

Contents

1. **Equality Bill**
 2. **UCU Equality Scheme**
 3. **Congress 2009**
 4. **Legal cases**
 5. **Impact assessments**
 6. **House of Commons: Speaker's conference**
 7. **Events: UCU Annual Equality Conferences**
 8. **The equality team**
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1. Equality Bill

The Equality Bill was published on 27 April. It brings together all domestic equality legislation, including the Equal Pay Act, into one harmonised and comprehensive piece of equality legislation. Preparing for the implementation of the new legislation will be one of the key areas of work for the Equality Committee over the coming months.

The UCU web site at www.ucu.org.uk/equality has a range of information about our work on the Equality Bill including:

- **Summary of the Bill**
- **UCU response to the EHRC consultation on Codes of Practice and guidance to accompany the Bill**
- **UCU response to the Government consultation on multiple discrimination**
- **UCU submission to the Bill Committee**

We will continue to work with other unions and the TUC to improve the Bill wherever possible and ensure there is no dilution of existing equality rights.

2. UCU Equality Scheme

The NEC has set up a steering group to oversee the development of UCU's equality scheme. The intention is for the scheme to be comprehensive in coverage with practical, realistic but challenging action plans.

The steering group has drawn up the following draft principles:

1. UCU will develop a three year equality scheme 2010-2013.
2. The scheme will be comprehensive in scope going beyond the current public sector duties. It will cover all equality areas: age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, national origin, religion or belief, gender identity. It will also cover casualisation and the equality impact of the use of fixed-term and part-time contracts.

3. The scheme will be outcome driven; with practical, realistic and challenging action plans.
4. Outcomes will be linked to the union's bargaining and organising agenda outlined in the National Organising Plan.
5. The scheme will be developed with the active involvement of all UCU members and staff.
6. The scheme will contain agreed mechanisms for monitoring and review.
7. The scheme should not be a snap shot at a particular moment. This should be an evolving process.

Please send your views on the draft principles and how you would like your branch to be involved in developing the scheme to Sharon Russell srussell@ucu.org.uk

3. Congress 2009

Equality had a high profile at Congress this year, with committee members and staff involved in running five fringe meetings and lots of information provided on the equality stall. Equality policy was passed on:

- **Defending the equality agenda during the recession**
- **, Supporting branches in negotiating for equality including full implementation of the public sector duties. This includes the production of all-inclusive resources and delivery of related training.**
- **The maintenance, protection and expansion of LGB and T anti-discrimination legislation including review and development of work in institutions covering these equality areas.**
- **Campaigning against the BNP**
- **Campaigning against welfare reform and the attacks on services for disabled people**
- **Campaigning against anti-semitism**
- **Age equality**
- **End Violence Against Women**
- **Parental leave**
- **Supporting disabled people in Palestine**
- **The campaign against points based immigration**

The motions are available at <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3414>

4. Legal cases

The Equality Unit is looking closely at institutional data to help to identify potential equal pay, indirect sex discrimination or indirect race discrimination cases. This work is focused initially on HE institutions but it is hoped to extend this to colleges.

We are particularly interested in finding potential cases in branches where the institutional data demonstrates a lower than average national percentage of women or black staff on the higher academic grades, along with an institutional failure to carry out equal pay audits or impact assessments of promotion procedures.

Please get in touch with Rachel Curley, National Head of Equality for more information, rcurley@ucu.org.uk.

5. Redundancy decisions must be impact assessed

The Equality Unit is very concerned at the number of branches reporting the failure of employers to undertake adequate impact assessments of restructuring or redundancy proposals. The Equality Unit is currently mapping the extent of the problem across the FE and HE sectors and will be reporting to the EHRC and the funding bodies. Please send any updates to your regional office and ask that these are also passed on to the Equality Unit.

6. House of Commons: Speaker's conference

You might have been aware that the House of Commons is currently conducting a 'Speaker's Conference' looking at improving underrepresentation of women, black and disabled people within the House of Commons.

The TUC submitted a written response and were also called to give oral evidence. Within its response, the TUC also highlighted its concern at the exclusion of LGBT people from the remit of the Conference.

The speaker's conference have now set up online forums where members of the public can contribute their views. These are the current questions:

- 1. Why do people think that to succeed in public life they have to hide aspects of themselves?*
- 2. What would persuade you to represent your community?*
- 3. What is the best way to increase the representation of under-represented communities at Westminster?*

If you would like to participate and contribute your views, you can access the forum here: <http://forums.parliament.uk/speakers-conference/index.php?index,1>

7. Events: UCU Annual Equality Conferences

The annual equality conferences are an excellent opportunity for you to meet other UCU members, discuss key issues and help formulate policy for UCU on each of the equality strands. The conferences will be held on the following dates:

Friday 13 November 2009

Saturday 14 November 2009

Friday 20 November 2009

Friday 11 December 2009

Women Members' Annual Conference

LGBT Members' Annual Conference

Disabled Members' Annual Conference

Black Members' Annual Conference

In accordance with Rules, Branches and LA's will be able to submit nominations and motions for each of the equality standing committees – further information and registration forms will be issued in due course.

8. The equality team

We would like to extend a warm welcome to **Janet Pantland** as the newest member of the equality unit. Janet joins the unit as administrator and can be reached at jpantland@ucu.org.uk and on **020 7756 2539**.

Get involved

If you would like to join one of our networks, please send an email to eqadmin@ucu.org.uk stating your preferred email address along with the name of the network you would like to join. You should note that these networks are not discussion forums, but that you will be sent information relating to the area of equality. The networks available for joining are:

Black Members Network
Women Members Network
LGBT Members Network
Disabled Members Network