



***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***

# ***April 2022***

Our members took two further days of strike action at the start of April to campaign for better wages. There's no doubt that wages are falling in real terms, with inflation now heading towards 10%. What that means is that we're all working for less money than we were before. If your pay did go up by 1.5% in August 2021 and inflation is now, for the sake of argument, 9.0% (RPI in March), then your pay is worth 7.5% less than it was a year ago. That's before the massive increase in energy costs.

Many millions of working people are suffering with wages that have not kept up with the real cost of things we all need to buy - food, housing, energy and travel. For the lowest paid, it is no longer a case of whether to eat or heat the house, but a case of managing without elements of both. We can't go on accepting that less money going into universities means that we have to watch our wages fall further and further behind. Our campaign for a proper pay rise continues. We have a mandate to strike and will do so again if we feel it's in our longer term interests.

Clearly, the employers' organisation, UCEA, will try to hold down wages to a level that their members i.e. universities think they can afford. Marketisation of higher education and the economic situation has created much uncertainty around university finances and Vice Chancellors are very cautious. Our members accept all this, but we can't just sit back and do nothing.

Our branch committee meeting earlier this month agreed to reassess where we are after Easter and try to coordinate any further action with other UNISON branches and UCU. As soon as we have any further proposals we'll make sure all our members know that the plans are.

*Ivan Bonsell, Branch Secretary*

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Some of the pictures from the 1st and 4th April Strike





## University of Dundee UNISON members striking for a week over attacks on their pensions



Members at Dundee are taking strike action over their employers' plans to impose changes to their pension scheme. This is the third round of action taken at the University over the same issue and the initial five-day strike will be followed by selective action in high-impact areas over the coming three weeks. The previous rounds of strike action provoked a U-turn by the employer of the decision to close the defined benefit scheme, but the dispute now centres on the terms with which the scheme remains open – with proposals to increase the retirement age, diminish the accrual rate and close the scheme to new joiners.

When consulted, members strongly rejected this package which was imposed rather than negotiated. The plans would affect around 900 staff on grades one to six, while those on higher grades would not be affected as they fall under a different, nationally negotiated, scheme.

University of Dundee branch secretary Phil Welsh, said: "We are deeply disappointed that the university has made no attempt to engage or come up with a revised decent firm offer.

"This pension attack affects low paid female staff, concocted by the management team who earn in excess of £150k per year and whose pensions will not be affected by these proposals. Instead of focusing their efforts into bringing in strike-breakers, we urge the University of Dundee to do the right thing and show some commitment to their loyal, low paid staff."

We've sent a message of support:

***University of Brighton UNISON branch sends solidarity to Dundee University UNISON members taking action in defence of your pension rights.***