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Strategic planning for tackling stress in the workplace

For those of you who attended the Safety Stress Conference in November, thank you once again. We hope you found it useful, your input was extremely valuable. You'll be glad to hear that the conference was only the beginning of the process and there is still plenty of work to do.

As you know we had three successful workshops on the day and thanks to delegates participation we now have some clear tasks that, as a union, we must address in order to help meet members' needs.

In February we will be holding a task force meeting and are inviting those who want to help follow this work up to take part. Together we will be developing a strategic plan for UCU to tackle stress, the causes of stress and the way that stress is managed across the sector.

The date we have fixed for this meeting is 22 February. If you are interested let Julian Nicholds know at jnicholds@ucu.org.uk or call 020 7837 3636.

The priorities identified on the day were:

Top 10 Actions for UCU to tackle stress

- 1** Work towards an agreement where employers recognise their duty to allow facility time for H&S reps
- 2** Create a facility to encourage sharing of good practice and LA/branch initiatives
- 3** Link up with other unions and TUC to campaign at a cross industry level

- 4 Create a campaign for HSE enforcement and implementing new regulations
- 5 Help facilitate a closer partnership with HSE at a national and local level
- 6 Deliver support with negotiation round stress policy at branch level
- 7 Open the debate around academic and academic-related members' working time
- 8 Training for H&S reps at different levels for stress
- 9 Establish a taskforce to determine the future strategic direction in tackling stress
- 10 Develop UCU sector specific toolkit, including:
 - measurement surveys, policies, handling cases, collective actions
 - guidance on good practice on management of change
 - details of support available
 - guidance on monitoring turnover of staff and a national database
 - regular risk assessment guidelines
 - support with analysis of results from raw data to meaningful figures
 - support with getting policies actioned
 - better guidance on where to get advice eg on case law
 - evidence on good practice in H&S

The management of asbestos in the workplace

Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006: Inspection Checklist

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 came into force on the 13 November. The duty to manage asbestos is carried forward from the previous Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002, and the compliance date was 21 May 2004. The amended regulations and updated approved codes of practice (ACoP) give you an opportunity to check your employer's compliance with the duty to manage asbestos. A checklist to help you conduct an inspection of the workplace is available from the UCU website at www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1953.

The checklist combines a number of different approaches and activities for the inspection, and ensures that reps who use it don't just walk around the workplace with a clipboard. Some of the points are simple observation, some require you to ask the employer for information and to inspect records, and some require you to talk to members and ask questions. This gives you the opportunity to talk to members, and helps to raise UCU's profile on health & safety.

Using the checklist

The checklist questions are written so that the 'Yes' column indicates a satisfactory answer, and the 'No' column shows unsafe or unsatisfactory conditions. When you have completed the inspection, it is easy to see which things you need to put into your report – just look for ticks in the 'No' column.

Following the inspection, submit a report to the employer raising any issues that you

think need to be addressed. Follow up your report to make sure appropriate action is taken where this is necessary. The report should contain matters that you wish the employer to address. Don't use the report to say that the workplace is safe – that's not its purpose. Guidance Paragraph 17 to Regulation 4 of the Safety Representatives & Safety Committee Regulations says that a report should both 'record that an inspection has been made and to draw the employer's attention to an unsafe or unhealthy condition'. If you don't find anything you need to take up, simply record the fact that you have completed an inspection, and there is nothing you wish to raise with the employer as a result.

The HSE publish the approved code of practice that accompanies Regulation 4 - *The management of asbestos in non-domestic premises* - L127. Paragraph 5 of the ACoP requires employers to give safety representatives access to a copy of the regulations and ACoP booklets, and additional help in understanding them if necessary. You should also ask for access to a copy of the general ACoP document *Work with materials containing asbestos* - L143.

For more background information, see the general guidance to the Control of Asbestos Regulations on the UCU website, and the *Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006: A Guide for Safety Representatives* issued jointly by the HSE and TUC.

For asbestos checklist, please go to:

www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1953.

More useful information

The TUC/HSE guidance on the new Regulations for safety reps - a brief guide is available on the TUC Website at www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/tuc-7194-f0.cfm.

More guidance and questions for employers on the duty to manage can be downloaded from www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/tuc-7194-f0.cfm.

The UCU Factsheet no 1 Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 can be found at: www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1953.

LRD survey on reps and the environment

We have received a request for assistance from the Labour Research Department (LRD) which is carrying out a survey of trade union action on environmental issues, focusing particularly on action by reps and employers in the workplace.

UCU is keen to support the survey and hopes you will find a few minutes to complete the questionnaire, which can be accessed by clicking on the link below.

Material from the survey will be used in LRD's magazine for reps, *Workplace Report*, and later in an LRD booklet on unions, the workplace and the environment. It will also be used to support the TUC's campaign to get more rights for reps wishing to undertake training in environmental issues and in taking action on the environment at work.

The LRD is planning to publish the *Workplace Report* article very soon, so is asking you, if possible, to complete the questionnaire ASAP. Further explanation of the survey is provided on the questionnaire, which you can see by clicking on the link:

www.lrd.org.uk/surveys/environment/.

The LRD would be very grateful for your help, and hopes the overview provided will be useful for reps interested in taking action on the environment.

If you have ideas which might assist UCU in developing work as a union around environmental issues at work or elsewhere, we'd be pleased to hear from you. You should also note that the TUC has begun running courses for workplace reps on these issues and we hope to circulate details of the next courses in the near future. Apologies for the short notice but we have only just received this.

Getting serious about health & safety

**A UCU north west regional conference
Saturday 17 February 2007**

10.00am - 3.30pm

Mechanics Centre, 103 Princess Rd, Manchester M1 6DD

To register, phone, fax, write-to or e-mail Helen Sidlow, conference administrator, with your name, contact details, & branch/local association.

Deadline for registration is **Friday 9 February**.

Helen Sidlow, conference administrator, UCU, 12 Bath Street, Hale,
Altrincham, WA14 2HG Tel 0161 929 7909 Fax 0161 929 7808

Email hsidlow@ucu.org.uk

Working with HIV/AIDS Seminar

Organised by The Institute of Employment Rights

Wednesday 7 February 2007
1.30pm - 4.15pm
at UCU, Britannia Street, London WC1

For more information please contact
Phelim MacCafferty, projects and events officer
phelim@ier.org.uk

UCU Health and Safety Advice Line

UCU's Health and Safety Advice Line for safety reps and branch officers offers information about health and safety legal standards, and how they can be applied and advice on dealing with health and safety issues/problems.

The Health and Safety Advice Line is for branch officers and safety reps only, not for individual members. The advice line will be staffed two days a week only. When you phone the advice line you will be asked to leave a message. You will then be contacted as soon as possible.

The **advice line number** is **0161 636 7558**

Email healthandsafety@ucu.org.uk

Or by post to **John Bamford**

UCU Health and Safety Advice Line

Greater Manchester Hazards Centre, Unit 2.5 Windrush Millennium Centre,
70 Alexandra Road, Manchester M16 7WD

UCU's health and safety team

- **John Bamford**
- **Linda Ball**
- **Sharon Russell**
- **Roger Kline**