



UCU London Region NEWSLETTER

ISSUE **2**
APRIL 20

Welcome to our latest newsletter

WE HOPE you are keeping well and that you managed to have a good Easter break.

As we move onwards through this period of international crisis, it is clear that there is still a long way to go. In further and higher education there are so many unknowns, including student numbers for next year, education delivery models, online learning and impact on precarious staff. UCU members are telling us that many employers are engaging with the union constructively to address the short-term problems, but it remains unclear whether they will continue to do so. Other employers are rushing ahead with ill-conceived proposals without consulting staff. That is why it is important that UCU maintains a strong presence in your workplace. The priorities are to maintain the employment, health, safety and welfare of all members while working from home is the norm, and making sure that employers don't take advantage of the increased flexibility shown by members in this period to set new and unreasonable expectations for the future.

We want to hear from you about your experiences, good and bad. Has your employer been meeting regularly with the union? Have they agreed a working-from-home policy to cover the coronavirus emergency? Are they providing all the equipment and support you need to do your job? Do you feel able to make the decisions you need to safeguard your health and welfare, and that of the people around you?

In this edition, you'll find articles from two of our London Regional Committee equalities representatives – Amy Jowett and Elane Heffernan. They have been doing great work on issues of importance to UCU members, and they'd like to hear from you. They are always happy to give you more information.

As always, you can get in touch with us via the regional office email address - londonregion@ucu.org.uk. Please let us have your views and experiences. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy, and we'll be back with another newsletter soon.

BARRY JONES AND ADAM LINCOLN, REGIONAL OFFICIALS



Recruit a colleague - stand together, stand stronger



THIS IS a critical time for all of us, and a crucial time to recruit via our networks so that we are in the strongest position in every institution, and able to represent the greatest number of workers in our sectors.

Please forward this newsletter to colleagues who you think would benefit from membership – it's never been more important to stand together.

Join UCU: www.ucu.org.uk/join



My UCU

IT'S NEVER been more important that UCU can contact you when we need to. Please go to ucu.org.uk/myucu today and check that all your membership contact details are correct, including:

- branch
- preferred email
- home postal address
- mobile phone number

THANK YOU

Working from home and online teaching



UCU ARE still watching this carefully, and are aware that some of the systems that colleges and universities are using enable managers to track online activity. We will challenge any examples of managers using these systems to spy on staff or use this opportunity in a way that could be detrimental to members. At the beginning of this period we heard of colleges asking staff to fill in timesheets reporting on how they were spending their day. With swift action

basis on which you are providing lectures to your students. For example:

- Does your institution have an established lecture capture policy negotiated with UCU?
- Is there agreement that any material you have made in response to the COVID-19 crisis will not be used once institutions get back to normal?
- Does your institution accept that you own the copyright on your lectures or other teaching materials?

from their local officers however, this was nipped in the bud. It is very important that you are aware of the

● What data does the online platform you are using obtain about you or your students?

If you are in doubt about any of these questions, ask your immediate line manager and if you are concerned at their response raise these issues with your local UCU branch.

More information for members on home working, online teaching:

UCU Working from home bulletin

<http://tiny.cc/yymiynz>

ACAS guidance

<https://www.acas.org.uk/working-from-home>

HSE guidance

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>

Did you know that you can claim tax relief for working from home?

Check here to see if you're able to make a claim: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

UCU advice on coronavirus and rights at work

THE UCU advice webpage on coronavirus can be found here:

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/coronavirus>

Information on the coronavirus job retention scheme:

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10842/UCU-guidance-on-the-Coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-rev-20-April/pdf/ucu_covid19_furloughed-staff-20apr20.pdf

And the government's latest guidance on financial support for education, early years and children's social care:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care#sector-specific-guidance>

Supporting members facing sexual harassment

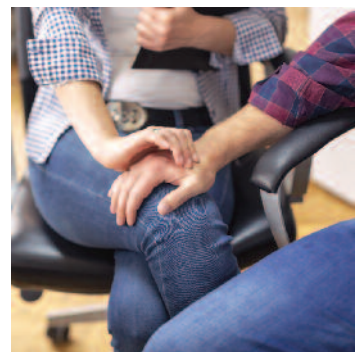
THIS LONDON region

workshop held in November 2019 was initiated by a group of women members who felt we need to do more to combat sexual harassment.

It was the most diverse

meeting in the London region for some time – bringing together members from FE and HE who want to build a campaign at branch and regional level.

Most of the attendees had never been to a regional event before. The workshop looked at the scale of the problem, thought about how we might deal with some case studies, what a campaign might look like, and what needs to change in our workplaces. Key points for further work at branch, regional, and national level were recorded. For more information on how to get involved in the campaign, please contact: elaneheffernan@btinternet.com



Update from Elane Heffernan

Chair of UCU Disabled Members Committee

AT THE TUC Disabled Members Committee in January, in response to the Tory election victory, we agreed to contact the disabled campaign umbrella body ROFA (Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance) and other DPOs (Disabled Peoples Organisations) such as DPAC (Disabled People Against Cuts), to talk about united resistance to the attacks that we expect from Johnson's Tory government. At DMSC (Disabled Members Standing Committee) we agreed to send delegates to the meeting which took place online on 22 and 23 April. Lucy Burke, the UCU HE NEC rep, and I attended. In line with the DMSC resolution to Congress 2020 we aimed to bring together the campaigns for independent living, protecting benefits and disabled workers rights into one movement around civil rights. The issues that were fed in by disabled members were brought to the DMSC meeting on 6 April 2020 and where necessary we have asked for specific advice and guidance to be issued.

This has grown in importance since our last regional meeting because of the impact of Corona virus on disabled people - with initial NICE guidelines indicating that most people, including young people, with impairments who required assistance from others in daily life would be refused access to ICU and ventilators and subject to DNAR (Do Not Attempt Resuscitation) notices without consent, while emergency legislation removed the right to adequate social care for many at a stroke - undoing many years of gains in independent living. Currently the BMA has responded to the appalling state of the NHS, without beds in ICU or life-saving equipment and PPE, by arguing that shortages allow for breaches of the Equality Act in relation to the treatment of disabled people. Our members have found working from home has increased the difficulties in winning reasonable adjustments, and that the pandemic is being used by managers to demand work without adjustments.

London Region held a Zoom meeting for disabled members and have managed to get advice to individuals and branches where

disabled members, or carers, were affected - Croydon College UCU Branch succeeded in overturning a policy that said members required to work would not be paid if they needed to stay home to protect a sheltered person.

DMSC held an emergency online meeting before the Easter break and have drawn up a list of issues faced by disabled members and requested specific advice and help for branches in negotiating for disabled members. We have also written a statement from DMSC, which we have asked to go out to all members of UCU.

Before the Corona crisis blew many things off track, the first 2020 meeting of UCU Disabled Members Committee considered the disability pay gap, and asked that the UCU pay gap tool include a means of capturing data on loss of pay for disabled workers forced to work part time, or on casualised contracts, because of employers' failure to meet adjustment needs, or through blocking promotion on the assumption that we cannot perform duties fully.

We are also bringing out new tools to help branches make union activities accessible - watch this space and massive thanks to NEC member Lucy Burke who, with her colleagues, has done the bulk of the work on this tool. To further this, we will be holding a meeting with disabled activists who participated in the recent pay and pensions strikes, to widen branches' understanding of how to involve disabled members equally in strike activities.

In London region REC (Regional Executive Committee) we agreed to have a speaker at the last London strike rally to talk about disabled people's fightback, and 25 February London Region Rally heard from Colleen Johnson, NEU disabled members NEC rep.

Please reply to this email if you are a disabled member and want to be involved. Details of future disabled members' meetings will be circulated to all UCU members in London

Equality and participation have produced this equality briefing for members: <https://bit.ly/2VTD7Bt>

Together we
are **UNITED**



Together we
are **STRONG**



Together we
can **WIN**



We are
the **UNION!**



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