

Contents

1. **Welcome back Sharon Russell**
2. **Equality Update**
3. **New joint national FE agreement**
4. **Regional Equality Networks Survey**
5. **Disability History Month**
6. **Government's announcement on flexible parental leave & flexible working**
7. **Sustainable Working Lives**
9. **Experiences of LGBT members working internationally**
10. **Cuts to courses & support for disabled staff & students**
11. **National Holocaust Memorial Day 2013**
12. **Stephen Lawrence Fund**
13. **Model Policies – Your feedback**
14. **Equality Reps training dates 2012 - 2013**



1. **Welcome back Sharon Russell**

The Equality Unit is delighted to welcome back Sharon Russell after her adoption leave. Sharon returns to her role as UCU Equality Officer. James Taylor, who was acting up as Equality Officer, now returns to his position as Equality Administrator.

2. **Equality Update**

UCU has produced an up-to-date briefing on the attacks and changes to equality legislation. The guide provide background and a summary of the proposed changes as well as advice on practical things you can do to help fight the attacks, including a pro-forma letter for your MP. The proposed changes in brief:

Government plans to repeal from the Equality Act 2010

- **Employment tribunals' power to make wider recommendations in discrimination cases**

The Government plans to abolish the new extended power that enables employment tribunals to recommend that an employer who is found guilty of unlawful discrimination to take specific steps to prevent others suffering similar treatment. This repeal will further allow employers to continue to operate discriminatory practices in colleges and universities instead of learning from tribunals and changing the culture of the workplace.

- **The procedure for obtaining information (equality questionnaires)**

UCU members have found the use of Statutory Discrimination Questionnaires a valuable tool in assisting them make their case in discrimination cases. They have also been invaluable in negotiations involving equal pay claims. The ability to have statistics available to prove that discrimination has occurred is extremely vital to show the comparators between two or more individuals as well as being useful in negotiating settlements without the need of having to attend the arena of an employment tribunal.

- **Third Party Harassment**

The Government plans to repeal third party harassment which makes an employer liable for repeated racial, sexist, homophobic or other prejudice-based harassment of staff by third parties like service users, students, customers or clients, where the employer has failed to take reasonable steps to protect them. This part of the law served to protect our members from bullying and harassment from non-staff members like students at their institutions.

Cuts to the EHRC...

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is an independent body responsible for enforcing equality legislation and compliance with the Human Rights Act and costs less than £1 a year per person. The Government plans to slash its budget by 68% which will mean at a time of unprecedented cuts that will hit the most vulnerable in society hardest. The Public and Commercial Union (PCU) and Unite the Union are running a joint campaign to save the EHRC, which UCU members can support. Please see the briefing for more details.

Equal Pay Audits...

- On the plus side, the Equality Act 2010 will also be amended to include for a requirement for employment tribunals to order an employer to conduct an equal pay audit where it has breached the equal pay provisions under the Act, except in limited circumstances.

All these changes are contained in the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill. Having already passed through the Commons, it gets its second reading on the 14th of November in the Lords. Track its progress here: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/enterpriseandregulatoryreform.html>

Download the briefing here:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/equality>

3. New joint national FE agreement briefing

UCU has launched a briefing for FE branches in England on asking your employer to adopt the jointly agreed equality agreement that was secured in May 2012.

Branches are urged to :

- Raise the new agreement with their employer through their local consultation and negotiating arrangement
- Persuade the employer to adopt the model agreement and agree to develop their own equality policies
- Agree mechanisms for implementation and review involving the trade unions
- Keep your regional office informed so UCU can monitor progress and support branches effectively.
- Check UCU's website for further advice and guidance on progressing equality.

You can download the **briefing** here:

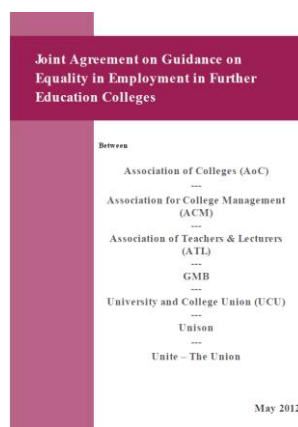
http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/e/a/National_FE_Equality_Agreement.pdf

And the **agreement** itself here:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/e/j/Joint_Agreement_on_Guidance_on_Equality_in_Employment_May_2012.pdf

4. Regional Equality Networks Survey

In May 2009, Congress passed a resolution concerning the development of regional networks as a mechanism for furthering the equality agenda. The purpose was to overcome isolation of particular groups, involve more members and that the networks would support collective action on equality issues at regional level. The Equality Committee wants to review the progress being made on regional networks, find out what works and what are the challenges.



UCU has produced a survey on regional/local equality networks that you can access below. Please complete the survey if you have any experience of being in one or more of these networks.

LINK

If for any reason you cannot fill out the online form you can request a hard copy from eqadmin@ucu.org.uk

5. Disability History Month



UK Disability History Month runs from the 22nd of November to the 22nd of December. This year the theme is **“Changing Lives, Changing Times, Challenging the Ideas that Lead to Hate Crime”**. This covers HIV/AIDS Day (1st December), International Day of People with Disabilities (3rd Dec – see item 4) and International Human Rights Day (10th December). It also follows on directly from Anti-Bullying Week (19th to 23rd November).

UCU is encouraging its members to attend UKDHM events and to tell us about any events they set up of their own. You can find out about UKDHM and planned events at their website here:

<http://ukdisabilityhistorymonth.com/>

UCU also continues to promote its popular Disabled People’s History Wallchart. You can download a copy here:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/4/h/ucu_disposter.pdf

or request a hard copy at eqadmin@ucu.org.uk

The Equality Committee has a working group looking at mental health with a view to producing a toolkit that can be used by branch officers.

You can download UCU's case study briefing on supporting members with equality issues here: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2306>

6. Government's announcement on flexible parental leave and flexible working – November 2012

The Government has announced that new mothers will be able to return to work two weeks after childbirth and share the rest of their maternity leave with their partner. From 2015, parents will be able to take time off together or in turns and have a legal right to request flexible working.

The coalition government has been looking at ways of extending flexible working and making existing parental leave arrangements work better for both partners and conducted a consultation last year which UCU responded to. The plans include the following:

- The right to request flexible working will be extended to all employees (except employee-owners, of course, and provided they meet the 26-week qualifying period). The statutory procedure governing how requests are made and responded to will be replaced by a duty on employers to consider a request in a reasonable manner and a statutory Code of Practice from Acas which will be consulted upon in 2013.
- There will be no extension to paternity leave and no additional month for dads as originally proposed. So fathers' rights remain as they are now - 2 weeks' paid at the statutory flat rate around the time of the birth provided they are employees with 26 weeks' service before the expected week of childbirth.
- The right to 52 weeks' maternity leave and 39 weeks' pay will remain but if a woman chooses to bring her maternity leave to an end early the remainder can be converted to flexible parental leave which is open to either parent to take. The leave can be converted to flexible parental leave from any time after the compulsory 2 weeks of maternity leave so there's a maximum of 50 weeks' flexible parental leave and 37 weeks' pay. It is welcome that it is up to the woman to bring her maternity leave to an end

early and there is no shortening of the designated maternity leave period to 18 weeks as was originally proposed. So it is recognised that some women will still need up to a year on maternity leave. This change in approach was partly down to concerns the TUC, individual unions, a range of charities and some good practice employers raised with the government over having an 18-week maternity leave period.

- Parents will be able to take flexible parental leave at the same time, which is something that cannot be done under the current system of Additional Paternity Leave where mother has to return to work before the father can take any of the leave.
- Employees, subject to their employer's agreement, will be able to take the leave in discontinuous blocks of 1 week (e.g. 1 week off, 1 week in work, 1 week off). If the employer doesn't agree to this kind of pattern of leave-taking it will default to one continuous block of leave to be started at a date decided by the employee.
- Unexpected positive news is: adoption rights are going to be equalised up to maternity rights so adoption leave will become a day one right (previously 26 weeks' service needed) and the first 6 weeks of leave will be paid at 90% of earnings rather than at the low flat rate that applies to the rest of the statutory adoption pay period and surrogate parents will get new rights to leave and pay as once they have applied for a parental order they are to be treated as adopters and qualify for the same leave and pay rights as adoptive parents.
- The unpaid parental leave that derives from the EU Parental Leave Directive will increase from 13 weeks to 18 weeks from March 2013 (the Government is required to do this because of the Revised Parental Leave Directive) and then from 2015, when other changes to leave rights come in, the upper age limit for taking the unpaid parental leave will rise from 5 years to 18 years.



TUC General Secretary **Brendan Barber** said:

"The reforms announced today will make it easier for parents to choose how they want to share their leave to look after newborn children. It's great that parents who want to adopt will be given more support too."

"Allowing all staff to ask to work flexibly is common sense to good employers. But we know that too many businesses are still reluctant to modernise working

practices so the government is right to give them a nudge with this new universal right to request flexible working

"These reforms will make life easier for millions of working parents. Businesses will also benefit from a more engaged workforce and a larger pool of people to recruit from."

UCU welcomes these reforms, although we are cautious that the measures do not place undue pressure on mothers to return to work early after they have given birth. The Equality Committee will continue to monitor this issue.

7. Sustainable Working Lives

Following from a motion passed at Congress 2012 we are bringing together a small working group to establish and work on an agenda around social sustainability in the work. This is particularly important after the removal of the default retirement age and should help lead on thinking around less traditional working patterns, including access for all to benefits such as flexible working. To create this group we are looking for equality reps with particular interest in this area, there is place for 1 branch equality officer from the FE sector and 1 from the HE sector.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact James Taylor jtaylor@ucu.org.uk by the 5th December with a short statement about your interest particularly any related work for the branch that you have undertaken.

It is expected that this first meeting of the working group will be at UCU HQ, Carlow Street, in London on the 15th or 16th January 2013.

8. UCU Equality at the March

The new UCU Equality Banner was at the Future That Works March on October 20th, and garnered many admiring comments along the route! There was positive and widespread media coverage of the event, and over 150,000 turned out to oppose austerity in London, Glasgow and Belfast.



National Head of Equality Helen Carr (right) proudly displays the new UCU Equality Banner in London

9. Experiences of LGBT members working internationally

UCU would like to collect feedback from our LGBT members about their experiences whilst working abroad for their institution.

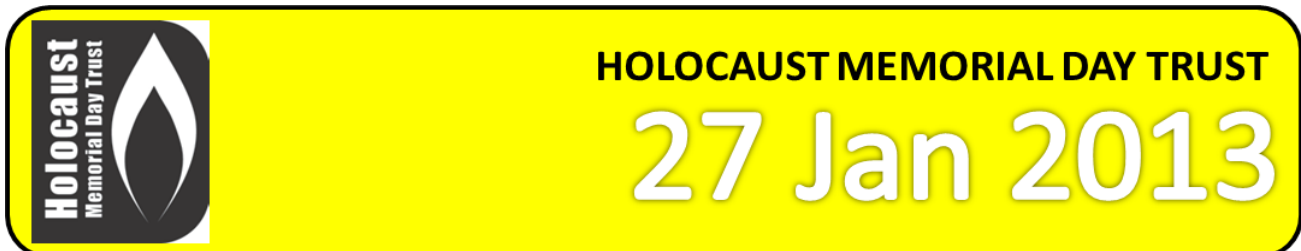
LGBT workers have a right to expect to be protected from discrimination under the terms of the Equality Act and their institution's equality policy. However, during the course of working for your college or university it is possible that you may find yourself working abroad, either on a short visit or longer term basis. Sometimes you may not have a choice over where you end up. Sometimes this will mean working in a country or environment that is non-LGBT friendly.

There is growing evidence of academic and academic related staff enduring discrimination whilst working abroad for their institutions, and UCU would like to collect first-hand testimonies from our members to feed into a research project it is undertaking. Please send your feedback to James Taylor at jtaylor@ucu.org.uk

10. Cuts to courses & support for disabled staff & students

UCU would like to hear from members who have had courses or support for disabled staff or students cut at their institution. We have recently received notification of sweeping cuts to dyslexia provision in FE institutions, with entire teams being taken away. If you are aware of cuts to courses for disabled students of staff such as Dyslexia, British Sign Language or any other, please let us know by contacting jtaylor@ucu.org.uk

11. National Holocaust Memorial Day 2013



Holocaust Memorial Day is observed annually on 27 January. It is a day where we share the memory of the millions who have been murdered in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur in order to challenge hatred and persecution in the UK today.

UCU is encouraging branches and local associations to organise events locally to mark the day and will be providing the following materials to assist:

- Award winning wall chart
- Antisemitism leaflet
- Booklet of personal testimonials of UCU members and other speakers who have attended past events
- Book / film list

We are also producing a short film for the UCU website explaining why it is important to mark the day.

Please keep us informed of any activity your branch is organising to mark this day. Please send full details to eqadmin@ucu.org.uk and we will share this with the wider UCU membership.



12. Stephen Lawrence Fund

The TUC is calling on trade unions and trade unionists to help protect the legacy of Stephen Lawrence by giving generously to the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust fund raising appeal to ensure that the vital work of the Trust continues

and that Stephen's legacy lives on.

The work of the Trust is threatened by the lack of funds for voluntary organisations that has resulted from public spending cuts and the recession. Now more than ever, the Stephen Lawrence Trust that does support young people and to combat social injustice, by promoting equality of opportunity, must not be allowed to fail for lack of funding.

You can donate online by visiting <http://www.justgiving.com/TUCslct> or by text message. Text TUCS99 followed by the £ symbol, then the amount to 70070. *They receive a text message receipt, and the chance to add Gift Aid (by filling in a web form or by text message). JustTextGiving is free for you the sponsor and the charity you're supporting.*

Download a printable promotional poster here:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/9/c/Stephen_Lawrence.pdf

You can use the following model motion at your branch meeting to agree to send funds to the trust:

TUC STEPHEN LAWRENCE FUNDRAISING APPEAL

Model Motion

This branch notes that the struggle to bring to justice the killers of Stephen Lawrence who was murdered 18 years ago has left an enduring legacy and awareness in the wider community about the evils of institutional racism and racial injustice in the UK. A vital part of that legacy is the work of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust which was set up to be a lasting legacy for Stephen and who had dreams of becoming an architect.

This branch notes that the work of the Trust is threatened by the lack of funds for voluntary organisations that has resulted from public spending cuts and the recession. Now more than ever, the Stephen Lawrence Trust that does support young people and to combat social injustice, by promoting equality of opportunity must not be allowed to fail for lack of funding.

The branch resolves to help protect the legacy of Stephen Lawrence by:

- 1) Donating £..... to the TUC Stephen Lawrence Fundraising Appeal.
- 2) Publicising and promoting the appeal amongst branch members
- 3) Calling on members to make individual donations through the appeal page on the TUC website.

Proposed

Seconded

13. Model Policies

UCU wants to collect model equality policies you feel work well in your institutions. We would like to collect and share good examples of collective agreements on issues relating to equality, disability leave, maternity, paternity, other family friendly policies (flexible working, career breaks), union facilities and other subjects that may be covered by union negotiations. The purpose is to provide good examples to other branches who are negotiating equality policies in their institutions. Please send your policies, how you arrived at them and why you feel they work, to James Taylor jtaylor@ucu.org.uk

14. Equality Reps training dates 2012 - 2013

Liverpool, Cotton Exchange, Friday, 7th December, 2012

Birmingham, Alpha Tower, Wednesday, 16th January, 2013

Leeds, TUC, Thurs, 24th January, 2013

Birmingham, Alpha Tower, Wed, 13th February, 2013

London, Carlow Street, Wednesday, 1st May, 2013

London, Carlow Street, Friday, 7th June, 2013

For information on training contact Karen Brooks at kbrooks@ucu.org.uk

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