

Friends of GFTUET:

Building the Future of Trade Union Education

2026 –2027



Trade Union Education has never mattered more.

Working people are facing rapid change. AI is reshaping workplaces, insecure work remains a reality for millions, and divisive politics continues to exploit the uncertainty felt by many. Trade unions are responding to an increasingly complex world. Education is one of the most powerful tools we have to meet these challenges head on.

Friends of GFTUET brings people together who believe that education belongs at the heart of our movement. Since launching in 2024, Friends have helped us reach more workers, develop new courses, and build an education programme that responds to the challenges trade unionists face today.

This booklet looks back at what we've achieved together and ahead to another year of building a stronger movement.

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A Message from Our General Secretary

Friends of the GFTU Educational Trust are a unique group of people who make an outstanding contribution to the future of trade union education in this country. By giving regularly, from as little as five pounds a month, you can ensure that the next generation of trade union activists and leaders receive the education they need to deliver, in and out of the workplace.

Your donation will make sure that new workplace reps have access to that vital training in how to organise, represent and win for their members in the workplace. It will support trade union members to raise their voices and play a role in rebuilding our economy in the interests of workers, not profit. It will also provide the resources needed to train a growing team of activists to challenge and defeat far right narratives in their workplaces and their communities, through rebuilding unity and solidarity.

By becoming a Friend of the GFTU Educational Trust, you are helping to shape the future that will be inherited by our children and grandchildren – a future in which working people have the power to determine the conditions under which we live and work.

Thank you for being part of this movement for change.

In solidarity,

Gawain Little
General Secretary

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gawain Little', written in a cursive style.

Building the Future of Trade Union Education

More people learning

Education is growing.

Since the start of our 2023-24 programme, more than 5,000 people have attended a GFTUET course.

This year alone, participation increased by 539% compared with 2023-24. Every learner represents another worker gaining the confidence, skills, and knowledge to organise in their workplace and community.

Education that challenges the far-right

This year, Rebuilding Solidarity becomes a core part of our education programme after a strong response from affiliates and activists. This reflects our commitment to developing education that responds to the issues facing the movement today.

Alongside this, we'll introduce Women's Voices in Challenging the Far Right, further strengthening our education offer for 2026-27.

Listening to workers

This year we've carried out one of the most significant pieces of research into trade union education in decades through our Workers' Education Survey, developed in partnership with SOAS University as part of our Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

The survey is helping us better understand workers' experiences of trade unions and the education they want for the future.

Its findings will be launched in Parliament in partnership with SOAS and will help to shape the future direction of our Trade Union Education.

Building the Future of Trade Union Education



Political economy matters

This year we held our first Political Economy Conference, bringing together trade unionists, academics, and campaigners to discuss the forces shaping working people's lives.

The response was so positive that the conference returns in our 2026-27 programme.

Political economy continues to be an important part of our education programme as more workers look to understand not only what is happening, but why.

Reaching more people

Trade union education should meet people where they are.

This year we launched our TikTok channel, helping introduce GFTUET to new audiences and sharing trade union education in a new way.

Whether someone discovers us through a course, a conference, or a short video, our aim remains the same: to make education accessible to as many workers as possible.

Our Mission & Values

The GFTUET exists to provide independent, progressive trade union education. We know that education builds stronger workplaces, stronger unions, and a stronger movement.

Our programme is built on the values of equality, solidarity, critical thinking and discourse.

We deliver education that is:

- Political and analytical, helping participants understand the structural causes of injustice and inequality
 - Practical and skills-based, enabling union reps and activists to organise, bargain and lead effectively.
 - Accessible, with a strong commitment to in-person, online, residential, hybrid, and on-demand learning.
 - Responsive, with timely courses that address the issues facing working people and the trade union movement.
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Our mission is to support union members to build confidence, strategy, and vision, building the next generation of trade union leaders.





Your Friend Benefits

As a Friend of GFTUET, you will receive:

- Free access to every online course.
- One free in-person course each year (Gold Friends).
- Free access to our new on-demand Bitesize courses, available to watch whenever suits you.
- Discounted rates for selected conferences
- Invitation to our annual Friends anniversary celebration
- Invitation to our Friends Gala Dinner
- Regular newsletters
- Early news about courses, events and opportunities.

Most importantly, you'll be helping ensure independent trade union education continues to grow.

Become a Friend:

Friend: £5/month

Silver Friend: £10/month

Gold Friend: £25/month

The Year Ahead

September 2026

Bitesize: Political Economy

A series of on-demand political economy learning, giving Friends the opportunity to explore political economy at a time that suits them.

November 2026

Friends Gala Dinner

Join us for an evening celebrating trade union education, the work of the Trust, and the growing Friends community.

January 2027

Parliamentary Launch of the Workers' Education Survey in partnership with SOAS

We're proud to launch the findings of our Workers' Education Survey in Parliament, in partnership with SOAS University of London.

February 2027

Angela Davis joins our Strategy Series

We're delighted to welcome Angela Davis as part of our Strategy Series for what promises to be a thought-provoking discussion.

March 2027

3 Year Anniversary of the Friends of GFTU Educational Trust Scheme

Join us as we celebrate three years of the Friends scheme and the community we've built together.

April 2027

International Workers' Memorial Day

We join the trade union movement in remembering those who have lost their lives through work and renewing our commitment to safer workplaces.

May 2027

May Day celebrations

Celebrate International Workers' Day and the achievements of the trade union movement with us.

June 2027

Rebuilding Solidarity & Women's Voices in Challenging the Far-Right

Two courses exploring how trade unionists can respond to division, strengthen solidarity and build confidence in their workplaces and communities.

August 2027

GFTU Summer School

Our flagship residential event returns, bringing together trade unionists from across the movement for a week of learning, discussion and shared experience .

September 2027

TUC Congress

We'll be at the TUC Congress and look forward to meeting Friends, affiliates and trade unionists from across the movement.

Thank You

Every course delivered.

Every Learner welcomed.

Every new conversation started.

Every stronger workplace.

All begin with people who believe trade union
education matters.

Thank you for being one of them.

**Scan the
QR code
to become
a Friend
today:**





“The work of the Trust transforms lives and draws upon the very best pedagogic traditions in popular education to involve, engage and excite participants.”

“I know that most rights in the UK have been won by grass roots campaigning uniting in Trade Unions.”





