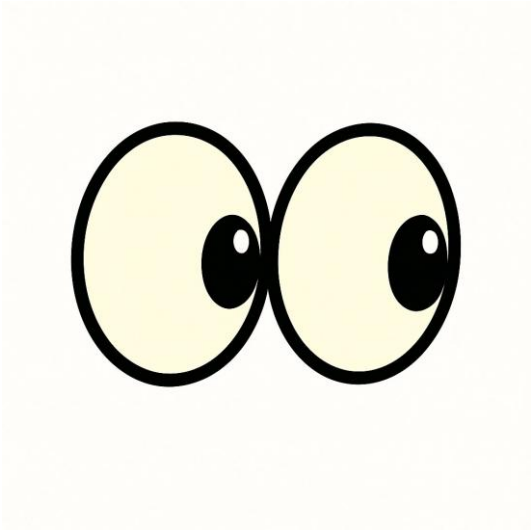
June 2026

UCU Branch News

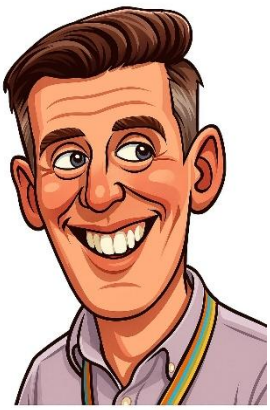
An Information Bulletin for Members at UCU UWE Bristol

In This Issue



1. **Welcome from Matt Proom UCU Bristol Branch Chair**
2. **This months Spotlight: Anne Foley, Vice-Chair**
3. **Branch AGM news**
4. **Message from National re; Sheffield University**
5. **EHRC update**
6. **Workload Campaign**
7. **ROCC update**
8. **Stress at Work**
9. **Stress Tool**
10. **TUC update**
11. **When NO is an Act of Solidarity**
12. **A Win for Birmingham University**
13. **Are you paying the correct subs?**
14. **Event Calendar**
15. **Not a UCU Member Yet?**
16. **Contact us**

Welcome from Chair, *Matt Proom*



There is never a quiet moment at the branch, as always there has been a lot of activity for the union locally and nationally. I want to first recognise our solidarity with all institutions in the UK facing redundancies and attacks on their terms and conditions, in particular staff at Sheffield University whose jobs are being threatened by a restructure and who are facing 'double deductions' for taking part in lawful industrial action. Members should be aware that an academic boycott of Sheffield University has been announced which requests UCU members refuse to undertake any of the following;

- speaking at or organising academic or other conferences at the University of Sheffield
- giving lectures at the University of Sheffield
- accepting positions as visiting professors or researchers at the University of Sheffield
- accepting new contracts as external examiners for taught courses at the University of Sheffield.

We also stand in support of our Trans members and students alongside staff networks and our sister trade unions – an attack on one is an attack on all of us.

I had the pleasure of attending UCU congress and Higher Education in May. This was my first time attending and it was an interesting experience seeing the democracy of the union in action. If you are signed up to our signal group, then you will have seen my posts identifying themes discussed and how I voted on the motions to set our unions policy in the coming year – if anyone is interested in understanding this further drop me an email.

Unsurprisingly, congress and conference identified resisting attacks on terms and conditions, redundancies, focussing on anti-racism, defending trans and disabled workers. Lots of debate around a possible trade dispute with the Secretary of State for Education – we will discuss this further in the branch and at members meetings so keep an eye out.

Congress featured keynote speakers Asad Rehman (CEO Frends of the Earth) and Zak Polanski (Green Party leader) who both spoke very well, Asad made particularly strong connections between Environmental Justice and Workers rights.

It was a privilege to represent the branch in Harrogate for 3 days.

Locally we continue to support members individually whilst engaging in work on the Workload system, Anti Racism, the recent Staff survey and a move from a punitive grievance/conduct/performance procedure to one that is resolution focussed.

In Solidarity

Matt

Spotlight: Branch Vice-chair - Anne Foley

This is my second year as the VC of UWE UCU and I thank members for having the trust in me to take on this important role.

I grew up in South Wales, my dad worked in the steel industry and like many of his peers, lost his life to work-related cancer, while my mum was a nurse. We were a typical Welsh working-class family who fully supported Labour and the Trade Unions. The miners' strike during the 1980s cemented my political views, I remember one of my first gigs was Red Wedge, a collective of left-leaning musicians supporting the miners and anti the conservative government (I was under age!).

I have always had a strong sense of injustice and the importance of speaking out against it. This sometimes has got me into trouble, like when I told my head teacher to stop picking on the new boy in school and I was sent to Dapper Davies, so called as he would give us a whack with his daps. I do continue to speak out whenever I see wrongdoing and I know I am labelled as *'that difficult woman'*, but here at UWE I take that badge and wear it with pride. There is so much to speak out about.

I am proud of the whole UCU at UWE Executive. Often, the work we do is behind the scenes and members don't always get to see this, but over the last year we fought hard against changes to the workload that would have detriment for our members. We have other fights to challenge coming up, most notably the attack on our pension. I am also proud of all our members who have engaged with us and speak out.

In Solidarity

Anne Foley: *That difficult woman.*

The **Annual General Meeting** held 20th May 2026.

Here is your branch exec for 26/27

- **Chair** Matt Proom
  matt.proom@uwe.ac.uk
- **Vice Chair** Anne Foley
  anne.foley@uwe.ac.uk
- **Branch Secretary** Sarah Harding
  ucusecretary@uwe.ac.uk
- **Branch Organiser & ROCC Chair** Carolyn Sissoko
  carolyn.sissoko@uwe.ac.uk
- **Recruitment Officer** Kait Clarke
  kait.clarke@uwe.ac.uk
- **Treasurer** Phil Sayce
  phil.sayce@uwe.ac.uk
- **Casework Lead Officer** Clive Warn
  clive.warn@uwe.ac.uk
- **Health and Safety Lead** Margaret Roberts
  Margaret3.Roberts@uwe.ac.uk
- **Equality Committee Chair** Sorrel Kavanagh
  Sorrel.Kavanagh@uwe.ac.uk
- **CHSS College Rep - Frenchay** Greta Squire
  greta.squire@uwe.ac.uk
- **CHSS College Rep - Glenside** Judith Worthington
  judith.worthington@uwe.ac.uk
- **CBL College Reps** Rick Ball and Mary Young
  richard.ball@uwe.ac.uk & mary.young@uwe.ac.uk
- **CATE College Rep** Charlotte Selleck
  charlotte.selleck@uwe.ac.uk
- **Membership Officer** Sarah Harding
  sarah7.harding@uwe.ac.uk
- **Race and Ethnicity Rep** Robin Jhagra
  robin.jhagra@uwe.ac.uk

- **Disabled Members Rep** Charlotte Selleck
  charlotte.selleck@uwe.ac.uk
- **Women's Rep** Charlotte Selleck
  charlotte.selleck@uwe.ac.uk
- **LGBTQ+** Clive Warn
  clive.warn@uwe.ac.uk
- **Negotiator 1** Matt Proom
  matt.proom@uwe.ac.uk
- **Negotiator 2** Greta Squire
  greta.squire@uwe.ac.uk
- **Green/sustainability Rep** Miles Thompson
  miles2.thompson@uwe.ac.uk
- **Pensions Officer** Judith Worthington
  judith.worthington@uwe.ac.uk
- **Policy Lead Officer** Sorrel Kavanagh
  sorrel.kavanagh@uwe.ac.uk
- **Union Access to Learning rep (URL)** Margaret Roberts
  Margaret3.Roberts@uwe.ac.uk
- **Social Media Officer** Charlotte Selleck
  charlotte.selleck@uwe.ac.uk
- **Researcher's Rep** Rick Ball and Mary Young
  richard.ball@uwe.ac.uk & mary.young@uwe.ac.uk
- **Anti-Casualisation Rep** Vacant
- **Schools Leadership Rep** Vacant

Urgent from UCU: global boycott of the University of Sheffield by Shahenda Suliman UCU head of higher education

I write to you with urgent news regarding the University of Sheffield. As branches will be aware, Sheffield UCU have been facing widespread attacks from the university's management, which include the repeated imposition of 'double deductions' whereby staff who took industrial action have now been subject to further deductions if they refuse to make up teaching lost to industrial action.

Since the announcement of a proposed restructuring programme which threatens the jobs of Sheffield UCU members despite the university's own records showing that its finances are healthy, branch negotiators have worked very hard to defend the livelihoods of members and their right to take industrial action. UCU also wrote to the university's vice-chancellor on 8 April notifying them of our decision to formally censure the university, making clear that we will not accept such treatment of our members, and asking them to revisit their position.

Despite this, university management have been unwilling to withdraw the proposed restructure plans or revisit their position on double deductions, instead threatening to impose further deductions if staff do not reschedule teaching missed due to strike action. Sheffield UCU have been clear that punishing staff in this way constitutes an egregious act of management escalation, and we cannot stand by and accept these threats.

On Friday, UCU's higher education officers, in support of Sheffield UCU, approved an academic boycott of the University of Sheffield. We have written to the university's management to notify them of this academic boycott and urging them to withdraw their threat of double deductions. As you will know, UCU does not implement such sanctions lightly, however we are clear that unless the university reverses its course, it will face escalating and significant reputational damage.

We are calling on all UCU members, trade unionists, and supporters to undertake an academic boycott of Sheffield University which includes refusing to undertake any of the following:

- speaking at or organising academic or other conferences at the University of Sheffield
- giving lectures at the University of Sheffield
- accepting positions as visiting professors or researchers at the University of Sheffield

- accepting new contracts as external examiners for taught courses at the University of Sheffield.

In addition, we are also calling on members, trade unionists, and supporters worldwide to publicly decline any honorary degrees/doctorates from the University of Sheffield.

No UCU member should be participating in any of the above. Our members at University of Sheffield deserve the full support of the entire union, the wider labour movement, and colleagues and comrades around the world.

With best wishes

Shahenda Suliman

UCU head of higher education

Equality and Human Rights Commission Code of Practice

Our branch offers solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ student network and other TU's that has led to the recent Bristol Pride's decision to drop UWE sponsorship

The EHRC Code of Practice has now been published following the Supreme Court judgment. This is statutory guidance issued by the EHRC and laid before UK Parliament for scrutiny. It does not change the law, and employers remain fully bound by their existing duties under equality and employment legislation.

Branches are likely to face immediate questions from members and, in some cases, early or inconsistent attempts by employers to interpret or implement the guidance. It is essential that reps emphasise that no unilateral policy changes should be made without proper consultation and legal basis, and that equality obligations continue to apply in full.

UCU has issued interim guidance and will update this as a matter of urgency once we complete detailed analysis of the Code. Branches should continue to escalate concerns through normal regional and national structures where employers act precipitously or in a way that risks discrimination.

We encourage branches and members to read the following:

- Statement from UCU general secretary Jo Grady on EHRC Code of Practice

- UCU's letter to the University of Reading, which sets out key concerns about practical implementation
- UCU's letter to employers' representative Universities UK.

In addition to the usual practice of getting regional support so that branches can challenge problematic developments, we have a survey open to help keep a national view on what is happening. If you wish to report such policy development, please use this survey.

If you have any questions about this gender identities policy survey, please email the UCU equality team (national) or you can contact our branch Equality lead Sorrel.Kavanagh@uwe.ac.uk

ITS YOUR TIME; WORKLOAD CAMPAIGN

Staff across post-16 education are experiencing excessive workloads, long working hours and intensification of work that is causing significant stress and ill-health. The increasing administrative burden, the widening of job roles, the introduction of new IT and online working, increased student numbers and staff cuts are a growing problem.

In response UCU developed a new approach to tackle workload issues using a campaigning and organising approach linked with health and safety which was successfully piloted in 2016/17. Following the significant changes that have taken place across workplaces since the covid-19 pandemic, UCU is now re-launching this workload campaign across the UK with new tools and refreshed approaches.

UCU workload campaigning also uses the results of national and local workload surveys to support branches with local campaigning, organising and bargaining. UCU developed a longitudinal national workload survey which has run in 2016 and 2021. Some key finding from 2021 reveal that staff in higher and further education work on average more than two days unpaid each week and workload is unmanageable and unsustainable for most staff.

UCU members can also access 'workload rep' training which is available to all those who want to get more involved in tackling the causes of excessive workloads and work-related stress in their place of work. In addition UCU will be running a CPD course for members who wish to better understand workload as a health and safety issue and how best to protect ourselves and colleagues from unsustainable and unhealthy workload demands.

My workload, your education: a joint statement by UCU and NUS

Research shows that excessive workloads can lead to increased stress, greater absences and personal health issues for those effected.

Yet recent surveys show that workload is increasing for staff in further and higher education, particularly as a result of the recent waves of redundancies.

26% of further and higher education staff work in excess of 50 hours a week during term time; 75% describe their job as stressful; and 46% say their work involves unrealistic time pressures.

Excessive workloads can also have a detrimental impact on students and learners and the quality of their education, including upon student contact time, the return of marked work and class and seminar sizes.

The effective management of staff workloads is therefore an education issue.

We believe that well motivated staff with time to attend to their students properly are at the cornerstone of a decent further and higher education system.

Therefore:

UCU calls for every university and college to agree a new joint approach with them to the issue of academic and related staff workload, including regular monitoring to ensure staff are not overloaded.

NUS calls for every university and college to ensure there are sufficient staff in place to provide a decent education, ensure students and learners receive the attention they need and that staff are not overworked.

UCU and NUS agree to support each other in these objectives and to encourage mutual respect and support between students and staff.

Sally Hunt Liam Burns

UCU NUS

A graphic showing the six UCU organising action points

Recruitment Organisation Committee

Update from Carolyn Sissoko

Statements on violent disorder

Following the events in Northern Ireland in recent days, UCU stands in solidarity with our members and their communities. We condemn the monstrous attack that took place on Monday evening on Stephen Ogilvy. Our thoughts are with him and his family. The dignity shown by Stephen's family in speaking out against all forms of violence, appealing for calm and pointing out the positive role migrants play in our society is an example to us all. It is this approach we should all unite behind.

We have seen attacks on homes, houses being set alight with families inside them, and the racist targeting of ethnic minority communities and migrants in Belfast. There can never be any justification for racism, vigilantism, or collective blame.

You can read the full statement on Northern Ireland here, and you can also read University of Southampton UCU's statement on the far-right disorder in Southampton.

LGBT+ Pride 2026 and the EHRC Code of Practice

LGBT+ Pride is more important now than ever. Trade union solidarity at Pride is crucial for standing alongside LGBT+ people across the country. UCU organises a walking group at London Pride (Saturday 5 July). Sign up here if you would like to attend.

EHRC Code of Practice: UCU has voiced concerns about the Equality and Human Rights Commission's updated Code of Practice. Universities and colleges are responsible for protecting their staff and students, not putting them at risk through rushed or inconsistent decisions. We will continue to fight for our members and stand with all those who are marginalised and stigmatised. Read UCU general secretary Jo Grady's full statement here.

Write to your MP and encourage them to sign a UK parliament early day motion to reject the code of practice. TransActual, Trans+ Solidarity Alliance and Scottish Trans have created an email template for you to contact your MP.

Your feedback is vital: UCU Workload Survey 2026

UCU is conducting the Workload Survey 2026 to investigate the changing size and intensity of workloads in universities, colleges, prison education, and adult education. The survey will provide evidence to support local and national campaigns and negotiation to reduce excessive workloads.

The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete, and respondents will be able to enter a prize draw upon completion. You can skip questions that you would prefer not to answer. Please click here to start the survey and encourage your colleagues to complete it too (whether they are UCU members or not).

Global academic boycott of University of Sheffield

University of Sheffield has been hit with the ultimate sanction of a global academic boycott by UCU. UCU is calling on all members, trade unionists, and supporters to refuse to:

- speak at or organise academic or other conferences at University of Sheffield
- give lectures at University of Sheffield
- accept positions as visiting professors or researchers at University of Sheffield
- accept new contracts as external examiners for taught courses at University of Sheffield.

The boycott is over Sheffield management's repeated imposition of 'double deductions' whereby staff who took industrial action have now been subject to further deductions if they refuse to make up teaching lost to industrial action. Since the announcement of a proposed restructuring programme which threatens the jobs of UCU members despite University of Sheffield's own records showing that its finances are healthy, the branch has been defending the livelihoods of members and their right to take industrial action.

Stress at work – the case for action

Work-related stress is a well-known hazard in our workplaces. The TUC 13th biennial survey of union safety reps confirmed that, with the exclusion of Covid-19, stress is the most widespread concern cited by 70% of survey respondents. '*In fact, stress – or 'stress or overwork' as the hazard was categorised before 2010 - has been the most commonly selected major concern since the series of surveys began in 1998, when overwork or stress' was picked out by 77 per cent of respondents.*' In education, stress was cited as the number one hazard by 81% of union safety reps, closely followed by overwork (61%), long hours (50%), bullying / harassment (46%) and harassment / violence / verbal abuse (29%).

In December 2020, a UCU survey of all members in post-16 education found that 85% of respondents were experiencing an increased level of stress due to changes in working practices associated with the pandemic. Overall, respondents reported that their mental wellbeing had been negatively impacted (a little or a lot) as a result of the following: increased workload (85%); lack of work-life balance (80%); lockdown / selfisolation (77%); move to online working (71%); lack of support from their employer (60%); return to face-to-face working following lockdown (51%); move to online working (71%); lack of access to healthcare (36%); lack of access to other support services (36%). Notably, only 30% of survey respondents felt that their employers approach to risk assessment during the pandemic had been satisfactory in relation to protecting their mental health and well-being.

If employers want to create a healthy a working environment where all workers have the opportunity to thrive they should take measures to prevent stress and promote healthy working practices.

Employers must provide a safe working environment for their staff and all those coming into contact with their business. They have a legal duty to undertake risk assessments to control workplace risks to low levels. They must identify potential workplace stressors and implement protective and preventative measures as part of this process.

If employers want to create a healthy a working environment where all workers have the opportunity to thrive they should take measures to prevent stress and promote healthy working practices.

'As health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity but a positive state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (WHO, 1986), a healthy working environment is one in which there is not only an absence of harmful conditions but an abundance of health promoting ones.'

*(*World Health Organisation*,* Occupational health: Stress at the workplace)

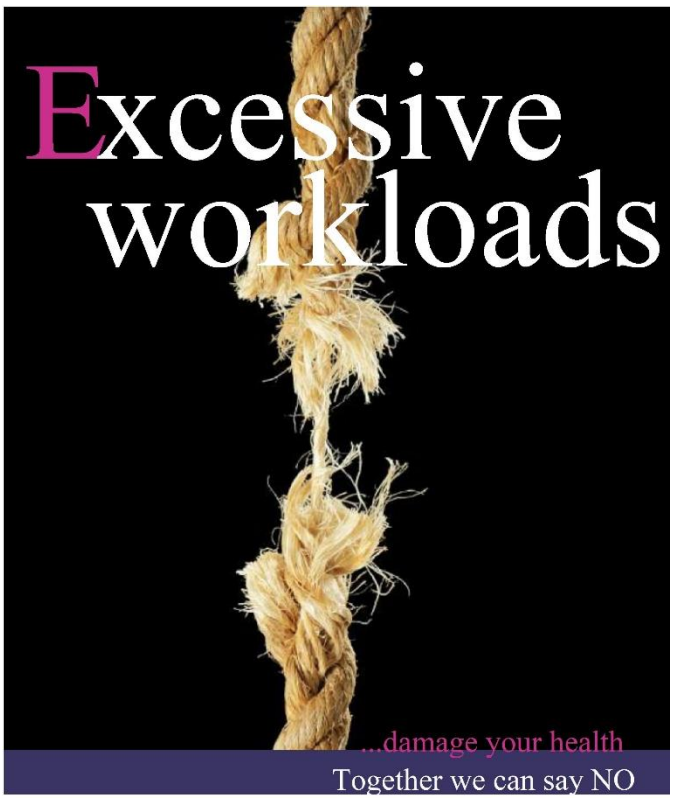
Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Stress Management Standards Approach

Stress and workload resources:

Stress toolkit and resources:

https://www.ucu.org.uk/stress

It's your Time - UCU workload campaign
https://www.ucu.org.uk/workloadcampaign



Workloads (HE) https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10981/Bargaining-for-better-workloads-inhigher-education-in-response-to-the-Covid-19-pandemic-Jun-20/pdf/ucu_he_covid19-workload-bargaining_jun20.pdf

TUC 13th biennial survey of union safety reps 2020/21 https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Safety%20reps%20survey%202021.pdf

UCU model stress risk assessment https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/2068/Stress-toolkit-model-riskassessment/doc/stresstool_modelriskassess.docx

UCU model stress questionnaire https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/2073/Model-stressquestionnaire/doc/stresstool_hse_question.docx

HSE line manager (stress) competency indicator tool: https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.htm

Tackling work related stress using management Standards approach: HSE workbook:

https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wbk01.pdf

HSE example stress risk assessment (college) https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/assets/docs/learning-with-care-riskassessment.pdf

UCU toolkits provide advice for branches and links to other sources of information. Anyone seeking specific advice in respect of the issues covered by this toolkit should consult their branch officers in the first instance, who in turn may need to take advice from UCU regional officials. Important time limits often apply; for further information about these or if you are seeking to pursue a legal claim on the issues covered in this toolkit, you should not rely on the toolkit alone but should seek additional advice from the union.

The HSE Stress Management Standards approach is an organisation wide, preventative approach to tackling the causes of work related stress. While employers do not have to follow this approach, it will enable employers to demonstrate that they are meeting their legal responsibilities and protecting workers from harm while at work.

There are six stress management standards that have been identified as the main drivers of stress at work:

1. **Demands** - includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment
2. **Control** – includes how much say people have in the way they do their work
3. **Support** - includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
4. **Relationships** - includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour

5. **Role** – includes whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
6. **Change** – includes how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation

See: https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/

The HSE have a free step by step workbook that employers can utilise to systematically capture actual and potential workplace stressors in an organisation and control them to low levels through the risk assessment process.

Many organisations have adopted the HSE management standards approach and the TUC have also developed guidance to support safety reps in their work to encourage employers to implement these standards in their workplaces

See: 'Tackling Workplace Stress Using the HSE Stress Management Standards:

Guidance for health and safety representatives'

Stress Toolkit click the link for full access.

Stress is a major concern for staff in further and higher education. Rising workloads, poor management culture, excessive audit and inspection, job insecurity and poor facilities have all contributed to rising concern over stress and its causes.

UCU Workload Survey 2029 please complete the survey, click the link!

The University & College Union are conducting this survey to investigate the changing size & intensity of workloads in universities, colleges, prison education & adult education. We know that many workers in these sectors experience excessive workloads which contribute to stress and poor mental health. Your responses are vital in ensuring that the real experiences of members are accurately represented and heard, helping to build a clear picture of the challenges faced across the sector.This survey will provide evidence to support local & national campaigns and negotiations to reduce excessive workloads.The survey will take approximately 15 mins to complete, and respondents will be able to enter a prize draw for **5 x £50 vouchers** upon completion. You can skip any questions you'd prefer not to answer. Please encourage your colleagues to complete this survey too (whether UCU members or not).

When answering the survey questions, please think about all the in-person & online work that you do.

TUC update new employment rights 2026 (full report, click the link)

Summary of changes Trade union laws

From 7 April 2026:

New Fair Work Agency (FWA)

- A new single body enforcing employment rights.
- Combines several existing enforcement organisations.

- Includes: workplace inspections, issuing penalties for underpayment, taking legal action on behalf of workers and enforcing criminal labour law breaches.

From 6 April 2026:

Stronger penalties for employers who breach redundancy rules

- Maximum protective award doubled to 180 days' pay.
- Applies when employers fail to properly consult on collective redundancies.

Day-one parental leave rights

- Paternity leave and unpaid parental leave now available from day one of employment.
- Removes previous qualifying periods (26 weeks / 1 year).

Whistleblowing protection

- Sexual harassment is now a protected disclosure.
- Workers reporting it can be protected from unfair dismissal or mistreatment.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) reforms

- No minimum earnings threshold.
- Paid from day one (no waiting days).
- Lower earners receive 80% of average weekly earnings or £123.25 (whichever is lower).

Equality Action Plans

- From 2026: voluntary for large employers (250+ staff).
- From 2027: mandatory for those reporting gender pay gaps.
- Must include actions to reduce pay gaps and support issues like menopause.

Bereaved partner leave

- New day-one right to up to 52 weeks' unpaid leave if a partner dies after childbirth/adoption.

Easier union recognition

- Simpler process for unions to gain recognition: No need to prove majority likely support upfront; simple majority vote is enough and employers can't block recognition via alternative unions

When NO is an Act of Solidarity by Charlotte Selleck

Many of us entered education because we care deeply about our students, our subjects and our institutions. That commitment often makes it difficult to say no. We stay late, answer emails at weekends, take on one more task, cover one more gap.

Individually, saying yes can feel easier. It avoids conflict. It solves an immediate problem. It helps a colleague, supports a student or keeps a project moving.

But there is another side to every yes.

When we routinely take on work beyond our contracted hours, we create an expectation that the work can be done. When we absorb the responsibilities of unfilled posts, vacancies become easier to ignore. When we quietly carry workloads that were never allocated, the real scale of the problem remains hidden.

Many of us are willing to make those sacrifices ourselves. We tell ourselves it is only temporary. We do not want to let others down. Yet when extra work becomes normal, the burden is not carried equally. Colleagues with caring responsibilities, newer staff and those already at capacity can find themselves measured against standards that depend on unpaid labour.

This is where saying no becomes important.

“No, I cannot take on work that is not in my workload allocation.”

“No, I cannot routinely work beyond my contracted hours.”

“No, I cannot indefinitely cover for a vacancy.”

These are not selfish responses. They are acts of collective responsibility. They make visible the gap between expectations and resources. They challenge the assumption that goodwill can endlessly compensate for understaffing and excessive workloads.

The power of a union lies not only in what we agree to do together, but also in what we agree not to accept. One person saying no may feel exposed. A group saying no together is solidarity.

If saying no feels difficult for your own sake, remember it is rarely just about you. It is about the colleague who follows you, the colleague who cannot take on anymore, and the colleague who does not yet feel able to speak up. If not for you, then for others say "NO".

Whoa! A BIG WIN for Birmingham University

HSE Confirms Material Breaches at U. of Birmingham Following Union Safety Concerns

Multi-Year Campaign by UCU Safety Representatives Leads to Formal Enforcement Action Over Work-Related Stress Management Failures

We want to share with you some significant news. On Thursday, 11 December, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) issued a formal notice of contravention to Vice-Chancellor Adam Tickell, confirming that the University is in material breach of Health and Safety law, specifically regarding work-related stress management.

The decision follows an inspection of the University's arrangements for managing work-related stress in September, which involved a full review of the University's documentation and comprehensive interviews with staff from across the organisation.

The inspection was triggered by a formal complaint made by BUCU to the HSE in April 2024, outlining the University's failure to manage stress effectively and requesting the HSE's urgent intervention to protect staff from harm. For over three years, BUCU reps had been raising concerns about unsafe workloads and inadequate stress management.

Instead of working with us, management has cancelled meetings, dismissed our concerns, and routinely refused to meaningfully engage with our BUCU Health and Safety Officer's workplace inspection reports – dragging their feet on taking action to mitigate sometimes harrowing cases of chronic work-related stress.

What the HSE Found

The HSE confirmed systematic failures in four key areas:

1. The University is not following its own Stress Management Policy. Risk assessments aren't being completed at College or School level, and there is no assessment of how to reduce excessive workloads.
2. Risk Assessments are inadequate. The University concluded that stress isn't a significant issue by analysing data in isolation and ignoring local-level incidents.

Crucially, staff have not been involved in how to address failures in current management and performance.

3. Controls are not working: despite guidance on working hours, academics routinely work evenings and weekends. Workload allocation models are not used consistently, and many staff are themselves unaware of the procedures for covering work.

4. There is no effective monitoring: no system exists to report work-related stress, manager training is inconsistent, and the University lacks understanding of where high-risk areas exist. Management has failed to acknowledge that excessive workload and work-related stress are more than isolated issues at the University.

The HSE inspector has stated plainly: the University "cannot demonstrate sufficient understanding of the risk to [its] staff from work-related stress."

What This Means for Our Members

Our 2025 workload survey tells the human story behind these failures. Over 90% of you report having more work than time to complete it. Many academics are working 1,100-1,300 workload points—equivalent to 47+ weeks per year. Burnout is normalized. Staff wellbeing is dismissed. Management is often unsupportive or disconnected from staff needs.

As one member put it: "Unacceptably high workloads—impossible to complete without also working in the evening or at weekends... Management's typical approach is to just load more and more work onto us."

ARE YOU PAYING THE CORRECT SUBS?

How does UCU work for its members?

People who work in post-school education have never been under so much pressure. Staff numbers drop as student numbers rise - often with no matching increase in funding. For many people, salaries are simply failing to keep pace with those of comparable staff elsewhere in education. And as most people spend the majority of their lives at work, it pays to be in a union that ensures your pay and conditions are protected and improved, and that you are treated with respect in the workplace.

UCU campaigns and negotiates for tangible results. We make real progress on many issues including improving pay, implementing equality policies, protecting part-time, fixed-term and hourly paid staff, tackling safety issues, and much more.

Defending and advancing your employment and professional interests, both nationally and locally, is what UCU does best. Post-school education is changing fast, and you need a union behind you that understands the changes and knows how to deal them. Our job is to ensure

that your commitment and professionalism are valued and recognised – and the more people there are in the union, the more UCU can achieve.

National subscriptions

Arising from the decisions of UCU's national congress and the National Executive Committee, the subscription rates for 2025/26 have now been agreed. A table showing the new rates taking effect on 1 September 2025 is attached. With the aim of balancing the pressures of the current industrial and financial climate together with the greatest utilisation of UCU resources necessary to support the membership at this time, we have made as small an increase as possible to subscriptions. Congress has agreed a further progressive movement in subscription rates with an overall increase of 2.0% spread across the top three bands (F0 - F2) covering those on incomes of £30,000 or more, weighted towards higher earners. This has enabled us to freeze or reduce the rates for all other full members i.e. those earning £29,999 or less.

National UCU subscription rates for UCU members to 31 August 2026		
Employment income band (excluding London Weighting)	**Including political fund (per month)**	**Excluding political fund (per month)**
£60,000 & above (F0)	£31.54	£31.22
£40,000 - £59,999 (F1)	£27.10	£26.83
£30,000 - £39,999 (F2)	£23.05	£22.80
£22,000 - £29,999 (F3)	£16.88	£16.71
£15,000 - £21,999 (F4)	£10.48	£10.38
£5,000 - £14,999 (F5)	£4.54	£4.50
Below £5,000 (F6)	£1.00	£0.99

Note: UCU operates a political fund which expressly does not contribute to any political party, but is used for campaigning and lobbying to promote the interests of UCU members. The contribution level is one percent of the national subscription rate. If you choose not to contribute to the political fund you shall not be excluded from any benefits of the union or placed in any respect, either directly or indirectly, under a disability or at a disadvantage as compared to other members of the union.

Event Calendar

- **Gay Pride Calendar 2026 - Dates, Parades, Routes** (world dates)
- UK Pride Dates: **Pride London** **Exeter Pride** Birmingham Pride Oxford Pride UK
- **Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival** 17-19 July 2026
- **Black History Month Oct 2026**
- **Charity Digitals World Awareness Day Calendar**

Not a Member?

*1 - **JOIN HERE***

Contact Us

UCU UWE Bristol

Please contact us on:

UCU@uwe.ac.uk

UCUSecretary@uwe.ac.uk