

**UWE  
Bristol**

University  
of the  
West of  
England



University and College Union  
University of the West of England Branch

# Workplace Wellbeing: does UWE enable you plus we?

SEPTEMBER  
2020  
Newsletter

*LISTENING TO, WORKING WITH & PROMOTING THE NEEDS OF MEMBERS  
...STRIVING FOR A SECURE FUTURE.*

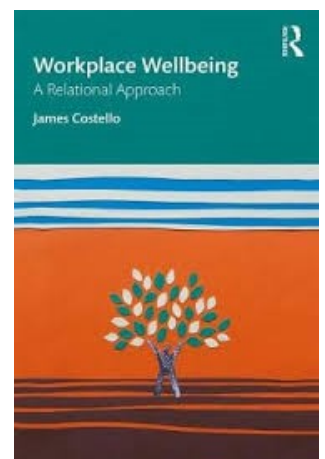
**The Branch would like to draw your attention to a new book by  
written by one of our Branch executive,  
Dr James Costello:**

*Workplace Wellbeing – A Relational Approach* presents the most important, insightful and up-to-date academic thinking and research related to flourishing at work. It also describes the transformative humanistic skills, values, and attributes ordinarily adopted by counsellors and psychotherapists alike, and shows how they may be transferred from a therapeutic setting to the workplace. Integrating ideas and strategies from counselling and psychotherapy, the book gathers together a wealth of accessible, interactive exercises and resources to help develop the skills and personal awareness to thrive in organisations.



*Workplace Wellbeing – A Relational Approach* examines how we can create an emotionally healthy workplace for all of us. It will prove useful for counsellors and psychotherapists alike, whether in training or practice in an organisational setting. More importantly, however, it is designed to be of value to the non-specialist, particularly those working in business, education, healthcare, human resources, occupational health, and organisational psychology.

Within this book we may all find a wealth of reflective triggers to help us consider our ongoing working experiences. This book is available in hard copy and digitally. The branch is going to purchase some copies of the Union Office.



## Fund the Future/Jobs First Campaign

In June, UCU launched its national campaign titled 'Fund the Future' to respond to the gathering and accelerating crisis in higher education. Its key objectives are:

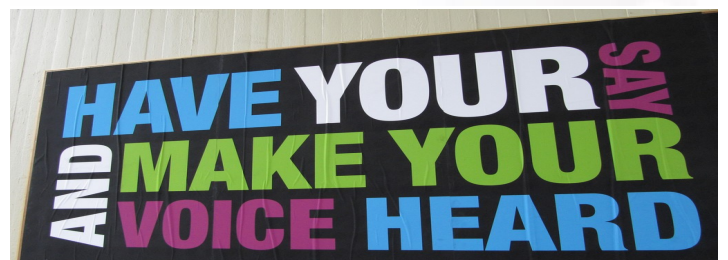
- to defend members' jobs.
- to win increased financial support from government.
- to increase support for a public education system underpinned by fairness, equality and co-operation.

While providing a national framework and support, each branch is being encouraged to develop its own specific campaign which is sensitive to the local issues faced by our members. A central concern for each and every branch will be to attempt to negotiate a 'Jobs First' agreement with their employer so that our members and university employees across the board are not the ones to pay the price for any cuts in university revenue.

At UWE, we have been putting the case to management to protect the jobs of all employees regardless of the duration of their contracts. The management response has been that fixed-term contracts will only be renewed where a business case can be made. We in UCU regard this as unacceptable on two grounds. Firstly, there is an overwhelming moral case for keeping all members of our university community together in these extraordinarily difficult times. Secondly, our ongoing analysis of UWE finances demonstrates that we are clearly and certainly in a strong enough financial position to be able to retain all employees.

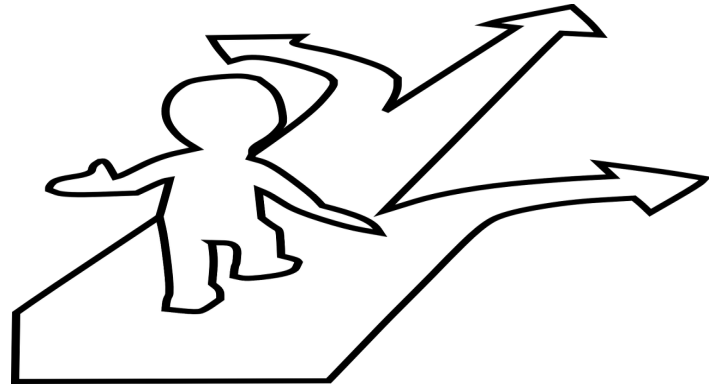
UCU is already aware of members who have not had their contracts renewed and who have no other employment to go to and so are likely to be facing hardship. In certain cases, losing their job has meant losing their right to stay in the UK. We will continue to press the case for the retention of all of our colleagues. We know however that in order to make this happen we will need to mobilise our members and our allies in support of our case. As a first step, all members can contribute to highlighting this issue by signing up for the pledge for the **'10 steps to take in solidarity with precarious higher education staff'**:

<https://fundthefuture.org.uk/10-steps>



**Fair Pay  
Equal Pay  
in HE**

You could drive a coach and horses through this chasm of confusion!



Over the summer 'break', our UCU Branch has received a significant amount of emails and calls from concerned members who cite confusing messaging and therefore insufficient clarity regarding the substance, curricula compatibility and content of Block Zero. This has been further amplified by academic concerns regarding plans to initiate a system of 'volunteer' coaches, with disparate understanding as to how this could sit alongside the existing Academic Personal Tutor role (which is currently recognised in WAMS– just about)! There is exasperating confusion amongst the academic Community regarding what all this means for the future and we would like to more fully understand collective concerns with you all and ask for your feedback on current experiences. We understand now that each Faculty can decide what to do in terms of recognising either or both APT and coaching, if indeed it can or does proceed. However whilst choice is often welcome, disparity and inconsistency might throw up more inadvertent adverse consequences for both staff and students.

A big question for all of us is how much this confusion has potentially damaged staff perception of consultation, fair play and professional recognition. Our understanding is that academics should be delivering the personal tutorial support to students and that the students should rightly expect to engage in this way with those who directly facilitate their programmes. The Post-92 Staff Handbook states that "both staff and management jointly have a responsibility to seek to enhance the quality of educational provision". On behalf of our members we therefore feel compelled to raise their concerns formally because the Branch were not consulted on these changes and would not have agreed to them. We welcome any contact from members who have been affected by this chaos. Some pro-

gramme leaders have had to re-write their induction three times when they should have been having a well earned break. This is unacceptable.



**Newsletter Editor: Dr N Goodall**  
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# COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT

PLEASE TAKE A NUMBER

**Branch Reps Maggie Weber and Nicky Goodall have joined a Joint Union Forum task and finish group reviewing the current grievance process, initiated at the UCU Branch request.**

As we continue that work, we would like to hear from you if you have had challenging experiences of the Grievance procedure/ process.

What casework has revealed about the Grievance process thus far:

Most casework/ grievances/complaints relate to G and H grade concerns with their line manager including WAMs issues (high workload, inattention to workflow, poor PDR experience, lack of development opportunities, micro-management and communication breakdowns). If the grievance process only explores the line managers perception, it is most unlikely to reveal the full picture of what has happened or indeed facilitate resolution.

Most I Grade casework/ grievances/complaints relate to excessive workloads, excessive working hours, limited spheres of influence, responsibility and accountability without the functional authority to make changes, deference to unreasonable HoD edicts, lack of scope to constructively challenge.

What is your lived experience of making a complaint or raising a grievance? We are putting together a portfolio of evidence to support our claim that the process needs to evolve rapidly and radically for the future. We should be in a position to report on that work soon.

