

UPDATE

for UCU Reps in the

North West Region



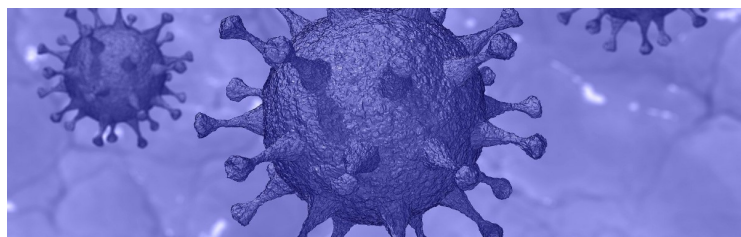
University and College Union

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Your new bi-weekly UCU North West Rep Updates

Industrial Relations in a time of pandemic: UCU NW launches new support for branches

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, your UCU North West Regional office is developing new ways to support branch officers and members. We will now provide a bi-weekly Update for Reps including key information on bargaining and branch organisation. Next week, we will also begin distribution of a bi-weekly Newsletter for UCU Members in the Region. The Update for Reps and Newsletter for Members will be released on alternate weeks. After the Easter break, we will explore the use of Webinars for reps to provide virtual advice “surgeries” and to support branch organisation and Industrial Relations.

UCU Bargaining Guidance

The National Union has recently published updated Bargaining Guidance for Branches on key issues that may arise because of the impact of Covid-19.

Please read and familiarise yourself with the document:

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10841/Branch-Covid-19-bargaining-guidance/pdf/ucu_covid19_bargaining-guide.pdf

If your employer is not engaged in weekly consultation and negotiation meetings with UCU please contact the Regional Office as soon as possible.

HE Strike Deductions

Deductions delayed for some branches.

After concerted pressure from the University of Liverpool UCU Branch, RO, and local MPs, Liverpool University has delayed strike deductions until May. Edgehill UCU branch has pushed back deductions until June. Despite pressure from the branch, Lancaster University began deductions in March.

What safety requirements do we want to see in a Working From Home Policy?

Working From Home Policies will be key in negotiations

HSE Homeworker Guidance <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm> has been updated in response to the current Covid-19 situation.

It asks employers to consider environmental risks associated with workstations and lone working inclusive of stress. While homeworking for our members is considered temporary the DSE regulation requiring full assessments doesn't automatically apply unless staff have specialised DSE needs such as disability and pregnancy.

Collective consultations on your wfh policies might want to look for the new guidance to be a minimum requirement, arguing that full DSE risk assessment for more groups of staff is the more effective way forward to reduce risks. As the situation and guidance evolves your Working From Home (WFH) policy might want to include short review periods.

Negotiation successes

UCU branches at Manchester and Liverpool John Moores Universities have been successful in getting redundancy Section 188 notices suspended during this period. If your branch is facing any S188 notices, then please contact RO immediately.

At Macclesfield college, staff working from home with caring responsibilities were reported to have been told to work evenings and weekends to make up any absences. After pressure from UCU branch officers and Regional Officials, the employer has now confirmed that members absent due to caring responsibilities will not suffer any detriment in terms of pay and that their absence will not count in absence triggers and/or any disciplinary or capabilities hearings.

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