



Our newsletter is free to all members.

If you're not a member, we want you to join us. Either follow the links on-line from our blog on Staff Central, or ask us for a paper membership form.

University of Brighton Branch Newsletter

December 2021

Thank you to all our members who played a part in last week's strike over pay.

This was a strike about the University's refusal to even seriously consider a bonus to make up for the 2020 pay freeze, despite our willingness to negotiate over the amount. Our members have put up with declining rates of pay for too long and this was the first battle in our campaign for proper pay rises.



The email from senior managers earlier this week was an attempt to suggest that our strike was a waste of time, and yet they seem so keen to prevent us from striking that they are now trying to encourage our members not to vote in our ballots. Frankly, they can keep their noses out of our union and our democratic processes. Who elected them?

Our pay campaign continues on two fronts:

1. To continue to use our existing strike mandate for 2020-21 by planning more strike action in early February. It's up to the University as to whether this goes ahead or not.
2. To make sure every member votes in the 2021-22 pay ballot, which is now live, despite the wrecking tactics of UEB.

Ballot papers will be arriving on doormats very soon and we want to see every member voting, by filling in the ballot paper and returning it in the post before the end of January.

Ivan Bonsell, Branch Secretary

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2020-21 Pay Strike

2nd December 2021 was a historic day for our branch. Despite the attempts of senior managers to tell people it was unsuccessful, we had visible and lively picket lines and a demonstration into Brighton, alongside UCU. Our members were cold, but determined to not allow our pay to continue to fall further. This is just the first stage of a major campaign over pay which we're running.



Throughout 2021, we've seen some significant changes to the University as the management embarked on a major cost-cutting exercise so that they can invest in cosmetic improvements, to fight for student enrolments.

The reduction in the number of IT technicians was the start, followed by closure of both nurseries and the scaling down of catering. The major reorganisation of school administrative staff has created more work for fewer people.

Obviously some of this is related to Covid, but the general trend is that all University of Brighton workers are being expected to do more for less, leading to overwork, work-related stress and personal financial pressures.

It's no wonder that our members and non-members want to tell the University's managers that they're sick of being taken for granted.

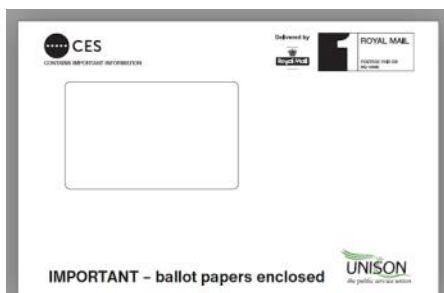
2nd December was not just a day out. We're serious about pay justice and are planning our next days of action for early February, when thousands of students are due to graduate. If the University want to settle this, they know what to do.



2021-22 Pay Ballot - Make sure you vote!

All members working directly for the University will receive a ballot paper to their home address.

It will look like this:



All you need to do is make sure you fill in your vote, and return it in the prepaid envelope, into a letterbox by the end of January, like this:



If you don't get one, or you think you may have lost it, please get in touch:

Unisonhelp@brighton.ac.uk

From 5th January, you can call UNISON Direct on **0800 0 857 857** to ask for another ballot paper,

It's absolutely crucial that all members vote in this important ballot.

Three reasons why we need you to vote:

1. We are a democratic branch and we will act on the decision of our members. If you don't vote, you don't get a say.
2. Thanks to the anti-trade union laws, if we don't get a turnout of more than 50%, the vote doesn't count! We can't let the law stop us campaigning over pay.
3. The University's senior management don't want you to:

[Andrew Lloyd/Stephen Dudderidge email of 6th December:](#)

["If you personally do not want further action, then the most effective way to achieve this is not to take part in the vote."](#)

You have to ask why they're giving this advice. It's all because they want a quiet life where we can't threaten action, just get on with our work and accept lower and lower wages.

If this carries on, with inflation well ahead of pay rises, we'll all be working Fridays for free!

Please make sure you have your say. Return your ballot paper and give us a shout if you have any problems. If you can tell us when you've voted, you'll make life easier for us and we'll not keep asking you!

Eastbourne Closure

We'll be submitting a response to the University's consultation over the proposed closure of Eastbourne Campus, as part of the consolidation of the University's estate, due to the decline in student numbers.

Whilst we understand the drivers behind this proposal (which will inevitably be a decision after the consultation process), we don't accept that the total closure of the campus is desirable or necessary and it's a good example of running something down for years, only to then claim that it's a lost cause.



Obviously, our main concern is going to be the members of staff working at Eastbourne and what happens to them, in terms of relocation to Falmer or redundancy. We are, of course, opposed to compulsory redundancy and we'll be consulting with members over what we can do to avoid it, and with the University over what they are going to do to make sure nobody loses their job if they want to stay.



The University of Brighton has achieved 33rd place, out of 154. Not bad, but well below what the score could have been had it not only managed 10% in the Workers' Rights section.

What stands out for trade unionists is the scores for being a Living Wage Employer and seeking Equality for Outsourced Staff.

In both these categories, it's a big fat zero.

Whilst the University do pay Real Living Wage rates for directly employed members of staff, they have so far refused to sign up to become a Living Wage Accredited Employer because it would need to then ensure that suppliers did the same. Many other Universities can manage this. Why not Brighton?

The University also has no policy for monitoring the equality of pay and conditions between in-house and outsourced staff. That's because it's cheaper to rely on cheap, exploited labour than employ properly trained and paid staff with rights and sick pay etc. It's about time the University made more effort to recognise how crap all this looks and did something about it.