University and College Union

UCU Guidance Leaflet No. 2

Energy Management – What role for the UCU? (June, 2010)

This leaflet is one of a series designed to help UCU members engage with their institution on the 'green agenda'. This is an area that is becoming increasingly important and we urge you to make sure that the views and interests of staff are addressed.

Why is energy management a trade union issue?

Energy costs are rising and it is an increasingly a larger component of the budget. There are legal duties to maximise energy efficiency but the methods used are not always popular with staff. UCU reps need to ensure that efficiency gains are not made at the expense of people's jobs and other conditions of employment. For example, employers can reduce energy bills by closing course programmes and selling off buildings. The knock-on effect could be job loss or more crowded working conditions. Branches need to ensure that energy management is not used as an excuse to justify job cuts. Instead unions will want to see how energy savings can ease the pressure on other costs.

There are a number of legal and sector policies that provide a framework for UCU branches to engage with their FHE institution:

- Climate Change Act 2008
- Climate Change Levy
- Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme
- Display Energy Certificates
- HE sector
- FE sector

Climate Change Act 2008

A legally binding target of at least an 80 percent cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Also a reduction in emissions of at least 34 percent by 2020. Both these targets are against a 1990 baseline. The FHE sector is under an obligation to support the achievement of these targets.

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/legislation/cc_act_08/cc_act_08.aspx

Climate Change Levy

- The Climate Change Levy is a tax on energy delivered to non-domestic users – ultimately paid for by institutions through electricity bills
- The Levy's aim is to provide an incentive to increase energy efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions

Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme

The CRC came into effect in April, 2010. It is a legally binding scheme to save at least 4 million tonnes of CO2 emissions per year by 2020, as part of the UK's response to the challenge of climate change.

Who is covered? – Large energy users in the public and private sector using at least 6,000 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity a year. At current prices, this is approx an annual energy bill of £500.000 plus. It is also equivalent to approx 3,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

Most universities and some large colleges will qualify for the full duties of the CRC. Those that don't are still likely to have the duty to report their emissions. These must be reported to the Environment Agency by September 2010. Ask your estates / environment management whether your institution is covered by the full requirements of the CRC.

Every CRC participant must calculate their energy use over the first 'footprint year' from April 2010 to March, 2011. This must be put into a 'footprint report' identifying their total emissions. The report must be submitted to the Environment Agency by July, 2011. Allowances must then be purchased for each ton of CO2 they expect to emit. From April 2011 employers will pay £12 for every tonne of carbon emitted.

The government will publish a league table of all CRC participants annually. An organisation's position in the table depends on various factors, including percentage change in annual CO2 emissions from building energy use, and early action metrics. In the first year the league table is based on an early action metric only covering:

- Installing automatic meter readers to measure its supplies; and
- Attaining the Carbon Trust Standard (or recognised equivalent accreditation) which recognises organisations that are 'measuring, managing and reducing carbon use'

The position in the league table is one of the factors determining 'recycling payments'. The recycling payments are based on an organisation's proportion of total CRC emissions in the first year of the scheme, adjusted by a bonus or penalty payment based on the organisation's position in the league table.

Footprint emissions are calculated by adding up all energy supplied from electricity, gas, coal, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), diesel etc, using energy bills, meter readings or fuel delivery invoices. UCU should ask for an early meeting on how management intends to collect this information.

Consulting unions and employees

Under CRC employers are encouraged to consult with staff. Consider how you will press for the implementation of the official guidance below on union involvement:

Participants may tick the employee engagement box if they meet one of the following criteria:

☐ *Energy management training is offered to the majority of employees in your organisation*

☐ *Your organisation has active employee working groups on energy management, which report to senior management, and take forward initiatives to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions.*

☐ *Where an independent trade union is recognised for collective bargaining purposes, energy management issues are considered in these joint discussions and members actively take forward initiatives to reduce the organisations carbon emissions.*

Participants who choose to provide responses to the voluntary information tick boxes must keep records to support their responses in their evidence pack.

For more information about the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme go to:

- EAUC Insight guide http://www.eauc.org.uk/file_uploads/insight_4.pdf
- TUC Guide www.tuc.org.uk/extras/crc-ees.pdf
- The CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme User Guide provides a detailed step-by-step guide to all aspects of the scheme, available at: http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/lc_uk/crc/user_guidance
- The Environment Agency helpdesk - CRCHELP@environment-agency.gov.uk%20
- The Carbon Trust has produced a useful publication *Managing the CRC as a Business Opportunity*, which can be downloaded at http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/Publications/pages/publicationdetail.aspx?id=CTL081
- For other union guides to the CRC, e.g. PCS resources, go to: http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/resources/green_workplaces/greening-the-government-estate/CRC.cfm

Display Energy Certificates

UCU can use the information required under this legal duty to get an initial assessment of performance. The requirement for Display Energy Certificates came into effect on 1 October 2008.

Display Energy Certificates are only required for buildings with a total useful floor area over 1,000m 2 that are occupied by a public authority and institution providing a public service to a large number of persons and therefore visited by those persons. Most university and college buildings will be covered by the requirement

The Operational Rating is a numerical indicator of the actual annual carbon dioxide emissions from the building. This rating is shown on a scale from A to G, where A is the lowest (best) and G is the highest (worst).

Also shown are the Operational Ratings for the last two years; this provides

information on whether the energy performance of the building is improving or not.

The Advisory Report will contain recommendations for improving the energy performance of the building. A DEC is valid for 12 months and needs to be updated annually. The accompanying Advisory Report is valid for 7 years.

For further information:
http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/theenvironment/energyperformance/publiccommercialbuildings/displayenergycertificates/

Higher Education

In 2006 the Higher Education sector in the UK emitted 3.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. UCU reps can use official policy to promote consultation. The Higher Education Funding Council for England published a Strategy and Guidance to support the sector in reducing its emissions:
'Carbon reduction target and strategy for higher education in England 2010'

These actions aim to ensure that the HE sector meets, and if possible exceeds, the Government's general target to reduce carbon emissions by 80 per cent against 1990 levels by 2050.

Para 50 refers to 'Partnership working' and states '*carbon management plans could be developed in consultation with staff and students, and include ways of working with them to achieve reductions'.*

Para 78 refers to the UCU Climate Solidarity project and states '*In the HE sector the project aims to set up 'climate action groups' of university staff in the workplace to work together on a chosen carbon reduction theme*.'
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_01/10_01a.pdf

Further Education

FE does not have an equivalent carbon reduction strategy to the one developed in HE. The Learning and Skills Council produced a Sustainable Development Action Plan in 2008-9. It refers to a requirement to *'establish realistic long-term targets related to SD and reducing the carbon footprint for the whole FE estate'*

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-sustainabledevelopmentactionplan200809-pl-sept2008-v1-0.pdf

The review of the LSC strategy for sustainable development 2005-10 refers to *'a dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders on sustainability not just one-way communication'.* This is not specific to union consultation on carbon management but can still be referenced in the absence of anything more specific.
http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/LSC_SD_Strategy_Review_Final.pdf

Assessing energy use

The Carbon Trust estimate that energy costs can usually be reduced by 10-20% through simple actions that produce quick returns. This can represent significant savings. Use the Carbon Trust free factsheet *'Assessing the energy use in your building':*
http://www.eauc.org.uk/sorted/files/ctl003.pdf

- Check if there is someone employed in an energy management role.
- Request information on energy bills. Ask for a breakdown of the information as appropriate, eg. By site, department etc.
- It may be useful to identify types of use, especially if there may be clear savings in relation to specific activities like computer use.

ICT and energy use

ICT has a surprisingly heavy environmental footprint. A typical European office PC and LCD monitor weighs around 20kg, contains over 27 different materials, and generates 66kg of waste and 1,096kg of CO2 during its lifetime (IVF 2007). ICT overall accounts for around 2% of global CO2 equivalent emissions (Gartner Consulting 2007), and around 3% of UK electricity consumption (MTP 2008). The SusteIT report calculated that ICT use in further and higher education will use over £116m of electricity in 2009, and generate over 500,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions (James and Hopkinson 2009).

Procuring the right ICT equipment and services can greatly reduce this footprint, through increased energy efficiency and in other ways. A useful report *Sustainable ICT procurement in HE* covering these issues can be found at:
http://www.eauc.org.uk/file_uploads/sustainable_ict_procurement_sept09_1.pdf

Involving staff

UCU is pressing for Climate Action Groups to be set up in all FHE institutions as the best way to ensure that staff views are taken into account. Staff will often be the best guide to improving energy efficiency at work. For further information on CAGs and guidance on Energy Use visit the Climate Solidarity website: www.climatesolidarity.org.uk

Energy inspections

UCU Green Reps should ask for facility time to participate in an energy inspection. This could be a joint exercise with management.

- For guidance refer to the Energy inspection checklist on the UCU site at:
  http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/d/d/UCU_energy_inspection_checklist.doc
- Prepare a report summarising the results.
- Involve staff before, during and after the inspection. Get their views on problem areas and possible solutions.
- Put energy efficiency on the agenda for a meeting with management

10:10 campaign

Find out if your institution has joined. A number of universities and colleges have signed up to reduce their energy use by 10% by the end of 2010. The end date can be moved beyond 2010 as the principle is to take urgent action to make a reduction in a 1 year period. If there has been a sign up use the opportunity to get an update on progress. If there hasn't then the branch should make a formal request pointing out that all government departments were signed up in May, 2010.

Community energy initiatives

Your institution may be in a locality where other organisations have adopted energy policies that could be applied. These could be:

- Other education institutions
- Local authority
- Campaign organisations like Friends of the Earth and Transition Towns

There may be opportunities to liaise around issues like:

- Professional support for audits and implementing particular measures like building insulation
- Converting to Green energy suppliers
- Renewable energy projects

Other Resources

1. EAUC Guidance
   http://www.eauc.org.uk/sorted/carbon_reduction_targets

2. Carbon Trust publications can be ordered free of charge. They include fact sheets and sector reviews. For example, *Further and higher education: training colleges and universities to be energy efficient'*
   www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy