

November 2017

Equality priorities for UCU

At the last meeting of the NEC's Equality Committee, it was agreed to ask branches to prioritise the following issues. There are plenty of resources and support from the Equality and Participation team. Please discuss at your next branch meeting and work towards making this issues visible in your institution. Please get in touch if you want further advice or support.

Equality reps – the next Equality reps conference is on February 16th 2018. Hope to see you there. Details to follow.

Parents at work

UCU has developed a comprehensive toolkit to support members who are considering becoming parents or are parents. Achieving work and life balance is becoming increasingly difficult as members juggle high workloads, precarious contracts and tight finances. Insecure work makes decisions around having a family, having time with your family or time out from the workplace very difficult. Women are still discriminated against for pregnancy and motherhood. Our survey of members demonstrates this area needs support and advice.

This guide will support ALL families in understanding their rights at work. The Carer's guide will be promoted as well.

Branches are asked to:

- Disseminate the guide
- Submit good and bad practice including policies
- Promote shared parental leave
- Use the guide as a recruitment tool.

Parents at work

Copies will be available at the equality conference and on the website in the following weeks. This will be publicised in the Friday email.

Carers Guide

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8170/Caring-for-the-carers-a-UCU-guide-May-16/pdf/Caring_for_the_Carers_-_full.pdf

National contact: Sharon Russell (SRussell@ucu.org.uk)

Bullying and harassment at work

Bullying and harassment ranks the third highest hazard in the education sector at 62%, as reported in the TUC biennial survey of safety reps 2016. This can be worse for those from equality groups and it was evidenced in recent surveys by UCU for Black members, Disabled members, LGBT members and Women members. UCU has updated its guide on challenging bullying and harassment at work to reflect this evidence.

Bullying and harassment are rarely completely isolated, one-off events. While UCU continues to give support to individual members, we will be much more effective if we address the problem at source. That means looking at the institution as a whole to:

- assess what training (if any) managers and staff have received in order to address bullying and harassment in the workplace
- identify who else is being bullied or harassed/the nature of the bullying (related to a protected characteristic)
- address institutional policies to ensure that they are properly enforced, reviewed and monitored to prevent workplace policies from becoming 'compliance' only documents.

In terms of policies, UCU has produced a model policy (with accompanying guidance) for dealing with sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment of staff by other staff and by students is widespread so having effective policies in place helps those that have experienced harassment to understand how they can be supported as well as branch reps supporting individuals.

UCU is encouraging branches to:

- discuss the model policy and guidance on domestic abuse and sexual harassment at a branch committee meeting
- raise it with the employer with the aim of getting a policy in place
- raise awareness amongst members and work with the NUS to make clear 'No harassment here'
- run events that highlight the issue and create a supportive culture to challenge harassment, establish women's networks and prioritise gender based harassment
- send examples of good practice on all aspects of challenging bullying and harassment.

Further information

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8365/Challenging-bullying-and-harassment---equality-guide-for-branches-and-reps/pdf/Challenging_Bullying_and_Harassment_-_An_Equality_Guide_for_branches_and_reps_Oct16.pdf

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8364/No-harassment-here-poster/pdf/No_harassment_photo_poster_2017.pdf

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8373/Dealing-with-sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace/pdf/Dealing_with_sexual_harassment_in_the_workplace_guidance_Nov_2016.pdf

16 days of activism against gender-based violence (GBV)

UCU is supporting this campaign. The activism period is November 25th to December 10th. It starts on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ends on the International Human Rights Day.

It is proposed that UCU uses this period of this campaign to focus on our priorities and suggest 16 ways in which branches and members can get involved. More branches need to be encouraged to raise the model policies on sexual harassment and domestic abuse.

The suggestions are:

1. Visit <http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/>
2. Follow 16 days on <https://www.facebook.com/16DaysCampaign>
3. Tweet support <https://twitter.com/16DaysCampaign>
4. Publicise and use UCU resources www.ucu.org.uk/16days
5. Talk to members, potential members and your employer about how GBV impacts on the workplace
6. Raise the sexual harassment model policy with your employer
7. Raise the domestic abuse model policy with your employer
8. Make links with local organisations who are campaigning against GBV
9. Fundraise for a local or national cause fighting GBV
10. Sign up to UCU training including the reps course on challenging sexual harassment:
<https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/8178/Dealing-with-sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace-30-January-2018-London>
11. Link up with the NUS to challenge GBV and harassment in your institution
12. Can you raise GBV as part of your lesson plan?

13. Identify a branch champion to support women's campaigns
14. Look at the campaign through different lenses: eg - black women, disabled women, lesbians and trans.
15. Keep the campaign visible: use the posters and wristbands
16. Share your ideas and actions with everyone: eqadmin@ucu.org.uk

National contact: Contact any member of the equality and participation team eqadmin@ucu.org.uk. For advice on sexual harassment or gender based violence, contact Charlotte Nielsen (CNielsen@ucu.org.uk)

Day of Action against Racism, 28 February 2017 'Decolonising education'

Since 2015, UCU has been holding a day of action against workplace racism in February/March each year. This is an opportunity for branches to focus on the discrimination and unfair treatment experienced by black members.

'...you're really articulate for a black person'

'...but where are you REALLY from?'

'...although it seems very minor, consistent and persistent misspelling of my name. If you can learn Dostoyevsky...'

Extracts from the UCU survey into the experiences of black workers in further and higher education, 2015

The campaign aims to highlight the issues faced in our workplaces by black workers in the post-16 education sector and to raise the profile and progression of race equality in the union.

The theme for this year will be 'Decolonising Education'.

Branches are encouraged to undertake activities for the day of action which can include:

- film showings - using the 'Witness' film chronicling the lived experiences of UCU black members
- share the witness statements capturing some of the experiences of UCU's black members
- meetings to promote or discuss the findings of the survey of Black members

- joint meetings with NUS - suggested themes 'Liberate My Degree' or 'Decolonise the Curriculum'
- stalls to distribute the challenging workplace racism pack - posters and leaflets
- promote the Black Voices blog on the UCU website **to promote the regional black members networks.**

Branches are encouraged to use **the UCU bargaining guide on tackling workplace racism** and to raise the issues identified with employers as an integral part of the collective bargaining agenda.

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/action-against-workplace-racism>

National contact: Chris Nicholas (CNicholas@ucu.org.uk)

Gender identity – raising awareness and understanding

The language we use about people and issues, can have a powerful impact. Language used about sexual orientation and gender identity continues to develop as there has been increased visibility, awareness and discussion in recent years. This guide sets out suggestions about current use of language.

UCU has used LGBT as the acronym for its LGBT work. Reflecting the increase in terms used the UCU LGBT Members' Standing Committee recommended to Congress the use of LGBT+. It is considered that whilst there is a desire to be inclusive and representative the language is continuing to change so rather than adding any more letters it seems practical to add the + to denote all other non-heterosexual and non-binary identities.

UCU has produced guides on gender identity and non-binary which provide an update on this fast-developing area of equality. These guides provide a picture of where action and thinking is around gender identity equality in 2017.

UCU recommends that branches circulate and discuss the new guides to assist members in developing awareness and understanding so that colleagues and students can be included and supported at work regardless of how they define their gender identity.

In 2016 UCU produced a summarised version of the Forum's Pride and Prejudice in Education report. This report includes recommendations for developing and promoting sexual orientation and gender identity equality in the workplace. This resource can be used to help review and guide action in these equality areas.

UCU intends to survey branches this year to identify any actions on the recommendations in the report.

Further information

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8359/Summary-of-Pride-and-Prejudice-in-Education-report-Oct-16/pdf/Summary_of_Pride_and_Prejudice_in_Eduation_report_Oct_2016.pdf

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8600/Guide-to-Gender-Identity-May-17/pdf/Guide_to_gender_identity_may_17.pdf

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8602/LGBT-a-guide-to-language-in-use-May-17/pdf/LGBT__language_May_17.pdf

National contact: Seth Atkin (SAtkin@ucu.org.uk)

Disabled members campaigning toolkit and 'David's story'

A disability awareness toolkit for branch equality officers

This toolkit is based on the work of the Disabled Staff Network (DSN) and UCU Branch Committee at the University of Sherwood. It is designed to assist UCU Equality Officers who have responsibility for disability issues within their local branch.

The University of Sherwood is a fictitious organisation. However, the case study in this toolkit is not, as it follows the real life experience of a UCU member working in higher education as a Lecturer in Adult Nursing. It follows his progress as he discloses his disability and negotiates reasonable adjustments at work and the discrimination he experiences throughout his journey.

This toolkit consists of several resources that Equality Officers might use as part of an intervention to create a more disability friendly culture within their organisation. The resources include case studies, narrative, audio visual and web links, and overhead transparencies that can be used as part of a seminar programme for disability awareness, which can be used with members, co-workers, and managers.

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8828/Disability-awareness-toolkit/pdf/DA_toolkit_4equality_officers_Aug17.pdf

You will also find other UCU resources on disability issues at work at:
www.ucu.org.uk/equality

National contact: Helen Carr (hcarr@ucu.org.uk)

Dying to Work

Many people get a serious illness at some time during their working lives, often returning back following a period off work for treatment and to recuperate. However, for many people, the situation is different if they have been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

The TUC's 'Dying to Work' campaign is calling for additional employment protection for terminally ill workers and to implement a terminal illness policy which would ensure that all employees would not risk losing their job along with the financial security of their families after receiving a terminal diagnosis. The campaign is also calling for a terminal illness to be made a protected characteristic.

To date, the following institutions have signed up to the voluntary charter:

- The Sheffield College 26 January 2016
- Central College Nottingham 29 June 2016
- University of Kent 14 August 2017

The charter states the following:

- We recognise that terminal illness requires support and understanding and not additional and avoidable stress and worry.
- Terminally ill workers will be secure in the knowledge that we will support them following their diagnosis and we recognise that, safe and reasonable work can help maintain dignity, offer a valuable distraction and can be therapeutic in itself.
- We will provide our employees with the security of work, peace of mind and the right to choose the best course of action for themselves and their families which helps them through this challenging period with dignity and without undue financial loss.
- We support the TUC's Dying to Work campaign so that all employees battling terminal illness have adequate employment protection and have their death in service benefits protected for the loved ones they leave behind.

Branches are asked to encourage their employer to sign up.

<https://www.dyingtowork.co.uk/>
<https://www.ucu.org.uk/equality>

National contact: Sharon Russell (SRussell@ucu.org.uk)