

Dear Colleague,

This is our summer newsletter, giving our thanks to you for your support for UCU over the last teaching year, and providing you with information about some forthcoming events and other news. A key message is that UCU will be announcing plans shortly for a National Recruitment Week, when branches will be asked to plan activities and events aimed at increasing UCU membership. We're sure your branch would be pleased to hear from you with any ideas you may have for encouraging colleagues to join the Union.

Building the Union is not something that takes place on a few specific days in the calendar, however. If you work with colleagues in a post which is organised by UCU but who are not UCU members, please direct them to the UCU website and ask them to consider joining:
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2283>

With our best wishes,
Una O'Brien
Barry Jones
Greg Barnett

Dates for your diary

London Regional Committee:
October, date to be confirmed

London region training
Introduction to Casework:
7th October 2015

Briefing on legal rights of HPL
members:
21st October 2015

National Recruitment Week:
16th to 20th November 2015

UCU response to government's proposed trade union legislation

The proposals would do nothing to improve workers' rights, but expose the government's plans to attack working people.

UCU general secretary, Sally Hunt, said: 'The Conservatives have made a considerable effort to portray themselves as the party on the side of working people. However, reducing the few rights that workers still retain inside an already tight legal framework on industrial action will do nothing to help working people or their employers.'

'Strikes arise because of a breakdown between staff and their employer. If these proposals are enacted they will only increase mistrust between the two and worsen industrial relations. Strikes are always a last resort and never taken lightly by people who forfeit their pay.'

'If the government was serious about increasing democracy in union ballots it would allow things such as electronic and workplace voting. Instead it is seeking to impose minimum turnout levels and victory margins that were not applied in the general election or the Scottish referendum.'

'Demanding unions secure the kind of results that MPs couldn't, and police commissioners daren't even dream of, expose these regressive plans as a blatant attack on workers' rights.'

Workplace policy and management practices to improve the health and wellbeing of employees.

In June 2015 the National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (commonly known as NICE) published guidance for employers on improving the health and wellbeing of their employees; available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng13/chapter/1-Recommendations>. You will note that the content of this guidance is entirely relevant within the college and university environment.

A UCU briefing document will be forthcoming shortly.

Your branch is encouraged to discuss this guidance and to raise questions with your employer. Branches should evaluate the employer's performance against the NICE guidance and criteria for health and wellbeing at work.

Here are some questions for your employer:

- Are they aware of the latest NICE guidelines?
- What do they think of them?
- What are they doing to evaluate their performance against the guidance?
- Are they prepared to work with UCU to identify where improvements are necessary, in order to develop cultures, policies and practices that protect and improve the health and wellbeing of employees, and to implement changes that work towards a more positive environment for employees?

The NICE guidance presents a good opportunity to raise important questions and issues with employers against a backdrop of advice from a respected body.

Getting involved in UCU - a course for black members new to activism

UCU would like to draw your attention to a unique training course designed for our black members who are keen to learn more about how to get involved with UCU locally. This course is aimed at those members who are not currently involved with UCU, either on local branch or national committees, and the initial September date is already fully booked. However, we fully intend to announce more dates soon, and would encourage you to get in touch to register an interest and to make sure you receive further information as it becomes available.

The course originated from a survey of black members, in which over 70% of people said they would be interested in a course or event aimed at encouraging black members to take a more active role in their local UCU branch. There will be an element of professional development in the course pertaining to leadership and mentoring, along with activities to raise awareness of racism at work.

Below is an overview of the course along with the entry criteria. If you are interested, please email Esmilda Yates eyates@ucu.org.uk

This course is aimed at new black activists and members who are keen to get involved with their branch and the wider union. The course will also contain a continuing professional development (CPD) session on leadership and mentoring.*

**In UCU the word black is used in a political sense to describe people who self-identify as being from a visible minority (more usually from an Asian or African heritage) with a shared experience or understanding of discrimination*

This new one day course is specifically designed for UCU black members who are interested in becoming more involved with UCU. The course will also include a leadership CPD session. Come and meet like-minded black members who want to make a difference at work!

This course will cover:

- *Issues and positive solutions - becoming active in UCU in your workplace*
- *Leadership and mentoring a professional development session*
- *UCU campaigns, how you can get involved and access to further training.*

This course IS for you if:

- *If you are new to activism in UCU*
- *If you want to get more involved in your union and are looking to learn more about UCU*
- *If you self-identify as black.*

This course is NOT for you if:

- *If you have already undertaken a UCU reps training course or its equivalent*
- *If you are a member of the branch committee or executive*
- *If you are not new to activism.*