

# Job Security and Pay.....

## The Gathering Storm

A storm is gathering that will, we are promised by the government, though not in these terms, unleash personal and social misery on a scale not seen for many generations. Having exhausted the nation's treasure to save the bankers from their greed and folly, we are instructed that there is no possibility of a long-term recovery of fiscal balances (the bankers, in their bond marketeers role, won't tolerate the slow debt repayment that, for example, settled the Second World War debts). So in a few weeks the first gusts will start blowing. Jobs will have to go. Brilliant, let's take purchasing power out of the economy and hope we never meet the third world farmers and local workers ruined in the process. Real salaries will have to keep falling, with the same results. Pension reform will become 'inevitable' and lifetimes of saving and planning put at risk. And, after decades in which we university workers have raised our productivity, made our 'efficiency savings', turned out more and more successful graduates and more and more high quality research, for lower and lower relative salaries, we are going to be re-educated in the new, sub-prime, 'facts of life'.

We 'unproductive' workers are, as ever, the target of particular scorn, as politicians play the divide and rule game as if some law of nature defined an educator as a luxury and an arms seller as a necessity. As we struggle individually to 'do more with less' without abandoning our 'core missions and values', it will be easy to become demoralised and fatalistic. The best way to retain some self-respect is to act collectively to resist as much as we can of the social and personal damage that the approaching storm threatens to bring.

As in past campaigns against cuts in jobs, pay and services, there will always be arguments about strategy and tactics, especially about

the relative advantages of industrial and public relations actions. But one unambiguous lesson from the past is that those who protest least get hit hardest. Politicians and managers with savings targets to meet look for the line of least resistance – so it makes no sense to be standing on that line looking the other way and whistling a hopeful tune!

**Ironically, we are fortunate that this man-made crisis is so general: we have the chance to act collectively on an unprecedented scale. SUCU has already supported and sent spokespeople to protests in the city organised by the Trades Council.** There will be further opportunities to make your voice heard against job and service cuts, and to take a stance in any forthcoming UCU ballots.

UCU nationally and locally is supporting the Right To Work protest on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. For details see <http://sites.google.com/site/righttoworkconference/home> and for local travel arrangements (SUCU is supporting members who go) contact the Branch Office.

UCU and NUS (National Union of Students) are jointly organising a national demo, 'Fund Our Future: Stop Education Cuts' on November 10<sup>th</sup>. For details see <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4779>

**Let's not be the mugs standing on the line of least resistance!**



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# Unacceptable Behaviour at Work

You will remember SUCU encouraged members to take part in a piece of research undertaken by the Institute of Work Psychology, Management School and Department of Psychology, funded by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). The teams' final report has now been published and the research team has given us a feedback report on returns received from UCU members at this university. The full report and recommendations can be found at SUCU webpage at ([add webpage](#))

The objectives of the research were to understand the prevalence of unacceptable behaviour at work and then to identify practical strategies to reduce the frequency and risks of unacceptable behaviour at work.

The report findings show that although there are fewer reports of SUCU members experiencing unacceptable behaviour than in other organisations in the IOSH dataset, SUCU members do report experiencing incidents from both *insider* (that is from staff/students

within the institution) and *outsider* (external contacts).

Whilst recognising difficulty in influencing behaviour of *outsiders*, when you look at the full report you will see the recommendations concentrate on ensuring staff have reasonable workloads; are accorded appropriate respect in working relationships; the importance of providing clear communication to students and staff of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour at work together with the existing organisational policies and training available and that this is reviewed regularly to ensure it is relevant and purposeful.

As Personal Caseworkers we understand the impact that unacceptable behaviour at work can have on individuals and groups of workers and SUCU Committee members will be taking up the issues raised by these.

## The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the most far reaching and comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation for many years. In its initial stage of implementation, from October 2010, it will extend the scope of indirect discrimination to cover disability and gender assignment, extend the powers of Employment tribunals, introduce a more claimant friendly concept of discrimination arising from disability and dual discrimination. The Act will also make unlawful pre-employment health questionnaires and gagging clauses preventing employees from discussing pay with colleagues.

UCU remains concerned about aspects of the Act including significant changes in the steps public sector bodies must take in order to show they are meeting the terms of the general duty. UCU will be responding to the next stage of consultation on the Public Sector Equality Duty. The closing date is 10 November 2010. For a comprehensive review of the proposals read the online UCU Equality News - <http://www.ucu.org.uk> UCU responses to the consultation is being co-ordinate by the new Head of Equality- Helen Carr.

## Default Retirement Age ( DRA)

Branch members who have expressed concern over the default retirement age which Human Resources adhere to, will be aware that the government is finally going to scrap the Default retirement age in 2011. This will end a currently legal form of discrimination the grounds of age. We welcome this move and reaffirm UCUs support of the TUC position that everyone should have the right to retire with dignity and a decent pension.

Age UK research shows that an estimated 100.00 workers were forced to retire in 2009. This has caused harm to those who wish to work beyond retirement age, both financially and in terms of life choices. From October 2011 workers aged 65 and over will have the same job security as younger workers for the first time. Getting rid of the DRA will also help change views of the retirement process, encouraging employers and workers to be more positive about the contribution people can make in their late 50s and 60s if they choose this option. For further information contact UCUs Seth Atkin - [satkin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:satkin@ucu.org.uk)

## Women Members' Annual Conference

Friday 26 November 2010

The annual women members' conference will be held on Friday 26 November 2010 from 10.00-4.30 at UCU head office, Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH. The conference is open to all UCU women members and is free of charge (reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed). The theme of the conference is "*Women united in action and education*" and our keynote speaker is Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary of the TUC.



TO REGISTER VISIT: PLEASE E-MAIL: [cnielsen@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cnielsen@ucu.org.uk)



# Threat to USS grows



At a meeting in July our pensions were put under threat following an unprecedented move whereby the Chair of the trustees of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) used his casting vote to force through employers' proposals to 'reform' the pension scheme into a two-tier system of benefits. The employers' agenda will mean immediately:

- lower annual pension increases
- an increase in the normal pension age
- the abandonment of a final salary scheme for new entrants, creating a two-tier pension scheme with future pressure on existing members
- existing members who are at risk of redundancy or on fixed term contracts who have a break of 6 months or more in service will not be able to rejoin a final salary scheme
- an increase in contributions for employees with no progressive proposals to make high earners pay more
- Removal of the right for individuals made redundant to take their pension unreduced.

UCU is running a referendum and encouraging all members of USS to take part and to vote to reject the employers' proposals.

The branch is working with activists and Regional Officials to raise the profile of this campaign and will be holding open meetings for all USS members during the autumn to encourage everyone who is a member to take part in the referendum.

Further information will be circulated when it becomes available. In the meantime keep checking UCU website at: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/> and click on the defend your USS button.

Join us as we march on the streets of central London to fight against the looming, savage education cuts.

NUS and UCU are jointly organising a national demonstration – 'Fund Our Future: Stop Education Cuts' Wednesday 10 November 2010

[www.demo2010.org](http://www.demo2010.org)



# Membership:

This year has seen a number of attempts by employers to use the courts to challenge trade union ballots on legal technicalities.

These challenges focus, among other things, on the accuracy of union membership records. The Sheffield UCU branch has been working with UCU's central membership section over the summer to ensure that our membership records are accurate and up-to-date.

If any of your details have changed in the past year and UCU may not be aware of them, please go to: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2197> and enter the new information.

You may be prompted for your membership number, so please have that available.

If prompted also for the Sheffield branch number, please enter NE150 in the relevant field. Up-to-date membership details help to stop anti-democratic employer behaviour.



## WEBSITE WONDERS- WHAT'S NEW:

Avid followers of the SUCU website, which we know there are many will have noticed many new and wonderful things emerging on the SUCU website over the last few months. We aim to keep you updated with news and events coming from the wonderful world that is UCU HQ. As well as this we have recently added a new helpful FAQ's section to answer many of the obvious questions people have when thinking of joining. Please use this as you discuss the benefits of joining the union with many of your colleagues. Additions and resources have also been added to help our members through the minefield that is temporary contracts. Kaye Carl has worked tirelessly to create knowledge and resources for all those wishing to query their contractually status. We hope over the next few months to continue to add to the site and hope through this medium we can serve our members and keep them updated with UCU news.

### Local Subscription rate amended

The General Meeting held on 8 February agreed to increase local subs to enable the branch to provide appropriate admin support;

From 1 September 2010 to £1.50 per month  
From 1 September 2011 to £2.00 per month  
Future increases will be in line with percentage increase on national subscriptions on the uppermost payment band.

There will be no local sub payable by any member who earns less than £10,000 a year.

Please remember it is important to ensure you are paying the correct level of subscription. Failure to do this could limit your access to UCU legal advice and protection. You will find more information about subscriptions at: <http://www.ucu.group.shef.ac.uk/>. Click on the link to 'join UCU'

UCU offers a range of membership benefits and services in addition to employment, education and campaigning support. By making full use of these benefits, offered through recognised suppliers, you could save the cost of your subscription many times over. Look at: [www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2196](http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2196)

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2010-11

AGM: 21st October Fulwood Room 1-2pm

#### General Meetings:

18th November Fulwood Room 1-2pm

17th February Fulwood Room 1-2pm

24th March Fulwood Room 1-2pm

28th April Fulwood Room 1-2pm

6th June Fulwood Room 1-2pm

#### Reps Meetings:

4th November Rivelin Room 1-2pm

10th March Abbeydale Room 1-2pm

12th May Fulwood Room 1-2pm