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ucunewcastlecollegebranch

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December 2018

Newcastle College Branch Newsletter

Happy Holidays



Making It Better

Our branch secretary wrote *Making It Better* in November which is available here <https://fromacornsandoaks.com/2018/11/07/making-it-better/> - in which she puts forward the branch's position that all roles within Newcastle and Newcastle 6th Form Colleges are of equal value. Having written to party leaders and local MPs, positive responses were received from Jeremy Corbyn, Caroline Lucas, Chi Onwurah and Catherine McKinnell – Chi forwarded the branch's suggestions to Labour's policy forum with the intent on including suggestions in the party's manifesto ... *Let's watch this space in anticipation*



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16 Days in 16 Ways

"TOGETHER WE CAN END GBV IN EDUCATION"

This campaign to end gender-based violence in our workplace, in education, ran from 25 November International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women until 10 December International Human Rights Day.

Our branch organised a highly successful event on Friday 30 November. Our branch secretary gave a presentation on the 16 specific actions our branch has committed, alongside partnership working in the College. We had a number of guest speakers:



Chi Onwurah MP talked about parliamentary action and what she can do to support her constituents. *"Great to see solid actions being put into place by a strong, trade union branch, with lots of strong women".*

Dame Vera Baird QC – Police Commissioner for Northumbria provided an overview of the issue, an appraisal of the work of the police in supporting this issue and personal insight from personal casework as a barrister, highlighting changes in attitudes over time. *"Super people, super event".*

Joyce McAndrew – UCU Regional Support Official combined an historical viewpoint against an academic perspective, with grounded suggestion for resourcing the issue. *"Uplifting and dynamic – I was really pleased to be a part of this".*

Clare Williams – UNISON Regional Secretary – raised political concerns and demonstrated the violence caused to women through political and workplace decisions and actions, pinpointing the role of trade unions in breaking cycles of gender-based harm. *"Really good event".*

Councillor Ann Schofield provided an international perspective on the subject with horrific accounts of conditions and treatment of Syrian women who were subjected to sexual violence as a political weapon. *"Brilliant."*



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UCU's First National Day of Action on Disability Discrimination in the Workplace 21 November 2018

The Disabled Members Standing Committee are pushing UCU's national agenda to ensure organisations follow a social model of disability in managing staff in the workplace – and our branch supports this.





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Our Busy, Busy UCU BRANCH

... in the community

North of Tyne Devolution

This is possibly the most important political change to impact Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland with or without Brexit, with the amalgamation of a new, huge authority. The new North of Tyne Mayor will be unlike a traditional town mayor in that they will have lots of 'soft' powers and be responsible for generating business and building the local economy.

The mayoral election process has been put on hold following national intervention to invite women candidates to self-nominate because no women had previously come forward.

In her national executive role, Anya was invited to join a reflective conversation with socialist feminist women from across what will be the new, devolved authority and the only candidate thus far (unless a woman steps up) who is standing on a manifesto of working with trade unions. Bite size films of the conversation will be available online from December.

The Rohingya



In October the branch agreed to support local charitable organisation North East Solidarity With Rohingya and in November Anya took forward a motion to UCU's National Executive to support the human rights of The Rohingya People. The motion was passed unanimously:

- UCU supports the right of the Rohingya to a legal status
- UCU supports the United Nations' efforts to return the Rohingya to their homeland in freedom and safety
- UCU supports the right of the Rohingya to live in freedom from persecution and violence
- UCU is providing campaign materials and is encouraging branches to take part in local actions
- UCU amplifies international voices in campaigning for an end to the systematic use of sexual violence as a political weapon
- And our general secretary, Sally Hunt, is writing to the United Nations in solidarity and in support of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

In December Anya spoke at a rally at Newcastle's Civic Centre '*Stand Up For Human Rights – Stand Up For Rohingya*' and talked about the role of trade unions in upholding human rights and the work UCU is doing.



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Our Busy, Busy UCU BRANCH

... in the College

Membership

Over 50 members have been recruited since 1 September this year. Our branch remains the largest FE branch in the Northern Region.



Period Poverty

In October our branch launched the first Period Poverty campaign in a college in England – and it has been a great success so far. We have received donations from colleagues, HR and Marks and Spencers. Thank you to everyone involved, especially the Pastoral Team for implementing support.



Domestic Violence

The branch organised with the local Trade Union Education Centre to deliver awareness training to be attended by reps, mentors, senior disability advisors and counsellors.

Post-Ofsted Plan

Teaching observations have begun and the first wave of teachers on plans, on informal capability, has started lapping at the UCU branch office door ... DO NOT DELAY ... If you are unsure, if you have questions, if you are put on a plan ... contact your local rep as soon as possible so that we can advise and support you.

Casework

REMEMBER – we can only advise BEFORE you make a formal complaint. Any concerns, any questions, queries, issues, niggles (no question is a stupid question) – please meet with your local rep BEFORE submitting anything so the branch can best advise you and to ensure you receive appropriate support.

Mental Health First Aid

Has been an issue pushed by our UCU branch since 2015 when we first convinced HR to organise Mental Health First Aid Training which was provided to those colleagues, namely HR and trade union reps, who were in fact, already providing a mental health first aid function. There are distinct differences in Mental Health – as in diagnoses with a medical origin and those work-related and stress-induced illnesses which our branch believes that our trade union plays a significant role in supporting, in advising colleagues and working with local managers to keep our members well, to keep them in work, as well as in promoting positive wellbeing.

Workload

IS THE BIGGEST ISSUE AFFECTING MEMBERS IN OUR BRANCH. In November Adam a national H&S officer running UCU's national workload campaign *It's Your Time* joined the branch for a constructive discussion over supper. Workload IS a H&S issue. Adam will be back in January to support colleagues and the branch.





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Holocaust Memorial Day 2019

"Torn From Home"



UCU Event for Staff, Students and Visitors

Friday 25 January 10-12 Parsons 807

A simple lunch of bread and soup will be provided

Hosted by: Kerry Lemon UCU Vice Chair and Anya Cook UCU Branch Secretary and NEC



Yvonne Ridley is a journalist and author who was captured by The Taliban in September 2001 when on an undercover assignment for The Sunday Express immediately after 9/11 and was released after promising her captors that she would read the Koran. Yvonne is an active campaigner for peace, tolerance, social cohesion and women's rights.



Councillor Habib Rahman is Newcastle's first non-white cabinet member and is tasked with challenging discrimination and hate crime within his 'Communities' portfolio. Born in Bangladesh, Habib has been active in a local community project to support the Rohingya people who have taken refuge including the building of health and maternity clinics.



Beth Farhat Northern TUC Secretary represents working people of the North East. The Trades Union Congress has a long and proud history of challenging racism and discrimination.



Shumel Rahman is an education specialist, paramedic, mental health professional and joint chair of Newcastle Unites, Newcastle's leading anti-racist organisation which campaigns against fascism and all types of discrimination.



Liz Twist MP for Blaydon and is committed to building stronger communities.

Also: Joyce McAndrew UCU Regional Support Officer, Cameron Hartley Students' Union Welfare Officer, Lesley Hillary Newcastle Diocese Interfaith and Ethnic Relations Advisor

Holocaust Memorial Day is observed annually on January 27. It is the day every year that we commemorate the memories of the millions who were murdered in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 is 'Torn from home' - how the enforced loss of a safe place to call 'home' is part of the trauma faced by anyone experiencing persecution and genocide.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2019:
Torn from home

"When you are in hiding and when you are arrested, you live in fear and confront death every day. How could I be a child again?"

Renee Bornstein
Survivor of the Holocaust

