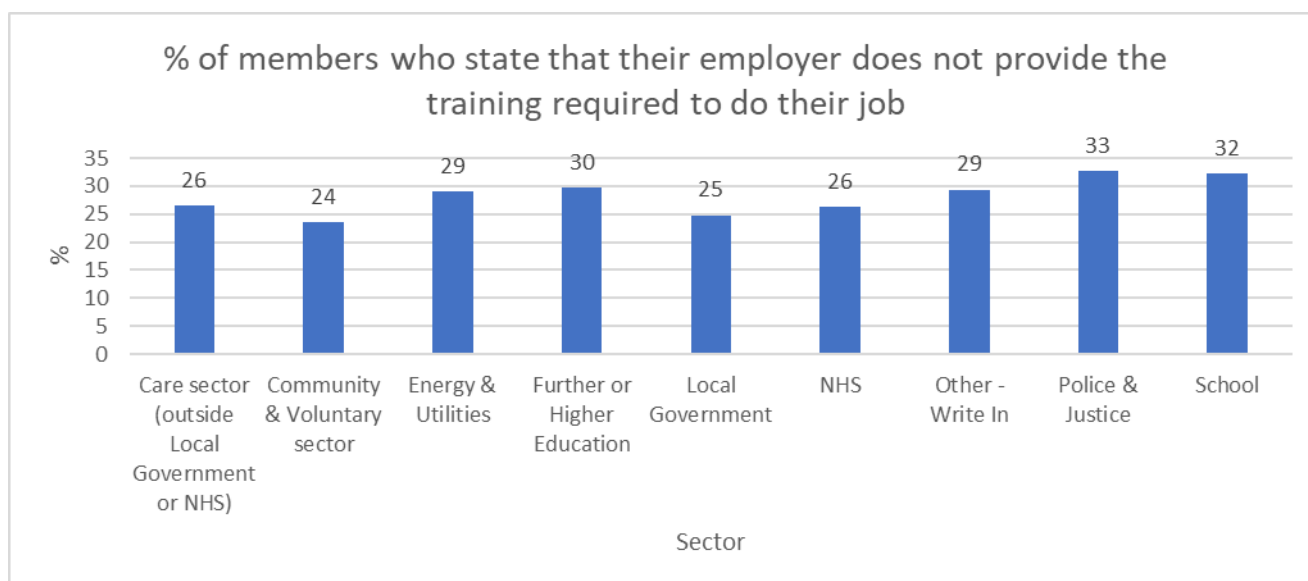
Unsurprisingly, when asked for more detail of the Basic IT skills need, Excel is the most requested with 76% but a large number (40%) are seeking help with more general basic functions.

Learning for work

The top three responses were, Understanding Neurodiversity (29%), IT Skills (28.5%), and Management/Team Leading (27%). All three indicate a significant proportion of the membership. Those noting IT skills were asked to provide further detail and Excel was again found to be most popular along with general 'MS Office'. This tallies with anecdotal evidence that new IT systems were introduced during Lockdown but insufficient training was given to staff.

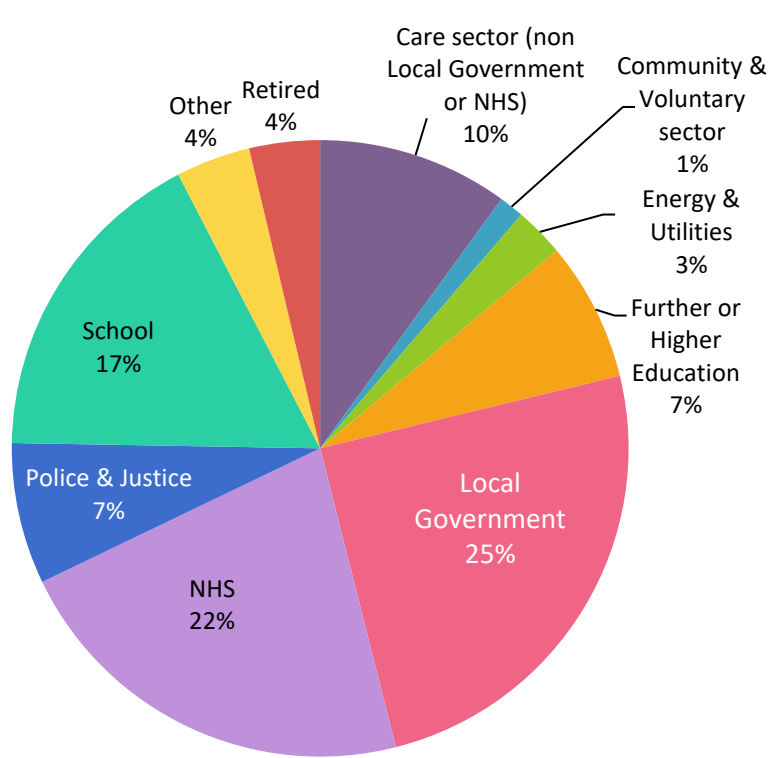
Employer provision

The numbers reporting that their employer does not provide the training needed to do their job is slightly lower in 2023 at 31%, down from 35% in 2022, but still remains remarkably high. We then asked members who said 'no' how that impacts them and found that 68% state that this impacts on their ability to progress, 35% are worried they will make mistakes and 15% say there is a risk to colleagues or service users. Whilst this is just a small percentage of the total taking part (4%) it is still troubling. The table below identifies sectoral responses.



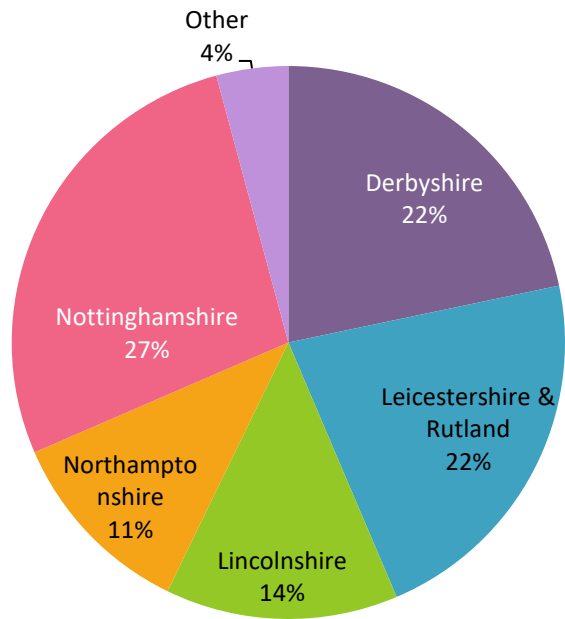
Part 1 - Background information

1. What type of organisation do you work for?



Value	Percent	Count
Care sector (outside Local Government or NHS)	10.0%	226
Community & Voluntary sector	1.3%	29
Energy & Utilities	2.6%	59
Further or Higher Education	7.3%	165
Local Government	24.8%	561
NHS	21.8%	493
Police & Justice	7.4%	168
School	17.1%	387
Other - Write In	3.9%	87
Retired	3.7%	83
Totals		2,258

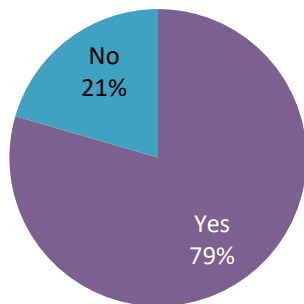
2. Which County do you live in?



Value	Percent	Count
Derbyshire	21.7%	490
Leicestershire & Rutland	21.9%	495
Lincolnshire	13.6%	306
Northamptonshire	11.3%	256
Nottinghamshire	27.3%	616
Other	4.2%	95
Totals		2,258

Part 2 – Awareness of UNISON Learning

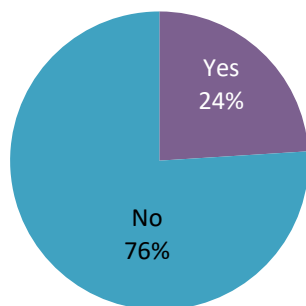
3. Did you know that UNISON had a programme of free courses for members?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	79.5%	1,794
No	20.5%	462
	Totals	2,256

Comment – an increase of 4% on 2022

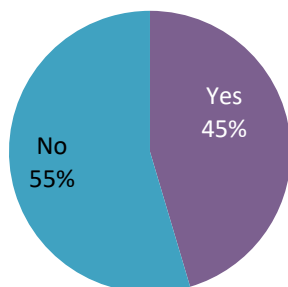
4. Were you aware that UNISON offered grants for members who are paying for their own courses?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	24.0%	542
No	76.0%	1,714
	Totals	2,256

Comment – a reduction of 2% on 2022

5. Do you know that UNISON has Union Learning Reps (ULRs) in many workplaces whose role is to support members around learning issues in the workplace?

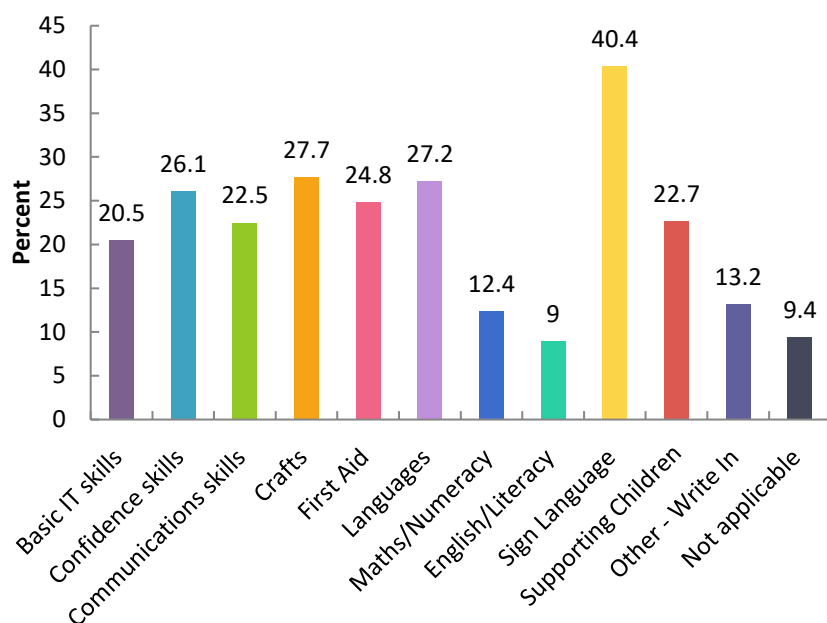


Value	Percent	Count
Yes	45.4%	1,024
No	54.6%	1,232
	Totals	2,256

Comment – a reduction of 5% on 2022

Part 3 – Personal Development & IT Skills

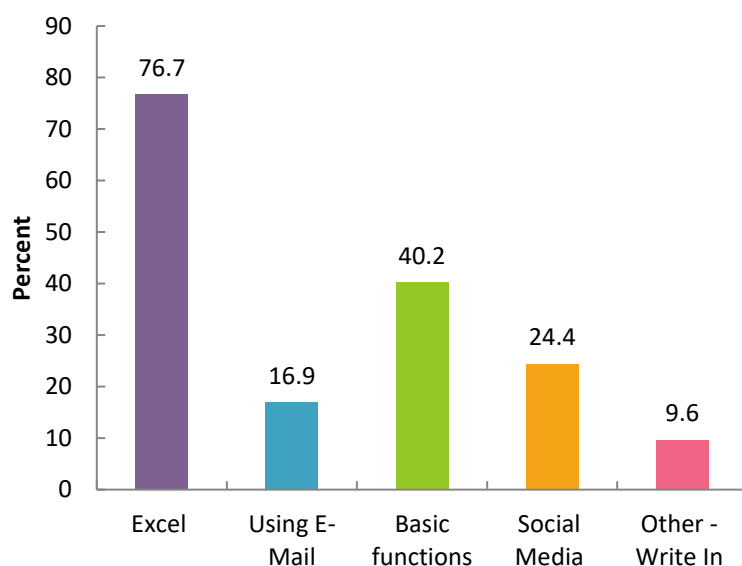
6. Which of these courses would you be interested in attending for your own personal development (not necessarily for work)? (tick all that apply)



Value	Percent	Count
Basic IT skills	20.5%	457
Confidence skills	26.1%	583
Communications skills	22.5%	502
Crafts	27.7%	618
First Aid	24.8%	553
Languages	27.2%	608
Maths	12.4%	276
English/Literacy	9.0%	200
Sign Language	40.4%	903
Supporting Children	22.7%	508
Other - Write In	13.2%	296
Not applicable	9.4%	210

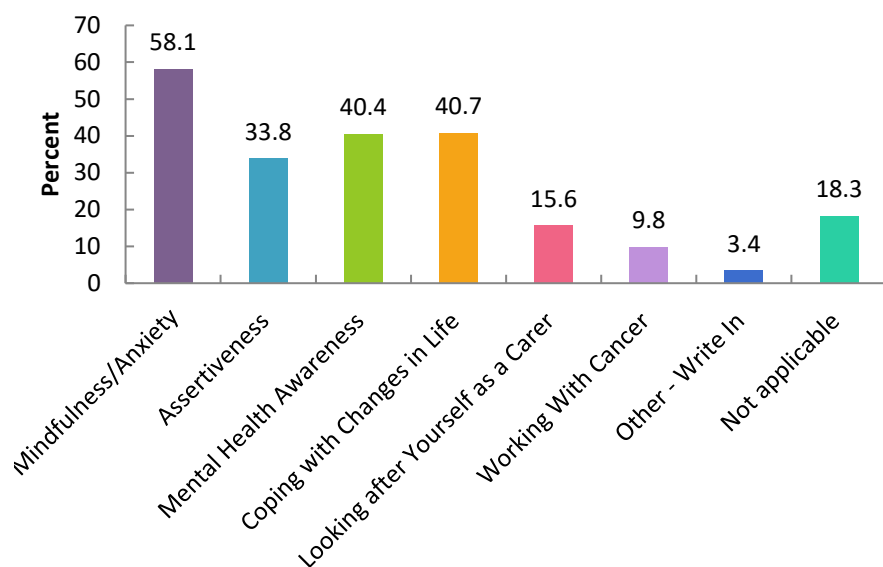
Comment – Much of this is identical to 2022. However, there is a significant increase in crafts and languages (12% and 10% respectively). 'Other' produced no notable trends.

7. What area of IT skills would you like to improve for personal use? Question asked of members who indicated in Q6 that they are interested in 'Basic IT Skills'



Value	Percent	Count
Excel	76.7%	345
Using E-Mail	16.9%	76
Basic functions e.g.saving and attaching	40.2%	181
Social Media	24.4%	110
Other - Write In	9.6%	43

8. Learning is an essential element of Health and Wellbeing. Would you be interested in any of these courses to support you or to gain a better understanding?

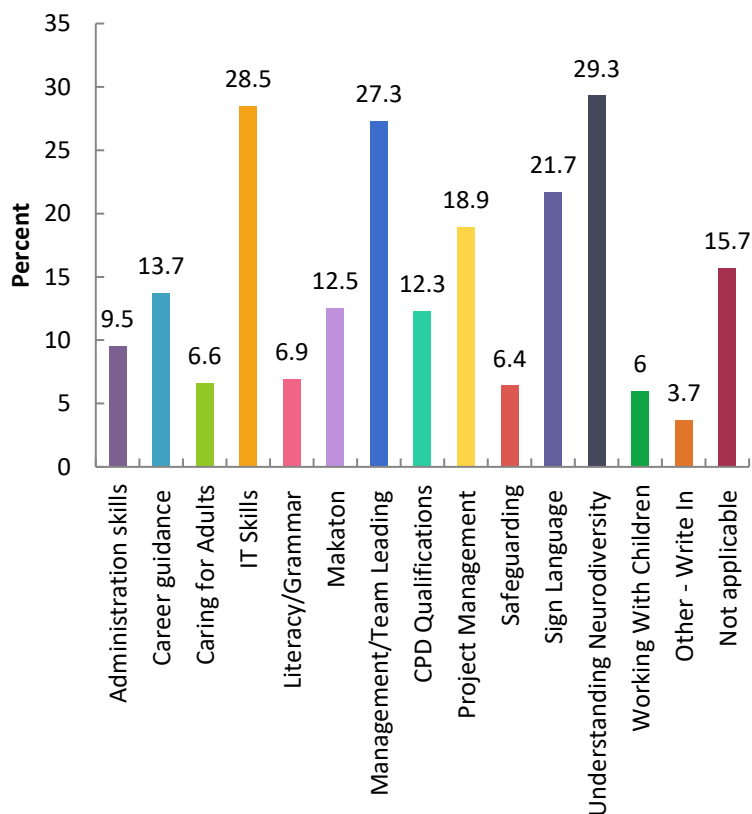


Value	Percent	Count
Mindfulness/Anxiety Management	58.1%	1,272
Assertiveness	33.8%	741
Mental Health Awareness	40.4%	885
Coping with Changes in Life	40.7%	891
Looking after Yourself as a Carer	15.6%	342
Working With Cancer	9.8%	214
Other - Write In	3.4%	75
Not applicable	18.3%	402

Comment – This is almost identical to 2022 (and previous years) despite the number of participants increasing. We can therefore express more confidence that this is a good representation of all UNISON East Midlands members

Part 4 – Learning for work

9. What learning would help you to carry out your job role or progress at work? Tick all that apply

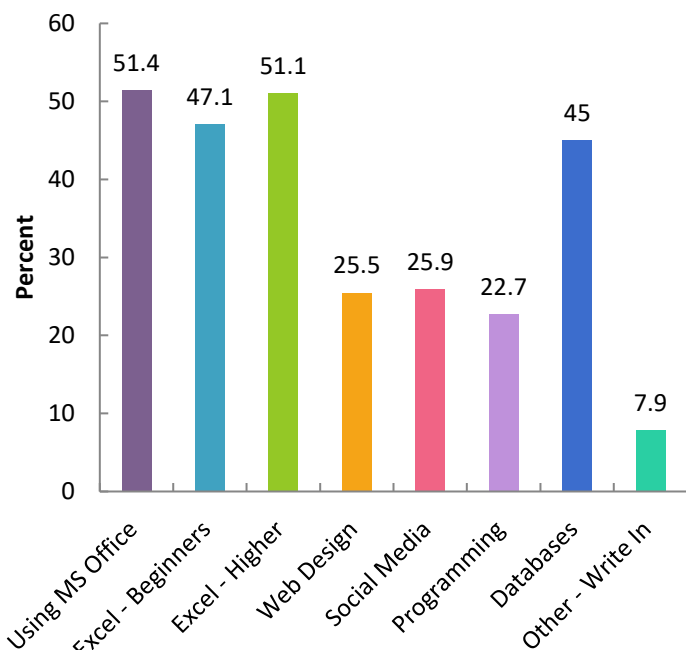


Value	Percent	Count
Administration skills - Please tell us more	9.5%	210
Career guidance	13.7%	301
Caring for Adults e.g. Dementia Care	6.6%	145
IT Skills	28.5%	626
Literacy/Grammar	6.9%	152
Makaton	12.5%	275
Management/Team Leading	27.3%	600
Professional Development qualification	12.3%	270
Project Management	18.9%	415
Safeguarding	6.4%	140
Sign Language	21.7%	478
Understanding Neurodiversity	29.3%	645
Working With Children	6.0%	132
Other - Write In	3.7%	81
Not applicable	15.7%	346

Comment – IT Skills, Management and Neurodiversity dominate the responses and tallies with applications for UNISON courses. Those who requested Administration skills were asked for more information and we found that IT was the most popular response with 32 members looking for Excel, MS Office, presentations and general help.

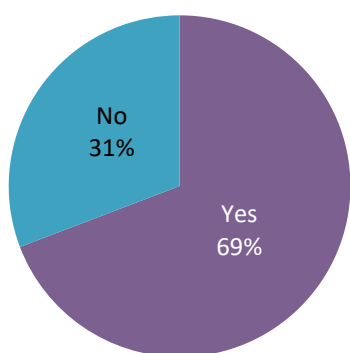
The biggest response with interest in Caring for Adults is for Dementia training (29 responses). In all other fields where additional information was given no notable trends were identified.

**10. Please tell us more about which areas of IT you would like to improve for work?
(Asked if they indicated 'IT Skills' in Q9)**



Value	Percent	Count
Using MS Office	51.4%	314
Excel - Beginners	47.1%	288
Excel - Intermediate/Higher	51.1%	312
Web Design	25.5%	156
Social Media	25.9%	158
Programming	22.7%	139
Databases	45.0%	275
Other - Write In	7.9%	48

11. Do you feel your employer provides the training you need to do your current role?



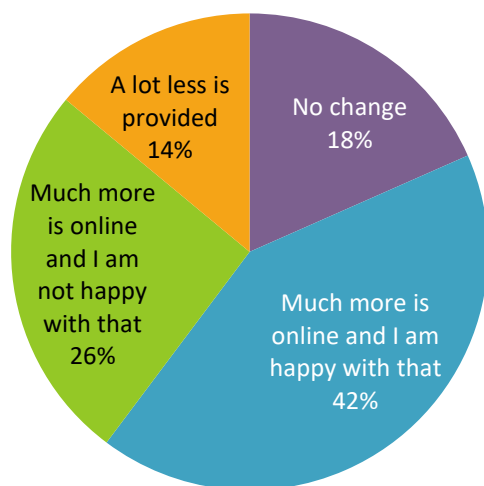
Value	Percent	Count
Yes	69.2%	1,542
No	30.8%	686
Totals		2,228

12. Please let us know how you feel that impacts on you and your work (Question only asked of those who indicated 'No' on Q11)



Value	Percent	Count
I am worried I will make mistakes	35.0%	233
Opportunities to progress are limited	67.7%	451
My confidence is low	35.3%	235
There is a risk to service users or colleagues	14.7%	98
Other - Write In	13.4%	89

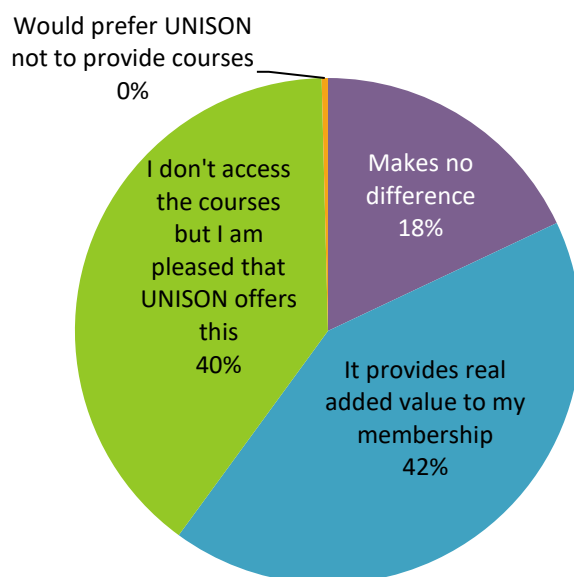
13.How has training at work changed in recent years?



Value	Percent	Count
No change	18.4%	406
Much more is online and I am happy with that	41.9%	927
Much more is online and I am not happy with that	25.8%	570
A lot less is provided	14.0%	309
Totals		2,212

Part 5 – The UNISON Learning Offer and the ULR

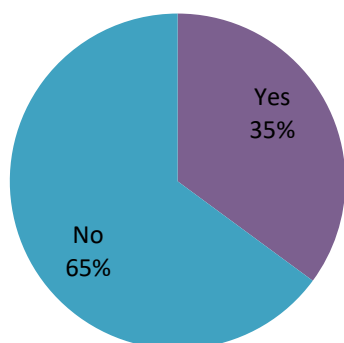
14.How does UNISON's Learning 'Offer' affect the way you view the union?



Value	Percent	Count
Makes no difference	18.0%	402
It provides real added value to my membership	42.1%	938
I don't access the courses but I am pleased that UNISON offers this	39.6%	882
Would prefer UNISON not to provide courses	0.4%	8
Totals		2,230

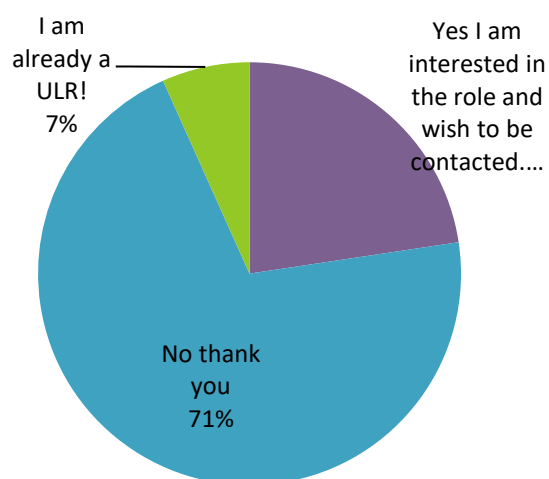
The response is almost identical to that of the 2022 survey. However, an extra 1000 members took part in the survey this year and so we can be more certain that the figure is representative of member feelings as it possible to assume that those who take part in UNISON learning are more likely to respond to a survey of this nature.

15.Are you interested in helping other people to take up learning?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	35.1%	782
No	64.9%	1,445
Totals		2,227

16.If yes then please do consider the role of the Union Learning Rep (ULR).



Value	Percent	Count
Yes I am interested in the role and wish to be contacted.	22.6%	175
No thank you	70.6%	546
I am already a ULR!	6.7%	52
Totals		773

The 175 expressing an interest in the ULR role will all be contacted, either by the regional member-learning team, organising staff or Branch Learning Co-ordinators.