



# Workplace Wellbeing Newsletter - October

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Welcome



Welcome to our October newsletter. Septemberr seems to have flown by... maybe because we had so much fun during the Steps Challenge! This year, we had around 400 participants and just under 100 teams.

This year's fun facts:

- We had a team mapping their steps on to the Moon trying to move around between Apollo moon landing sites.
- We had hilarious and sometimes very similar team names, and Die Lard was competing with Die Lards for a higher place on the leader board.
- Not Fast Just Furious and Cirque de Sore Legs were voted the most creative team names.

Thank you everyone who joined in and made an effort to run local mini-challenges in your department. If you have a story to tell about how the challenge went for you, please email it to me ([k.midltone@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:k.midltone@ucl.ac.uk)).

Kristina

## Flu vaccine vouchers

This year, the demand for flu vaccines is particularly high. To support our community, we secured a number of vaccines for UCL staff. We encourage you to book your vouchers and schedule an appointment as early as possible. At the moment, from mine and Karen's experience, appointments were available at our local Boots stores with only a few days wait. By using a link that is sent with a voucher that you can request via our flu vaccine voucher webpage<sup>1</sup>, you will be able to gain access to the corporate vaccine scheme and to appointments that are not available to the general public.

High demand for flu vaccines comes following research from Public Health England<sup>2</sup> highlighting the risks from co-infection with flu and Covid-19.

Professor Graham Hart, Dean of the Faculty of Population Health Sciences, said: *"It is particularly important this year that people are vaccinated against flu. This is not only for our own protection, and the health of our families and friends, but because we all want to help reduce the burden of respiratory diseases on the NHS. Preventing flu will actually help the national Covid-19 effort"*

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/flu-vaccines>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-numbers-offered-flu-vaccine-as-those-with-flu-and-covid-19-more-likely-to-die>



1 - Photo by Kelly Sikkema<sup>3</sup> on Unsplash<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>[https://unsplash.com/@kellysikkema?utm\\_source=unsplash&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_content=creditCopyText](https://unsplash.com/@kellysikkema?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText)

<sup>4</sup>[https://unsplash.com/s/photos/flu?utm\\_source=unsplash&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_content=creditCopyText](https://unsplash.com/s/photos/flu?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText)

## The sunflower lanyard scheme launches at UCL



The Invisible Disabilities Sunflower lanyard scheme is an initiative designed to act as a discreet sign that somebody has an invisible disability and requires additional assistance while out in public. Invisible disabilities do not have physical signs and include learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. They can also include asthma, COPD, and other lung conditions as well as chronic illnesses such as renal failure, diabetes, and Crohn's disease when those diseases significantly impact day-to-day life. These conditions affect each person in different ways and can be painful, exhausting, and isolating. Without visible evidence, it is frequently difficult for others to recognise or acknowledge the challenges faced and consequently, sympathy and understanding can often be in short supply.

### **So how can you support the scheme as we launch it?**

- If you see someone wearing a sunflower lanyard, please be patient and give them a little more time. They may need assistance but that assistance needs to be directed by the

sunflower lanyard wearer if they want assistance. Offer assistance but do not feel put off if the person does not take you up on the offer.

- Become a sunflower ally and add the sunflower supporter's image to your email footer.
- Encourage teams to show the sunflower lanyard YouTube clip about the scheme at teams meetings.

If you want to obtain a sunflower lanyard, please note there is no qualifying list of invisible disabilities. If you have an invisible disability and feel that you would benefit from wearing a Sunflower product, please do. The Invisible Disabilities Sunflower does not entitle you to anything other than recognising that you have an invisible disability and that you may need some assistance, help, or a little more time. Details on where to obtain a lanyard are on the Estates sunflower lanyard page<sup>5</sup>. There is an information sheet about the scheme to be read ahead of collection to ensure all those taking a lanyard understand what they are receiving (if you cannot read the text it can be read to you).

Whilst the national scheme calls itself the 'hidden disabilities sunflower lanyard scheme', UCL is using the term invisible disabilities. The term hidden for can imply that disabilities are something that carry shame and have a history tied up in individuals with disabilities being sent to live in specialist care out of sight of the population they were part of. UCL are proud of the diverse make-up of our university and would not want anyone to feel they should hide who they are.

## Stop smoking this October

Stopping smoking is one of the best things you can ever do for your health. When you stop, you give your lungs the chance to repair and you'll be able to breathe easier. There are lots of other benefits too - and they start almost immediately.

**Stoptober** is the national campaign that encourages the nation's smokers to make a quit attempt for the month of October and beyond. This is based on the evidence that if a smoker can quit for 28 days, they are five times more likely to quit for good.

To help you quit smoking, NHS Better Health<sup>6</sup> offer a range of support, including a free personal quit plan, an app to help you quit, information about stop smoking aids and local Stop Smoking service.

UCL have partnered up with the Camden-based smoking cessation service Breathe to offer support to UCL employees and students. Breathe can offer you advice, sessions with a trained stop smoking advisor, or specialist support for smokers with complex needs. More information about this service can be found on our website.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup><https://www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/bloomsbury-campus/accessibility/sunflower-lanyard-invisible-disability-scheme>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/health-wellbeing/wellbeingucl/healthy-lifestyles/smoking-and-tobacco-use>



## Backcare awareness



This week is a backcare week, and as many of us work from home, and had to transform our home space into a workstation, we need to be particularly mindful of working safely to protect our backs.

You can find a Display Screen Equipment Assessment that you can complete at home on UCL Safety Services website<sup>8</sup>.

To prevent back pain, make sure that you take frequent breaks to move and stretch. You can download a Workrave software to remind you to take a break from your keyboard.

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<sup>8</sup><https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/policies/2020/jul/display-screen-equipment-dse-assessmen>

## Events and webinars



### Understanding Neurodivergence Week

There is a series of training sessions for UCL staff and students on the topic of Neurodiversity. As this is taking place at the same time as the Dyslexia Awareness week this is a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness and understanding of the broader spectrum of non-visible disabilities. The Neurodiversity training week is a first for UCL and it is taking place online via Zoom. There will be captioning and British Sign Language interpretation.

Attendees can enrol for the training through Moodle using this link: <https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=23321>

### Facing the Future: what lessons have we learnt?

National Work Life Week (12 - 16 October) is an opportunity for both employers and employees to focus on wellbeing at work and work life balance. This panel discussion focuses on the realities of work life, the challenges we have faced, and lessons learnt during last 6 months. Book your place here.<sup>9</sup>

A panel discussion on:

- How UCL as an organisation is striving for a family-friendly and flexible working culture, particularly in a post Covid world
- Covid-19 has had an enormous impact on the number of parents and carers working flexibly. What lessons have we learnt?
- Going forward, how can this learning be used to better support UCL community, with and without caring responsibilities?

### Free LinkedIn Learning courses for Mental Health Awareness Day

These courses are all free to you anytime if you are a UCL member! But these are free to everybody until 18th October 2020 so do share the link below with friends and family.

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/paths/support-your-mental-health-during-challenging-times>

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<sup>9</sup><https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/facing-the-future-what-lessons-have-we-learnt-tickets-124112691401>

## Keep in touch



If you have any questions or would like to submit your content for next month's newsletter, please feel free to get in touch.

email: [ohw-wellbeing@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ohw-wellbeing@ucl.ac.uk)

Visit us on the web at [www.ucl.ac.uk/wellbeing](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/wellbeing)<sup>10</sup>

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram and tag us in your wellbeing posts: @UCL\_Wellbeing

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.ucl.ac.uk/wellbeing>