Strategies for Organising Polish Workers: The Case of UK Unions

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Introduction

- Unions active from early stages (fire-fighting?);
- TUC important in seeking to support engagement (3 regional projects);
- Resources and men/women involved locally;
- Three main ways of involvement.
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‘Employer’ strategies:

- Negotiated entry by northern bus companies (T&G);
- Bfawu agency agreement + webpage now provides vital information in range of languages;
- Other cases?;
- **Challenges**: 1) short-term relationships 2) organised workplaces?
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Learning strategies:

- Through learning centres (communicating with friends; booking tickets home);
- Through Esol taught in many differing locations and Ways;
- Through innovation GMB & fishing;
- **Challenges**: 1) Will we continue to support these approaches if Esol & learning funding goes? 2) organised workplaces?
Community strategies:

• Through locations & events;
• Through traditional Polish networks – ZPWB and church;
• Through the ‘media’ – Polish newspapers, radio and the internet;
• **Challenges**: 1) How sustainable are approaches? 2) Competitive unions? 3) Listening unions?
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Conclusion:

• Migrant organising takes time – past we have been piecemeal;

• Trust is vital;

• Learning union – culturally aware able to change;

• A real opportunity > real progress > much to be pleased with