

Day of Action for Disability Equality in Education

Wednesday 24 November 2021

The Day of Action for Disability Equality in Education will be held on Wednesday 24 November, during Disability History Month which runs from 22 November to 22 December. Whilst the campaign is promoted as a day of action, some branches might find it easier to take action on a different day during the week commencing Monday 22 November.

Discriminatory Language

Language and how it is used is important to all oppressed groups, and the theme for this year's Day of Action will be exploring 'Discriminatory Language'. The social model of disability challenges us to address society's inequalities, barriers and stereotypes that creates discrimination and oppresses disabled people. Using preferred language is an act of solidarity; for example, in the UK, the preferred term is Disabled People, not People with Disabilities.

Branches will be asked to review the language used in policies and procedures that can be ableist and discriminatory in their application, as well as exploring how branches can challenge ableist attitudes that excludes disabled people.

We have produced resources that look at:

- Creating an inclusive environment
- Negotiating and Bargaining
- Advocacy and Allyship and;
- Intersectionality

Each of these resources delve into what branches can do around issues such as the social model of disability, reasonable adjustments and working with allies to create a better landscape for disabled workers.

The information contained in this pack is also available as individual information sheets and can be downloaded here [UCU - Equality advice and guidance](#)

Every day is a day for action!

Branches are encouraged to take action on Wednesday 24 November and, if possible, throughout the week commencing Monday 22 November – Friday 26 November.

We are calling for branches to use the day to organise¹ and support disabled workers, by highlighting the challenges and barriers faced by disabled people as well as the gains made. Branches are further encouraged to incorporate these resources into any local / national action such as industrial action, where we suggest branches use the resources to host teach-outs.

We are keen to hear how your branch will be marking the day. Please share your actions / activities by emailing egadmin@ucu.org.uk and don't forget to send in your examples of good practice.

However, we shouldn't limit our work to support and engage with disabled workers to just one day – the annual day of action should be just one of many ways in which branches engage with the issues facing disabled members.

Background to the Day of Action

In May 2015, the union undertook a survey of its members across further, higher, adult and prison education to find out more about the key issues they face in the workplace.

The majority of disabled 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

¹ *This is an annual campaign. Branches must ensure that they are following the latest [official UCU guidance on GDPR-compliant organising](#)*

At our inaugural Day of Action in 2016, UCU launched a campaign for disability equality in education, with a parliamentary meeting where disabled members across the trade union movement joined with Disabled People's Organisations (DPO's) and students to discuss and share their experiences of the barriers faced in education.

The campaign calls for the following key demands:

- 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

Our annual day of action is also supported by the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee and by education trade unions and Disabled People's Organisations. We would encourage branches to hear concerns being raised, seek collective means of resolving work place issues and to work with campus and student unions on joint initiatives.

Autumn 2021