



There's nothing like the real thing...(and this is nothing like the real thing):

Why CU Coventry's Staff Consultative Group is no substitute for a real union:

1. The Staff Consultative Group is effectively a 'Yellow Union':

The International Labour Organisation defines a 'company union' as "A union limited to a single company which dominates or strongly influences it, thereby limiting its influence". These are sometimes called 'yellow unions'. In some countries these are illegal as they are seen as attempts to interfere with the right of people to organise freely in their own unions.

That's how you should view the SCG.

The Staff Consultative Group has been set up as a company controlled membership organisation designed to be the 'collective voice' of staff in the interests of 'the Group'.

It is NOT an independent voice for you. It has no independent organisation and as we will show below, it has no power.

It has been set up purely to try to confuse people and distract them from pursuing their own collective union organisation.

There is a term for this. It's 'union-busting'. Coventry University's companies have tried it before and they have lost. Badly.

2. The Staff Consultative Group is a powerless management tool:

The SCG's terms of reference sound great don't they? It will ensure that members are 'well informed'. It will promote 'equality and fairness' and develop 'trust and confidence'.

- But its aims and objectives were designed by management.
- Its membership and constitution were written by management.
- It cannot compel management to do anything.

That's clear from the absence of any reference to negotiations and reaching agreement with you over pay, terms and conditions, contracts etc etc etc.

Its sole objective is to try to persuade you to stop campaigning for a union.

Other companies have set these up, coincidentally just as campaigns for recognition have started to hot up.

Invariably they fail and lapse into inactivity because they are no substitute for a union.

3. Unlike real unions, the staff consultative group has no legal status:

When you win recognition, you get a legal right to negotiate with your employer over pay, hours and holiday. Your employer MUST negotiate with you over these issues and seek agreement with you. And if you fail to agree you have a legal right to pursue agreement through other means such as legal industrial action.

When you have a recognised union, your employer MUST consult with you over issues like redundancies, terminations of contract, transfers, health and safety and so on.

With a recognised union, your reps are elected by you according to rules you establish and your reps have a legal right to paid time off to undertake their trade union duties and undertake training.

Where union recognition is awarded under legal statute, and the employer fails to adhere to it a complaint can be made to the Central Arbitration Committee.

The SCG has no legal status and staff will have none of these rights or protections in law.

4. There's no substitute for a union

When you have a union, YOU decide the agenda you want to pursue, collectively and democratically and YOU decide how far you pursue any issue. Here are five reasons why a union is better:

Five ways in which a (real) union will help staff at CU Coventry

1. With a recognised union, you can set the agenda that you want UCU to discuss with management. You decide, not management.
2. With a recognised union, your management **MUST** negotiate with you over whatever the agreement determines is negotiable. As a bare minimum, that's your pay scales, hourly rates, salaries, annual pay awards, equal pay issues, your holiday allowance and your working hours.
3. With a recognised union, we can raise issues around pay, contracts, workloads, performance management, sessional staff pay and contracts and so on. UCU has lots of experience in negotiating around these issues and you will get support from professional full-time officials.
4. With a recognised union, your employer must consult with us if it is planning redundancies and it must do so with a view to reducing them and mitigating their effect. They must also consult with us over changes to your contracts and over any transfers of staff. No staff forum can give you that.
5. With a recognised union, your colleagues in other companies have tabled pay claims, negotiated around workloads, fought off compulsory redundancies and won flexible working agreements. You will be able to do the same.