



Sources of information for health & safety representatives

University and College Union

Effective trade union safety reps act strategically and tactically. They are representatives, not technical wizards. To be a good safety rep you need to know where to find specific technical information when you need it. A key requirement supporting an effective workplace organisation for health & safety is access to information. The following sources provide basic information resources that should be available for reps to use. This is an area where you should work with other unions in the workplace to pool resources.

UCU has produced a range of fact sheets on Health & Safety for representatives and a regular newsletter for safety representatives. Website address for the health & safety resource centre is www.ucu.org.uk/healthandsafety. You can access the following documents from our web page at <http://www.ucu.org.uk/harassment>:

Factsheets

- If you believe that you are being bullied, the chances are, you are
- What to do if you are being bullied or harassed
- What to do if you witness bullying or harassment
- Guidance for those accused of bullying or harassment

Joint guidance

UCU and other unions have reached a national agreement with the Association of College for all FE colleges which branches and LAs can use as a model for local implementation

- **Guidelines on harassment & bullying in FE (England/Wales)**

Surveys and model letters

- Model letter re bullying & harassment
- Trade union survey on bullying
- Example survey on bullying - South Thames College
- Example survey on bullying - Leeds Metropolitan University

Our **Stress Toolkit** is available at www.ucu.org.uk/stress

Safety representatives, branches and LAs should approach their regional office initially for advice or contact the UCU Health & Safety Advice Centre at www.ucu.org.uk/healthandsafety.

The following guidance documents are available from our **Equality web pages**
www.ucu.org.uk/equality.

- UCU Equality Duty Toolkit
- Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales
- The Public Sector Equality Duty in Northern Ireland

One in four: a UCU briefing on Mental Health at Work

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/r/q/ucu_1in4_mentalhealthatwork_jun11.pdf

Supporting Members with Mental Health Conditions and Issues

This is a new resource for branches in supporting members with mental health issues and conditions. Contact eqadmin@ucu.org.uk for a copy.

Joint agreement on guidance on equality in employment in further education colleges (FE England), covering harassment can be found here

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/c/c/feeng_equalityinemployment_may12.pdf

Hazards at Work is a safety reps manual produced by the TUC and updated every couple of years and is highly recommended if you are attending a TUC Safety Reps course. You may be able to purchase a copy via your course tutor or from TUC Publications for £18.00 including postage. Every Branch or local association should have at least two copies.

Risks is a regular weekly TUC bulletin for safety reps. It is available from the H&S section of the TUC website www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s or they will send it to your mailbox if you register for it.

Hazards Magazine is a quarterly magazine for safety representatives. It is available on subscription: email to sub@hazards.org for enquiries. The linked free-access Hazards website at www.hazards.org is packed with information. The website rides on the back of the magazine, and relies on subscriptions to the magazine for its existence.

Some local **hazards centres** and **occupational health advisory groups** exist around the country; these provide information on most health & safety issues. Together with some of the major trade unions and other campaigning organisations they make up the national **Hazards Campaign**, a loose network which acts as a campaigning focus for many issues. The Hazards Campaign organises an annual conference for safety representatives and activists, with political debates, information meetings and educational workshops. Details are at www.hazardscampaign.org.uk and leaflets are inserted into Hazards magazine. UCU sponsors a delegation to the conference, and circulates details in the newsletter.

Labour Research Department (LRD) provides a research and information service for trade unionists. It publishes Health & Safety information in its monthly magazine, a monthly newsletter, and 3 or 4 pamphlets every year on health & safety issues. UCU is affiliated nationally to the LRD, and your Branch or LA can also affiliate. If yours is, find out how the information is made accessible to the Safety Representatives.

Health & Safety Executive (HSE) is the government body that polices workplace Health & Safety. Inspectors enforce health & safety law; inspect workplaces, investigate incidents and will give advice and information. The HSE produces a huge range of information from free leaflets, through periodicals, newsletters and a magazine, legislation with associated Approved Codes of Practice, Guidance Notes, to booklets on specific issues and topics. Single copies of many leaflets are free; but priced publications can be expensive. They have committed themselves to establishing a free access website at some point.

They produce a free publications catalogue, annually updated, which lists all HSE publications. Order one from HSE Books on 01787 881165. The HSE is on the Internet at www.hse.gov.uk. Use the A-Z link to see the main topics. Locally, you need to develop a relationship with the HSE Inspector responsible for your workplace. They will be a valuable source of information and support, and it's worth making the effort.

Health & Safety Bulletin is produced monthly by Industrial Relations Services. It's not cheap, but it is good. **Croners** and other publishers produce loose-leaf manuals on health & safety, which are regularly updated to take account of legal and other changes. **ROSPA** and the **British Safety Council** produce regular magazines, as does the professional body for H&S practitioners, the **Institute of Occupational Health & Safety (IOSH)**. Try their websites - use a search-engine to find them. Many of these publications will be in college and university libraries.

Your employer will have masses of information, policies and procedures in respect of work systems and practices in the workplace, and a lot of general information about the particular hazards and risks in your workplace. You need to check what is available, and what arrangements are in place to give safety representatives access to information held by your employer. Many employers subscribe to an on-line database service like **Barbour Info** or **IHS**. If they do, ask for access, and don't forget that internet search engines can work wonders, and provide links to many other sources.

UCEA is the employers' representative on Health and Safety matters in the higher education sector. UCEA coordinates the Health and Safety Committee to act as a forum for all the different professional groups that have an interest in health and safety management, principles and practices within higher education. The Committee owns the HE Sector-level Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan. The Health and Safety Committee maintains an interest in the sector's work on wellbeing and engagement and UCEA provides stewardship for resources on wellbeing, including wellbeing case studies from HE institutions.

UCEA also coordinates the Higher Education Safety and Health Forum (HESH), which is a tripartite forum between the employers' representative, trade unions and Health and Safety Executive. UCEA has produced a number of guidance publications on Health and Safety issues. These are available for institutions to download. Institutions can also access a range of resources on matters related to health, safety and wellbeing for the HE sector. Visit <http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/empres/hands/index.cfm> for further details.

AoC (Association of Colleges) have worked with the HSE to establish a new forum for the further education sector, the Further Education Safety and Health forum (FESH). There is a core membership with representatives from: Association of Colleges ● Association of College Managers ● Colleges Scotland ● Trade Unions – UCU, UNISON & EIS ● ColegauCymru ● HSE

Links to legislation

The Equality Act 2010

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/pdfs/ukpga_19740037_en.pdf

Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/24/pdfs/ukpga_20130024_en.pdf

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/40/pdfs/ukpga_19970040_en.pdf

Employment Rights Act 1999

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/1996/18>

Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/52/pdfs/ukpga_19920052_en.pdf

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/pdfs/uksi_19993242_en.pdf

ACAS

Brandon House
180 Borough High Street
London SE1 1LW
Useful resources: Guidance on bullying and harassment

www.acas.org.uk

Association of Colleges

2-5 Stedham Place
London WC1A 1HU
Useful resources: Nationally agreed Further Education joint guidance

www.aoc.co.uk

Equality Challenge Unit

7th floor, Queens House
55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3LJ
Useful resources: Handbook on Dignity at Work for HE Institutions (this includes input from UCU)

www.ecu.ac.uk

Health and Safety Executive

Redgrave Court
Merton Road
Bootle
Merseyside L20 7HS
Useful resources: Management Standards for Work Related Stress Tackling Work related stress in education Guidance for Safety Representatives

www.hse.gov.uk

Labour Research Department

78 Blackfriars Road

London SE1 8HF

www.lrd.org.uk

Useful publications: Tackling bullying and harassment - a trade unionist's guide

Recourse

www.recourse.org.uk

24/7 telephone support line, on **0808 802 03 04**

Recourse is a national charity set up to support all adult, further and higher education staff and their families, regardless of age, length of service or union affiliations, to improve their wellbeing and effectiveness. It offers support services to all staff in further and higher education and their families including: **Counselling:** confidential, solution-focused counselling on personal and workplace issues; **one-to-one coaching:** personalised practical and emotional support via a secure email system; **information, advice and support material:** news, guides and factsheets on relevant topics such as well-being, work-life balance, workload problems, stress management, coping with bereavement, and dealing with difficult people; **financial assistance:** a needs-based grants and loans programme; **money management advice:** individually tailored strategies to address financial difficulties, restructure debt and secure benefits and **signposting to relevant organisations:** the information you need to take the next steps to a better future.

All these services can be accessed online at the **Recourse website**, or through a

Trades Union Congress

www.tuc.org.uk

See TUC health and safety pages

Useful publications: Focus on health and safety: TUC biennial survey of safety reps 2012

Don't forget that your employer has a statutory duty under Regulation 4A (2) of the Safety Representatives & Safety Committees Regulations to provide you with such facilities and assistance as you may reasonably require. Everything listed above is a reasonable requirement. Employers should have key HSE publications relevant to their workplace, and often subscribe to commercial and professional publications. The requirements of the regulations are satisfied if the employer provides access to these documents, rather than individual copies.