

# Day of Action for Disability Equality in Education

Wednesday 4 December 2019

## BRIEFING

November 2019

The Day of Action for Disability Equality in Education will be held on Wednesday 4 December 2019. Whilst the campaign is promoted as a day of action, we know that some branches might find it easier to do action on a different day, so feel free to take action on any or all days in the week of 2–6 December 2019.

This is the second day of action and we hope it will involve a whole union approach in tackling the barriers and challenges facing disabled members at work, the impact on careers, mental and physical health and well-being, accessing reasonable adjustments in the workplace to making workplaces accessible. The day is supported by the TUC disabled workers committee and by other education trade unions, so please contact other unions for joint action—student unions may also work with you.

Branches are encouraged to raise awareness of these issues and we suggest the following activities (below) in which discussions and actions can help further engage disabled members in seeking solutions.

I would like to thank the Disabled Members' Standing Committee (DMSC) for their work in campaigning and supporting members in working toward achieving disability equality and wish all branches a very successful day of action.

*Elane Heffernan*

*Chair, Disabled Members' Standing Committee*

*NEC FE Disabled Members Rep*





## BACKGROUND

UCU represents over 110,000 workers in higher education, further education, prison education and adult education, including over 2,200 members who self-identify as disabled.<sup>1</sup> In May 2015, the union undertook a survey of its members to find out more about the key issues they face in the workplace. The majority of members reported that they were confident about disclosing their disability at work, and that their colleagues and students were supportive. However, disabled members still face a number of challenges in the workplace, including:

- delays and issues with reasonable adjustments
- barriers to career development
- poor access to disability leave
- bullying and discrimination
- narrow range of support.

This campaign has been initiated by UCU's Disabled Members' Standing Committee, and is supported by the TUC Disabled Members Committee, other education unions and disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and is about organising against disability discrimination with a focus on the challenges and barriers faced by disabled people in education.

During Disability History Month 2018,<sup>2</sup> UCU held its first day of action for disability equality in education on 21 November 2018. The day saw a number of colleges and universities around the country take action to highlight the inequalities, challenges and barriers faced by disabled people – visit <https://www.ucu.org.uk/disabilityequality> to see how the day was marked.

Our key campaign demands are:

- time limits for the implementation of reasonable adjustments
- a review of building regulations to ensure they meet the accessibility needs of disabled people
- a statutory right to disability leave
- the right for disabled people to access mainstream education and a reversal of cuts to SEND provision.

## SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

UCU follows the social model of disability which looks at the ways in which society is organised and the social and institutional barriers which restrict disabled people's opportunities. The social model sees the person first and argues that the barriers they face, in combination with their impairments, are what disables them.

Barriers, including attitudes and perceptions around disabilities can make it impossible or very difficult for disabled people to access jobs, buildings or services. Removing these barriers is the best way to include millions of disabled people in our society.

## DAY OF ACTION FOR DISABILITY EQUALITY IN EDUCATION WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2019

A day of action every day - The Disabled Members Standing Committee encourages branches to take action on 4th December and if possible on every day during the week commencing 2nd - 6th December 2019. We are calling for action that highlights the challenges and barriers faced by disabled people as well as the gains made.



The following actions are suggested:

- 1. Nothing about us without us!** - Branches should ensure that the planning of any event should and must involve disabled members. This is important as the lived experiences of disabled members can strengthen branch organisation and participation and disabled members can feed their perspectives into all UCU campaigns, locally and nationally.

- 2. Use our disability equality resources to campaign and understand the issues facing disabled people:**

### Reasonable adjustments - Making adjustments work: passport and model policy

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10225/Reasonable-adjustment-passport/pdf/ucu\\_adjustment\\_passport\\_apr19.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10225/Reasonable-adjustment-passport/pdf/ucu_adjustment_passport_apr19.pdf)

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10226/Making-adjustments-work-adjustment-passport-policy/pdf/ucu\\_adjustment\\_passport\\_policy\\_apr19.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10226/Making-adjustments-work-adjustment-passport-policy/pdf/ucu_adjustment_passport_policy_apr19.pdf)

### Disclosing a disability

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/5445/Disclosing-a-disability-UCU-guidance/pdf/Disclosing\\_a\\_disability.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/5445/Disclosing-a-disability-UCU-guidance/pdf/Disclosing_a_disability.pdf)

### Disability awareness toolkit

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8828/Disability-awareness-toolkit/pdf/DA\\_toolkit\\_4equality\\_officers\\_Aug17.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8828/Disability-awareness-toolkit/pdf/DA_toolkit_4equality_officers_Aug17.pdf)

### Campaigning for accessible and inclusive workplaces

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8599/Disabled-Members-Toolkit/pdf/Disabled\\_members\\_toolkit\\_Mar17.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8599/Disabled-Members-Toolkit/pdf/Disabled_members_toolkit_Mar17.pdf)

### Enabling not disabling

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/1625/Enabling-not-disabling-UCU-Nov-15/pdf/ucu\\_enablingnotdisabling\\_nov15.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/1625/Enabling-not-disabling-UCU-Nov-15/pdf/ucu_enablingnotdisabling_nov15.pdf)

- 3. Look at the barriers to disabled people in the workplace** in different ways, for example, through the lens of being a disabled LGBT+ person or a disabled black person.
- 4. Watch our film on the social model of disability** and discuss how branches can adopt the social model <https://youtu.be/Do6U1j1vRYU>

- 5. Display our range of posters**

### Disability equality statistics

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9942/Disability-stats-poster-November-2018/pdf/Disability\\_equality\\_stats\\_A4\\_poster.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9942/Disability-stats-poster-November-2018/pdf/Disability_equality_stats_A4_poster.pdf)



**Poster 1**

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9945/Disability-Day-of-Action-Poster-1/pdf/DoA\\_A4\\_disability\\_people\\_poster11.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9945/Disability-Day-of-Action-Poster-1/pdf/DoA_A4_disability_people_poster11.pdf)

**Poster 2**

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9944/Disability-Day-of-Action-Poster-2/pdf/DoA\\_A4\\_disability\\_people\\_poster2.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9944/Disability-Day-of-Action-Poster-2/pdf/DoA_A4_disability_people_poster2.pdf)

**Poster 3**

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9946/Disability-Day-of-Action-Poster-3/pdf/DoA\\_A4\\_disability\\_people\\_poster3.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9946/Disability-Day-of-Action-Poster-3/pdf/DoA_A4_disability_people_poster3.pdf)

**Poster 4**

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9947/Disability-Day-of-Action-Poster-4/pdf/DoA\\_A4\\_disability\\_people\\_poster4.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9947/Disability-Day-of-Action-Poster-4/pdf/DoA_A4_disability_people_poster4.pdf)

**Disability wall chart**

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/4260/International-Day-of-Disabled-People---UCU-wall-chart/pdf/ucu\\_disposter.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/4260/International-Day-of-Disabled-People---UCU-wall-chart/pdf/ucu_disposter.pdf)

6. **Work with H&S reps to conduct risk assessments of your institution** to address issues of inaccessibility
7. **Host meetings to discuss how branches can work alongside institutions** to address and challenge negative stereotypes in the workplace
8. **This is an inclusive campaign** – work with campus unions and student unions to raise awareness of issues
9. **Ask everyone in the branch to take a solidarity selfie and tweet support** of the campaign using the hashtag **#Includeus** on social media platforms and upload pictures <https://www.ucu.org.uk/disabilityequality>
10. **Share your ideas and actions** with everyone [eqadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:eqadmin@ucu.org.uk)

**#Includeus**

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**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>The Equality Act defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities

<sup>2</sup>Disability History Month is held 22 November to 22 December