



Mental Health Charter

**Providing for a
healthy workplace**



Introduction

One in four people will experience some kind of mental ill health or condition in the course of a year. UCU believes that we all have a role to play to ensure that the stigmas and stereotypes are challenged and that all workplaces are safe for all workers. To achieve this requires willingness from all, i.e. the individual themselves, colleagues and managers.

Our branches play a crucial role in preventing discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in our workplaces whilst they provide vital support to members who require mental health support and advice.

If a member seeks support and advice, UCU will maintain confidentiality of its members who are living and working with a mental health issue or condition.

UCU branches are encouraged to adopt and adapt the Mental Health Charter and subsequent standards for their workplace.

This charter has been developed with the assistance of UCU's Disabled Members' Standing Committee

Key: Standards = S

The Charter

SUPPORT

- S1 UCU will support its members who have a mental health issue or condition to continue to work without fear or stigma.**
- S2 UCU will work with the employer to ensure that the culture and working environment is supportive to the needs of staff with a mental health issue or condition.**

Many individuals living with a mental health issue or condition can work without very little assistance to manage their illness or condition. However, there may be times when assistance is required.

Supporting a colleague at work with a mental health issue or condition can include but is not exclusive to:

- I. Listening
- II. Sign posting for further advice or assistance
- III. Undertaking training on how to support members with a mental health issue of condition
- IV. Working with your employer in making your workplace one that is free from the stigma of mental ill health – not just in policy but in practice
- V. Negotiating adjustments such as flexible working to support individuals at work

CHALLENGE

- S3 UCU will challenge and resist any attempt to stigmatise and marginalise any member due to their mental health issue or condition.**
- S4 Individuals with a mental health issue or condition are protected from discrimination in work under the conditions laid out in the Equality Act 2010 and relevant Health and Safety legislation.**

UCU will provide protection to all its members who are being stigmatised at work for having a mental health issue or condition. UCU will use existing equality and health and safety legislation to ensure members are and receive full protection as the law provides.

NEGOTIATE

- S5 UCU has policy and guidance that supports reps in the negotiating effective policies for use in the workplace.**
- S6 Branches play a key role in ensuring that policies and procedures meet members needs**

Equality is at the heart of everything we do. Branches should ensure that all procedures and policies make reference to how individuals with a mental health issue or condition are to be supported in all areas of working life. This includes (but is not limited to) career progression, recruitment and how sickness absence is managed in the workplace.

RAISE AWARENESS

- S7 UCU will raise awareness during Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day on issues faced by individuals with a mental health issue or condition.**
- S8 Displaying a poster, sending a tweet, organising a seminar or coffee morning can help to raise awareness and stimulate discussion.**

Using events specifically highlighting mental ill health are an opportunity for branches to de-stigmatise myths around mental health and to discuss and show the commitment branches are making toward improving the working conditions, environment for those living and working with a mental health issue or condition.

TRAINING

- S9 UCU will provide training in supporting its representatives and members with a mental health issue or condition**
- S10 Our training programmes are designed to allow members to expand their existing knowledge and skills base in supporting members in the workplace.**

Elected branch representatives are encouraged to attend our Mental Health training course. The course is designed to equip reps with the necessary skills in order to support members with a mental health issue or condition. Email training@ucu.org.uk for further information.

Signposting

- S11 UCU will signpost and refer members to sources of further support**
- S12 Feeling alone? There are a number of organisations that provide various levels of support to individuals living with a mental health issue or condition and will provide a list of organisations that provide such assistance.**

UCU does not expect its branch representatives to be clinically trained in order to provide support to members with mental ill health. UCU appreciates and values the commitment made by its reps to provide support and advice to members experiencing a mental health issue or condition whilst working to reduce the causes that can exacerbate a mental health issue or condition such as workloads and stress. UCU also appreciates that in a small number of cases, a member may need to be referred to an external agency i.e. GP, hospital or specialised organisation for example, Mind or the Samaritans for further support.

One in four people will experience some kind of mental health condition in the course of a year.

UCU believes that we all have a role to play to ensure that the stigmas and negative stereotypes are challenged. We should encourage direct interaction with members who need mental health support, as it helps prevent discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. To achieve this requires willingness from all, i.e. the individual themselves, colleagues and managers. UCU will maintain confidentiality of its members who are living and working with a mental health issue or condition.

SUPPORT

UCU will support its members who have a mental health issue or condition to allow them to continue to work without fear or stigma.

UCU will work with the employer to ensure that the culture and working environment is supportive to the needs of staff with a mental health issue or condition

CHALLENGE

UCU will challenge and resist any attempt to stigmatise and marginalise any member due to their mental health issue or condition.

Individuals with a mental health issue or condition are protected from discrimination in work under Equality and Health and Safety legislation

NEGOTIATE

UCU will produce policy and guidance that supports reps in negotiating effective policies for use in the workplace.

Branches play a key role in ensuring that policies and procedures are beneficial to members

RAISE AWARENESS

UCU will raise awareness during Mental Health week on the issues faced by individuals with a mental health issue or conditions

Displaying a poster, sending a tweet, organising a seminar or coffee morning can help to raise awareness and stimulate discussion

TRAINING

UCU will provide training in supporting its representatives and members with a mental health issue or condition.

Our training programmes are designed to allow members to expand their existing knowledge and skills base in supporting members in the workplace

SIGNPOST

UCU will signpost and refer members to sources of further support

Feeling alone? There are a number of organisations that provide various levels of support.

UCU will provide a list of organisations that provide specialist assistance.

This branch fully adopts the Mental Health Charter and Standards outlined above

UCU Branch Chair / Secretary

Branch Chair / Secretary, Campus Unions

Date