

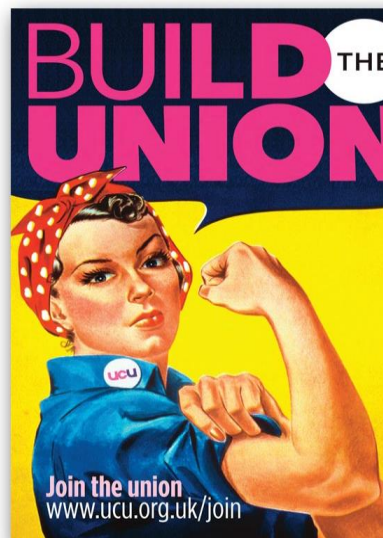
Coronavirus Advice

Your South Eastern UCU Regional office team has put together this newsletter to offer key relevant advice at this difficult time.

[UCU Corona Virus FAQs & links](#)

Support at work continues as normal so please get in touch with your local UCU rep.

To find their contact details please use the search here: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/contacts>



New ways of working

Delivering teaching and working remotely is new ground for many of our members – please have a look at the guidance that has been produced nationally:

[UCU Working from home guidance](#)

Members are picking their way through this maze at high speed but the guide should offer advice a multitude on different areas that may (or already have) be of concern.

Members still need to stay in touch with their Branch to ensure that any concerns from technical issues, workload, or general support for working remotely are addressed by your employer.

Although most education workplaces have now been shut down, for staff **still working from their normal place of work**, there are a number of obvious health and safety concerns:

- Employers have a legal duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and need to take reasonably practicable steps to identify and control any risks to injury or health.
- This means assessing all risks that might cause harm in the workplace, being clear about all risks identified, controlling those risks through protection measures and ensure that you are trained and instructed to deal with the risks.
- Employers also have to consult employees (normally via UCU and other unions) on health and safety issues.

If you have doubts about any aspects of your institution's planning for COVID-19 with specific regard to your health or you are vulnerable in any way, you should raise your concern directly with your manager and make sure your local UCU Branch Representatives are copied in. UCU advice is posted on www.ucu.org.uk and is updated regularly.

Leave in the time of Corona: a guide to exceptional leave

We are pleased to report that most of our employers have acted quickly to support staff during the coronavirus outbreak. Our guide here lays out your basic rights, but your employer may be offering additional protections too.

If you are too ill to work, whether coronavirus or not, you should be on sick leave. The normal reporting process may have changed so check with your manager e.g. it may be difficult to get a doctor's certificate just now. If you agree to use a different procedure, get it in writing.

If you are working, including when self-isolating, you should not be on leave. Working is working wherever it is, and you should be paid as normal.

If you can't be in your normal workplace, and you cannot work from home, a lot depends on the circumstances (check your staff policies and with your local UCU branch):

- If you are self-isolating* with coronavirus symptoms, because of a household member with coronavirus, under advice from a doctor or NHS111 – you may be eligible for contractual sick-pay and / or statutory sick pay (SSP) if you meet the other eligibility requirements. See <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation-and-sick-pay> .
*Remember if you are working whilst self-isolating, you get normal pay not sick pay.
- If you can't work because you are looking after dependents, you may qualify for time off to deal with a dependant's emergency, or parental leave to look after children. Some employers offer this as paid leave, but it's not a legal requirement that it's paid.
- If you are unable to work for other reasons, there may be contingency leave available.

Life is complicated so if your circumstances aren't covered, if you aren't being paid, or if you feel you are being treated unfairly, do contact your local UCU branch. They are negotiating hard for the best policies for all staff, and can support individual members who need different solutions. You can also read the ACAS guidance here: <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>.

MIND guidance on home-working

Please find useful support via: [Mental Health guide: CV19 and isolation](#)

Education Support

Education Support provides independent, confidential 24/7 support, including counselling on personal and workplace issues.

Whether it is stress, bullying, depression or financial matters please contact Education Support. There are plenty of resources available on their website.

For more details:

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

Or call the helpline on: 08000 562 561

Membership benefits

- Your reps raise issues collectively and provide individual help
- UCU's legal scheme covers **employment rights, personal injury** (claims are free and cover workplace stress) and **immigration employment advice**.
- Subscription rates are banded depending on your earnings and are as low as £00.00 for 4yrs. Most members can reduce their subs by claiming tax relief

To join: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/join>

Extra benefits: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/ucuplus>