

NEWSLETTER **UCU**

University and College Union

AN INFORMATION BULLETIN FOR SOUTH EAST REGION MEMBERS

MAY 2020

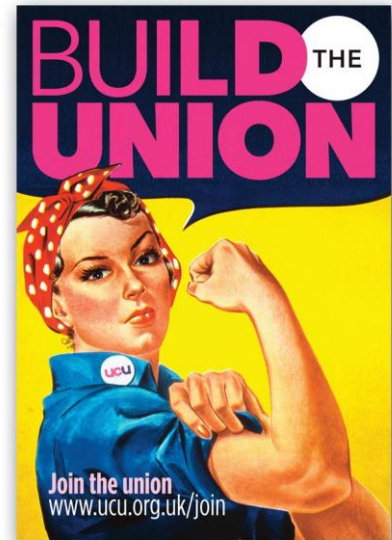
Coronavirus Advice

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

Updates are available on our website: www.ucu.org.uk
Resources are here: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/covid19>

If you need help please contact your local UCU reps. To find their contact details please use the search here: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/contacts>
If you don't have a rep contact your UCU regional office by emailing Euclid Pires epires@ucu.org.uk

<http://southeast.web.ucu.org.uk/>



New ways of working

Delivering teaching and working remotely is new ground for many members. In response to the sudden shift which could last for some time and the huge steps it involves, UCU has produced a concise guide:

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10830/UCU-guidance-on-working-from-home-and-teaching-online/pdf/ucu_workfromhome_guide_mar20.pdf

The guide takes in advice on home-based working (including health and safety), intellectual property and an overview of online teaching. Members are picking their way through this maze at high speed and as well as using the guidance, members should stay in touch with their branch to ensure that any concerns from technical issues to workload to general support for working remotely from your colleagues 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 representative is copied in. UCU advice is posted on www.ucu.org.uk and is updated regularly.



Furlough

UCU has updated their Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) guidance in light of the newly published DfE guidance on the CJRS & “Furlough” for FE and HE. It is clear that most UCU members should not be furloughed as they will be undertaking jobs supported by public funding. However, we are supporting a number of branches where the employer is proposing to furlough staff. For the most part these instances relate to staff with roles that are not publically funded. We have also written Section 181 letters to all employers calling on them to disclose information on their furlough arrangements.

Annual Leave News

A temporary amendment to The Working Time Regulations 1998 now allows employees and workers to carry over up to 4 weeks’ paid holiday into their next two holiday leave years if it wasn’t ‘*reasonably practicable*’ to take it in the normal leave year due to Covid-19. Scenarios in which this might apply include if staff are on a rota over the normal holiday periods or if staff are undertaking other work that makes it difficult to take leave during the pandemic. UCU has updated its guidance on annual leave accordingly and this is available [here](#). ACAS guidance is also available [here](#).

Mental Health and Well-Being Support

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support for UCU members 24/7. During “normal” times, working in education is not always that easy. Constant change, long hours and pressure to deliver can sap our energy and get in the way of doing what we staff in education care most about. With the Covid-19 crisis, the pressures is even more intense. UCU members have access to **Education Support** which offers confidential 24/7 support, to help people deal with stress and anxiety, bullying, career and money worries. Contact Education Support by phone on: 08000 562 651. For more details: <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

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. Most members can reduce their subs by claiming tax relief

To join: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/join> For more benefits: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/ucuplus>

PLEASE FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO COLLEAGUES WHO ARE NOT UCU MEMBERS. THANK YOU.