

This review reports on many of the achievements and activities undertaken in the past year, referencing our Programme of Work published in September 2018. While 2018-19 delivered a number of unforeseeable developments we sustained our focus on the objectives identified at the start of the year. This review identifies selective outcomes and outputs from our work over the year and some areas where work continues.

An interactive version of this review, with links to key resources, is available in the Membership section of our website.

1. Pay matters

We said we would: Seek an acceptable and timely implementation of the 2018-19 collective pay round whilst managing pay and other issues being drawn together as matters of dispute and ballots for industrial action being called in autumn 2018. Run the processes for a 2019-20 collective pay round. Support HEIs on benchmarking, communications and accountability regarding senior and Vice-Chancellor pay.

What we have delivered:

- Timely conclusion of the 2018-19 collective pay negotiations including dispute meetings enabling the employers' final offer to be implemented in August/September 2018.
- Eventual agreement by the unions to conclusion of the round (in February 2019), with no industrial action taken.
- Conducted an extensive and modified consultation process to set a realistic focus for 2019-20 negotiations and reach a widely supported final offer (in April 2019), providing support and communications throughout.
- Enabled extensive dialogue with trade unions through well-run JNCHES meetings, including Autumn and Strategic Issues meetings and three negotiating meetings.
- Provided access to high quality pay benchmarking data for members, seeing increased participation in the UCEA/XpertHR pay club survey, more bespoke pay benchmarking and sustained take-up of our Senior Staff Remuneration Survey; the latter incorporating a new Executive Pay briefing.
- Sought and provided information on financial reporting requirements (in England) through extensive engagement with OfS and liaison with other sector bodies.
- Provided members with new benchmarking information to assist with their pay ratio examination.
- Ensured authoritative data on HE pay and labour market issues for members and wider stakeholders through comprehensive briefings, updated Pay in HE data analysis, annual contextual material for negotiations on economic, labour market and pay trends, data on London allowances and analysis of gender pay gaps.
- Updated Living Wage Toolkit materials for members and added new case studies.

2. Employee relations

We said we would: Maintain trade union dialogue against a backdrop of disputes on both pay and pensions and ambitions of some trade unions to exceed the remit of JNCHES. Take forward sector-level work that addresses areas of trade union interest (casual employment, gender pay gap (GPG), mental health) – offering partnership working to the trade unions. Facilitate a UCEA Advisory Group to steer thinking on bargaining approaches.

What we have delivered:

- Completed a GPG action planning survey and produced the report of findings, launched in January 2019 at events in England and Scotland and profiled at the May 2019 UHR Conference.
- Organised a well-received conference on approaches to the employment of hourly-paid and casual staff which featured an initial analysis of new HESA data, which will be complemented by further analysis in the 2019 HE Workforce Report.
- Convened formal HESH Forum meetings with the unions and HSE and launched a joint Stress and Mental Wellbeing Resources Pack for HEIs.
- Held informal meetings with the unions to discuss common interest issues, including pay, pensions, Brexit and principles for future joint working projects.
- Worked with the trade unions to make the case to OfS and HESA regarding the importance of retaining the collection of comprehensive workforce data.
- Provided updated support materials, technical and legal guidance on managing industrial action, reflecting legal and other developments.
- Supported UUK in their dialogue and representation on USS through regular meetings between the UUK and UCEA pensions and communications teams and at executive level.
- Continued thinking and discussion with members about the future of bargaining through the Bargaining Futures Advisory Group, with the Board at its 'awayday' and held discussions with wider audiences.
- Worked with Universities Scotland conveying the HEI-focused activities on Scottish employment priorities and supported the dialogue with Scottish Government and with the trade unions.

3. Broad organisational development and workforce agendas

We said we would: Provide support on changing academic roles and career pathways and assist HE employers in examining performance, reward and contractual flexibility. Enhance HR insight and impact through working with data and to address issues around the casual workforce. Progress work addressing concerns around staff mental health and stress.

What we have delivered:

- A suite of well-received development events held around reward, performance and engagement, including workshops on pay progression, total reward, equal pay reviews, National Minimum Wage and GPG auditing.
- Profiled the new and jointly developed Workforce Explorer analytics tool at the 2019 UHR conference.
- HE Workforce insights for members through data reports covering recruitment, retention, apprenticeships and international staffing.
- Launched the 2019 HE Workforce Survey, having worked with a steering group drawn from UKRI, Advance HE, UHR and the UCL's IoE; there will be a two-part report, in July and September 2019.
- Commenced a new benchmarking service for the HE sector employee engagement indicator, with FAQs for members on the indicator and technical guidance.
- Joint work with the NHS/DHSC to develop an agreed reward strategy for clinical academics relating to new local performance pay (from 2021).
- Produced guidance for HEIs with clinical academics on new contractual and pay arrangements and continued work with NHS Employers, Department of Health and Social Care and the Medical Schools Council to improve communications.
- Influenced national debate and discussion with NHS Employers regarding the funding and inclusion of clinical academics in local Clinical Excellence Awards (CEA) schemes.
- Responded to the consultation on the new NHS workforce implementation plan 2019, to highlight employment and reward issues particular to clinical academic staff.
- Organised a major international conference, The HE workforce: exploring global perspectives, enabling around 100 delegates from around the world to come together and exchange learning on academic employment and HE policy issues. Overseas delegates additionally took part in study tours hosted by two UK HEIs.
- **Additionally**, UCEA contributed to and facilitated HEI input on the revised Concordat to support the career development of researchers and has also been contributing to UUK's work on sexual misconduct.

4. Legal and policy developments

We said we would: Assist employers in responding to the distinctive employment agendas and emerging issues in the different UK jurisdictions and offer pay gap support on gender data reporting and actions and in preparation for ethnicity pay reporting and examination of intersectional data. Support on the Taylor Review outcomes and expected changes in legislation. Support employers on immigration rule changes, with the EU exit finally coming into focus.

What we have delivered:

- Delivered support and benchmarking tools for members for the 2019 GPG reporting round, including communications and a revised suite of infographics.
- Examined the ethnicity pay gap, in HE and beyond documented in a report, Caught at the Crossroads: An intersectional approach to gender and ethnicity pay gaps in Higher Education which got significant national media coverage and wider interest from beyond the sector.
- Contributed for the sector to government-level consultations around future ethnicity pay reporting.
- Provided timely insights and guidance on issues for HE employers arising from National Minimum Wage and holiday pay rulings.
- Collaborated with UUK and through other employer bodies to lobby on immigration and skills challenges and respond to the Migration Advisory Committee.
- Successfully reversed planned increases to immigration salary thresholds in Tier 2, following lobbying work with CBI, UUK and the Russell Group.
- Provided HEIs with analysis of the first HE sector TU facility time reports, enabling them to assess their arrangements.

5. Challenges in the pensions landscape

We said we would: Support HE employer options and strategies across the public sector schemes and continue to work with UUK on USS funding and benefits issues, in light of further employer consultations and the Joint Expert Panel report. Keep alert to pensions policy developments and legal changes and contribute, with UUK, GuildHE and other sector bodies, to an evolving sector-level pensions strategy.

What we have delivered:

- Represented HE on the scheme boards (TPS, LGPS, NHSPS), produced materials for members on employer approaches in LGPS and made the LGPS SAB Tier 3 report available and pushed for its recommendations to be prioritised.
- Commissioned Aon to assist in providing a detailed, evidence-based response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's consultation on HE participation in the LGPS (E&W), including HE case studies.
- Supported members in current and next valuation cycles for TPS and LGPS, providing stakeholder and member briefings and encouraged members and parliamentarians to raise the issues with ministers.
- Discussed future approaches to participation with Heads of Institution / senior nominees from institutions providing public sector schemes.
- Provided direct support to UUK colleagues and in the EPF USS Group in a year of further extensive work on USS, including engaging at USS Joint Negotiating Committee and Funding and Benefits Sub-Committee meetings.
- Published new research for members examining current policies and approaches to cash supplements in a new survey report on HEIs' pension tax policies.
- Provided new resources to support members on LGPS and taking forward issues arising from alternative HE corporate forms.
- **Additionally**, provided extensive briefings and lobbying, and worked with other sector bodies, to make the case in Westminster and the devolved administrations for HEIs to be supported over the unexpected announcements of significant increases in employer contributions to TPS and NHSPS.

