

SPRING 2025

NEWSLETTER

We say a sad goodbye to Maria Clark

and celebrate her
achievements.

Launching our 2025 Neurodiversity Campaign

to ensure inclusivity
for all.

Understanding the disciplinary process

and how Aegis can
support you.



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Foreword



The past few months have been a busy and productive time for Aegis, with important wins for our members, new initiatives on the horizon, and ongoing challenges that we are tackling head-on.

One of our biggest focuses is ensuring that our members receive the pay and conditions they deserve. I'm pleased to say that we've successfully negotiated favourable pay rises across all businesses, thanks to the dedication and persistence of our reps, who have worked tirelessly to secure these gains. Their commitment ensures that you, our members, continue to be recognised and fairly rewarded for your hard work.

We're also proud to be launching our Neurodiversity Campaign 2025, an initiative aimed at making workplaces more inclusive and supportive for neurodivergent individuals. This campaign will raise awareness, push for policy improvements, and encourage employers to create better opportunities for those with Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, and other neurodivergent conditions. It's an exciting step forward, and we look forward to driving meaningful change.

Looking ahead, we have several key trade union conferences where we'll be representing our members' interests, from pushing for stronger workplace protections against harassment, to advocating for fairer policies across industries. These conferences are a crucial platform for influencing wider change, and we're determined to make our voices heard.

On a more difficult note, we say goodbye to Maria Clark, who is leaving Aegis after 12 years of dedicated service due to the unfortunate loss of Scottish Union Learning funding. Maria has had an immeasurable impact on our learning and development work, and while this is a major setback, we will continue to push for future funding to keep these opportunities available. You can read more about Maria's incredible legacy on pages 4&5 of this newsletter.

As always, Aegis remains committed to protecting, supporting, and empowering our members.

Whether it's securing better pay, fighting for workplace rights, or standing up for fairness, we are here to make a difference.

And while Eid will have already been celebrated by the time this newsletter comes out, we wish all of those celebrating this festival a belated Eid Mubarak.

Brian Linn

General Secretary, Aegis



Maria Clark to leave Aegis after 12 years of service



It is with great sadness and disappointment that I must inform you that our bid for Scottish Union Learning (SUL) funding has been declined.

This is due to the Scottish Government slashing the budget for SUL.

Unfortunately, several small unions who have been successfully offering SUL to their members for many years like us, have also been unsuccessful with their bids.

SUL will also be embarking on a restructure that may lead to redundancies within their operation.

Regrettably and with huge disappointment, this means Maria Clark our SUL Project Manager's contract which has now ceased, with effect from 31 March, 2025.

Maria has been responsible for, and driven the SUL project with amazing determination, imagination and groundbreaking successes for the past twelve years.

During this time, she has introduced and organised training and development for thousands of Scottish members who have received life changing qualifications to aid and further their careers.

Maria was a senior Aegis rep before leaving Aegon to take up the post of SUL Project Manager. I have known and worked with Maria for many years, and this has been a particularly bitter blow for me personally, and the full-time team and I'm sure all the reps Maria has worked with, encouraged and supported over her long Aegis career.

Maria's exemplary achievements have been listed on the opposite page and you can see in this snapshot what a life changing difference Maria's project has made for so many.

I'm sure you will agree that Maria has made an outstanding contribution to the success of Aegis and of supporting our members.

We are all so sad to see Maria go and on behalf of Aegis and our members I would like to thank Maria for her support and magnificent achievements and wish Maria and her family every success for the future.

Brian Linn

Aegis General Secretary

A final note from Maria

It has been an absolute pleasure working with Aegis over the past 12 years. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would leave Aegon and go on to work with such an amazing trade union—one filled with incredible people who have made this journey so special.

To have been part of Aegis' growth, to have worked alongside some of the best colleagues I've ever known, and to have played a role in supporting the learning journeys of so many people at Aegon and Atos has been nothing short of incredible.

Looking back, I'm so proud of what we've achieved together in such a short time. Thank you for being part of this journey, for your dedication to learning, and for making this experience so rewarding.

Wishing you all continued success and growth in the years ahead.




Maria Clark

Project Manager, Aegis Union Learning

Celebrating the impact of Union Learning

Over the past 12 years, 8,802 Aegis members have benefited from Union Learning, with many participants attending multiple courses. Sadly, we did not get the funding to continue such delivery going forwards, but we're optimistic that Labour will reinstate this pot of money in the near future.

Until then, let's reflect on what Union Learning has delivered for our members over the past 12 years:

 <p>Excel (Intermediate, Advanced, VBA) 412 learners (£76,220)</p>	 <p>ILM Coaching & Mentoring 15 learners (£14,000)</p>	 <p>Mental Wellbeing (Managers & Staff) 700 learners (£35,000)</p>	 <p>Education & Training (City & Guilds Level 3) 12 learners (£4,500)</p>
 <p>Prince2 Project Management (Foundation & Practitioner) 132 learners (£315,216)</p>	 <p>Modern Apprenticeships (CSR & Manager) 511 learners (£1,481,999)</p>	 <p>Unconscious Bias Training 90 learners (£9,000)</p>	 <p>SCQF Credit Rating Course 10 learners (£1,500)</p>
 <p>CIPD Level 5 15 learners (£9,000)</p>	 <p>Mediation 50 learners (£1,250)</p>	 <p>BCS Requirements Engineering 48 learners (£72,000)</p>	 <p>Data Protection & Cyber Security 120 learners (£24,000)</p>
 <p>Train the Trainer - Cyber Security 35 learners (£7,000)</p>	 <p>Open University - Business Management 37 learners (£47,000)</p>	 <p>Languages (Spanish, Italian, Dutch) 380 learners (£28,500)</p>	 <p>Yoga 30 learners (£1,800)</p>
 <p>Study Support Sessions 19 learners (£2,500)</p>	 <p>Leadership Sessions 103 learners (£18,231)</p>	 <p>SharePoint 24 learners (£4,800)</p>	 <p>Mentoring 19 learners (£3,500)</p>
 <p>Online Courses 6,000 learners (£1,200,000)</p>	 <p>Dyslexia Awareness 32 learners (£2,600)</p>	<p>Total Learners: 8,802</p> <p>Total Funding Sourced: £1,880,398.99</p>	

Aegis launches Neurodiversity campaign 2025:

Creating inclusive workplaces

We're thrilled to introduce our Neurodiversity Campaign 2025, a groundbreaking initiative dedicated to fostering more inclusive, supportive, and accessible workplaces across the UK.

Why Neurodiversity matters

At Aegis, we believe diversity strengthens workplaces. Neurodivergent individuals—including those with Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, and more—bring exceptional talents, unique perspectives, and innovative ways of thinking. However, many still face barriers such as lack of understanding, inadequate support, and non-inclusive work environments.

That's why we're committed to challenging these barriers and ensuring that neurodivergent employees are welcomed, supported, and empowered to succeed.

What our campaign will focus on

Raising awareness – We'll dispel common myths and misconceptions, increasing understanding of neurodivergence in the workplace.

Improving workplace policies – We'll collaborate with employers to implement inclusive hiring practices, reasonable adjustments, and flexible work environments.

Creating supportive workplaces – Our goal is to ensure that neurodivergent employees feel valued, understood, and equipped to thrive in their careers.

Driving change at trade union conferences

As part of our campaign, Aegis has put forward a proposal at Trade Union Conferences across England, Scotland, and Ireland, urging employers to:

Expand work experience opportunities tailored to the needs of neurodivergent young people.

Create clear career pathways to ensure equal opportunities for progression.

Ensure workplaces are fully inclusive and accessible for all employees.

This initiative is a vital step toward breaking down barriers and ensuring that neurodivergent individuals have the opportunities they deserve to contribute and thrive in the workforce.

Together, we can make a difference.

By working together, we can build workplaces where everyone—regardless of neurological differences—can succeed.

Join us in making neurodiversity a priority in the workplace. Together, we can create an environment where everyone feels seen, heard, and supported.

View launch video and presentation here >





**If you would like
to speak to one of
the reps in our D&I
Working Group you
can get in touch
with them here:**

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**Diversity &
Inclusion**

Events



In February we celebrated HeartsUnion Week, championing the government's Make Work Pay initiative, ensuring fair wages, job security, and stronger protections for all workers.

Skipton Building Society and Yorkshire Building Society had stalls set up during the week so that members could have a chat – and take a heart shaped stress toy!



March

Brian McDaid attended the Irish Congress of Trade Union Conference in Belfast, raising a motion on Neurodiversity in the Workplace.

Brian McDaid and Steve Crotty attended the Yorkshire & Humber TUC Conference where they raised a motion on supporting young people with neurodivergent conditions.

April

Brian Linn and Ricky Markham will attend the Scottish TUC Conference to raise a motion on Neurodiversity in the Workplace and Enhancing Workplace Safety.

May

Brian Linn and Brian McDaid will attend the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) Biennial General Council Meeting (BGCM) to raise motions on Neurodiversity in the Workplace and Enhancing Workplace Safety.

July

Brian Linn, Ricky Markham and Kevin Hall will attend the LGBT+ TUC Conference.



Below are the two key motions we will raise at various conferences throughout the year:

1. Promoting opportunities for Neurodivergent young people

Conference notes that Neurodivergent young people with, for example, autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other neurodevelopmental conditions, face significant barriers to gaining work experience and employment opportunities. These barriers can hinder their ability to transition into adulthood, limiting their opportunities for a fulfilling and independent life.

It is crucial to address these challenges by creating an inclusive work environment that recognises and values the unique strengths and talents of neurodivergent individuals.

Providing meaningful work experience and employment opportunities is essential to helping these young people develop the skills and confidence necessary to thrive in the workplace.

Conference calls on the STUC, affiliates and especially their members employers to create and promote opportunities specifically tailored for young people with neurodiversity challenges. This can be achieved through the following:

- i. Awareness and training: encouraging employers to implement training programmes for managers and employees to increase awareness and understanding of neurodiversity.
- ii. Work experience programmes: advocating for the establishment of work experience and internship programmes focused on the needs of neurodivergent young people, offering them practical experience and skill development.
- iii. Mentorship and support: promoting the introduction of mentorship schemes where neurodivergent young people can receive guidance and support from experienced colleagues.
- iv. Inclusive recruitment practices: encouraging employers to adopt inclusive recruitment practices that consider the unique challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals, ensuring fair and equal opportunities for all.

By implementing these measures, we can help neurodivergent young people gain valuable work experience and enhance their future employment prospects, so they can lead fulfilling lives as adults.

2. Enhancing Workplace Safety and Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Conference notes the recent introduction of measures under the Equality Act 2010, which mandate employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. These measures include a new legal duty for employers to proactively prevent sexual harassment and updated guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

Conference believes that to effectively combat sexual harassment, there must be a concerted effort to educate their work force on the subject and to make clear the expected treatment of women in particular, in the workplace. Education should focus on fostering a culture of respect, an understanding of what sexual harassment is and the impact it has on victims.

Conference calls on employers to fulfil their responsibility by providing comprehensive training on sexual harassment prevention. This training should be mandatory for all employees and include practical guidance on recognizing, preventing, and addressing harassment. Employers must also actively manage and enforce these policies, demonstrating their duty of care to women in the workplace.

Conference calls on the STUC to advocate for the following actions:

1. Mandatory Education Programs: Implement educational initiatives aimed at men to promote respectful behaviour and understanding of sexual harassment.
2. Comprehensive Training: Require employers to provide regular, thorough training on sexual harassment prevention and response.
3. Active Policy Management: Ensure employers are held accountable for actively managing and enforcing anti-harassment policies, with regular reviews and updates.

By adopting these measures, we can create safer, more respectful workplaces where women and vulnerable people are protected and valued.

Understanding the disciplinary process and how we support you

At Aegis we are committed to supporting our members through all aspects of workplace issues, including disciplinary processes.

If you are facing a disciplinary situation, it's important to understand the process, your rights and how we, as your union, can represent and support you.

What is the disciplinary process?

The disciplinary process is a formal procedure that employers use to address employee behaviour or performance issues. It is designed to ensure fairness and consistency when dealing with any alleged misconduct or failure to meet performance standards.

Typical steps in the disciplinary process include:

Investigation: If there is an allegation of misconduct or poor performance, your employer should first investigate the matter fairly and thoroughly. This may include gathering evidence and interviewing witnesses.

Formal meeting: If the investigation suggests that disciplinary action is needed, a formal meeting will be scheduled. You will be given details about the allegation(s) against you and the evidence, and you will have an opportunity to explain your side.

Decision: After the meeting, your employer will decide whether to issue a disciplinary sanction, which could range from a warning (verbal, written, or final) to suspension or even dismissal, depending on the severity of the issue.

Appeal: If you disagree with the decision or feel the process was unfair, you have the right to appeal. This appeal will be heard by a senior manager or independent party who was not involved in the original decision.

How Aegis can support you through this process:

At Aegis, we take workplace fairness seriously. If you are facing a disciplinary process, we are here to ensure that your rights are protected and that you receive the best possible support. Here's how we can assist:

1. Representation at meetings:

If you are invited to a disciplinary meeting, we can provide **representation**.

Our trained union representatives will attend meetings with you to ensure that the process is fair and transparent. They will support you in presenting your case and help address any concerns or unfair treatment during the meeting.

2. Advice and guidance:

We offer confidential advice to members who are facing disciplinary action. This includes advising you on your rights, the employer's obligations, and how to prepare for meetings or hearings. We will ensure that you understand the steps of the process and what to expect at each stage.

3. Review of employer procedures:

If you feel that your employer has not followed the correct procedures or has acted inappropriately, we can help challenge these actions. We will review the disciplinary policy and ensure that it is being followed according to legal standards and best practice.

4. Supporting your defence:

If the disciplinary action relates to performance issues, we can assist in gathering evidence and supporting your case. This might include reviewing any past performance reviews, collecting witness statements, and advising on how to present your defence effectively.

5. Appeal assistance:

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the disciplinary process, we can assist with filing an appeal. We will help you prepare for an appeal hearing, ensure that your arguments are clear, and work to secure a fair resolution.

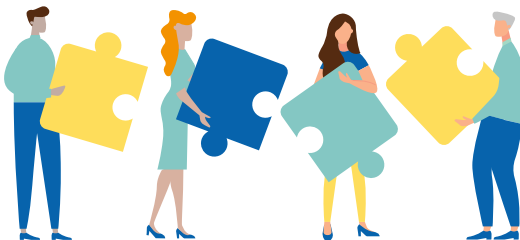
6. Advice on outcomes:

If a disciplinary action results in a warning or termination, we will offer advice on how to move forward. This might include reviewing the potential impact on your employment, ensuring that your record is accurate, and advising on how to prevent future issues.

Your rights during the disciplinary process:

As a union member, you have certain rights that ensure fairness during the disciplinary process. These include:

- **Right to be informed:** You should be given clear details of the allegations against you and the evidence the employer intends to rely on.
- **Right to be accompanied:** You have the right to be accompanied to all disciplinary meetings by a colleague, union representative, or legal advisor.
- **Right to appeal:** If you are unhappy with the disciplinary decision, you have the right to appeal the outcome.
- **Right to confidentiality:** Employers should handle all disciplinary matters with confidentiality, ensuring that your personal information is protected.



The Importance of early union involvement:

If you are called into a disciplinary meeting, it is important that you contact Aegis as early as possible. Our union representatives can guide you through the process from the very beginning and help ensure that your interests are protected.

While some members may hesitate to involve the union at the outset, it is crucial to remember that early intervention from a union representative can make a significant difference in the outcome. We are here to support you at every stage, from investigation to appeal.

Conclusion:

Being involved in a disciplinary process can be stressful and challenging. But remember, as an Aegis member, you are not alone.

We are here to provide you with expert support, advice, and representation, helping to ensure that you are treated fairly throughout the entire process. If you find yourself in a disciplinary situation, don't hesitate to reach out to us for guidance.

If you need to speak to us on this or any other matter, please contact members@aegistheunion.co.uk or speak to one of your local reps, a list can be found on the Aegis website at www.aegistheunion.co.uk





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colleagues about the benefits of becoming an
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