

## **Motion on Disability Policies in HE and FE**

Congress notes:

- Many Welsh HE and FE institutions do not have an existing Disability Policy and, consequently, lack a consistent framing or approach relating to disability.
- Discrimination due to disability is a problem that affects many HE and FE staff – for example, 58.5% of respondents to a Cardiff UCU EDI survey in 2023 who disclosed a disability or long-term illness reported having felt discriminated against while working at Cardiff University.<sup>i</sup>

Congress believes:

- Disabled staff deserve to be able to work with dignity
- The exclusion of disabled staff due to the lack of progressive policies and practice is damaging to all staff and students
- HE and FE institutions must do more to support disabled workers

Congress calls on UCU Cymru to campaign with Welsh government and directly with HE and FE institutions for these to develop a dedicated policy to support disabled workers, in collaboration with the trade unions and disabled staff networks. This policy must be based on the **social model of disability** and should include elements on:

- [Disability leave and disability-related absences](#)
- Hidden/invisible disabilities
- A reasonable adjustments policy, with clear procedures and the responsibility on the employer to implement these in a timely manner.<sup>ii</sup>
- A dedicated and trained Disability Officer as a point of contact to discuss adjustments and proactively address day-to-day barriers and HR issues.

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<sup>i</sup> Open-ended answers reflected that people affected by disability feel they are highly discriminated against compared to abled colleagues. Behaviours listed spanned a range of situations that included micro-aggressions to being actively pushed out of their jobs by their head of schools. These and other discriminatory behaviours (e.g. reasonable adjustments as above) were reported to have real consequences for affected people, mainly in terms of mental health, and sometimes leading to long-term sick leave.

<sup>ii</sup> Reasonable adjustments in organisations – guidance for best practice. September 2021. The Law Society of England and Wales and its Lawyers with Disabilities Division; and ‘Legally Disabled?’ team, Cardiff University Business School.