



Our newsletter is free to all members.

If you're not a member, we want you to join us. Scan this QR code, or ask a steward for a paper form.



Get organised, join a union!

University of Brighton Branch Newsletter

January 2023



Hi everyone and welcome to our first newsletter of 2023.

As the new year begins, we're still campaigning for better pay for all university workers. Over the last decade, our pay has gradually and then rapidly been ground down against the cost of living.

Working people across the UK recognise that if you want to get some pay justice, then you have to fight for it. 2022 saw us take more days of strike action at this university than any time in living memory. If the employers continue to hold down pay and refuse to actively and visibly campaign for sufficient funding for higher education, then we have no option other than to continue to take strike action, alongside UCU where we can.

This issue, we've information about the ongoing pay dispute, our Annual General Meetings in March, and UNISON's Winter Fuel Grant.

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Pay Campaign Latest

We're at a crucial point in the pay campaigns, both for 2022-23 (the pay rise/cut we did receive in August 2022) and for 2023-24 (the pay increase we're due to receive in August 2023.)

For 2022-23, thanks to our ballot success in the summer of 2022, we have a live strike mandate that lasts until 25th February. UCU have a mandate that lasts much longer, since their ballot was done after ours.

Our plan is to take further strike action on Thursday 16th, Friday 17th, Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st February, our long weekend of pay campaigning!



This wasn't an easy decision. We recognise the sacrifices our members have made in terms of money and time, to make previous strike the success that they were, but we also need to get something out of this campaign, and we're not going to do so by doing nothing. Our four strike days will go ahead unless we receive a much better offer from UCEA (the employers' organisation). We will, of course, be able to pay our members strike pay of up to £50 a day, which we'll do to coincide with the point when pay is deducted (probably at the end of April.)

Meanwhile, for 2023-24, we've been offered a pay rise of between 7.0% and 4.0%, weighted to give the lower grades the most and the highest the least. Whilst this is still a real-terms pay cut, with inflation still in double figures, it's clear that this offer is much more that we would have been offered had we meekly accepted the 2022-23 imposition of the pay "rise". Striking does get results, even though it might not been immediately obvious. Without an effective pay campaign during 2022, they would probably have offered us 1-2% or maybe even nothing.

Pay Campaign Latest continued

The final negotiation meeting with UCEA for 2023-24, takes place on 25th January, where we're expecting to be given a final, detailed offer of what they're proposing to give us. If and when that happens, we'll immediately start a consultation process of all our members working directly for the University, which will give us an idea of whether you want to accept the offer, or reject it.

Rejection may well lead to a full postal ballot, which would suggest that re-balloting for 2022-23 to extend our strike mandate beyond February 25th would be pointless.

UCU have announced a strike date of 1st February to coincide with strike action of PCS members and NEU members on the TUC "day of action". With hindsight, we should probably have done this as well, but we didn't, partially because we weren't sure what other unions were planning and partially because we thought striking later in the month would be more effective. We also have our annual conference on 2nd February which is an important event in terms of policy and UNISON will not allow a conference to be moved to a more appropriate date.

So, on 1st February, we'll encourage all our members to support UCU strikers alongside civil servants, train drivers and teachers, but we're not on strike ourselves. We're preparing for a massive show of strength on 16th, 17th, 20th and 21st February. UCU will soon announce their strike days for February and March and if there's an overlap then we'll strike together for maximum impact.



If you took strike action in November, then please remember that you should see a deduction on your January wage slip. As per previous months, we'll make a strike pay claim form available for all members facing deductions as soon as January wage slips are available.

Please make sure you claim because the money comes from UNISON's national strike fund that can easily afford a few thousand higher education workers claiming for up to £50/day.

If you have any questions about this, or anything else relating to the pay campaign, please feel free to get in touch.

UNISON's Winter Fuel Grant opens 25th January

UNISON's welfare charity, There for You, opens its annual programme offering grants of £200 next week – find out if you're eligible to apply.



It offers a one-off, non-repayable grant of £200 to help UNISON's most vulnerable low-income members and to help ease the worry of paying for their next fuel bill during the coldest months of the year.

UNISON understands the financial hardship many members are facing – struggling to make ends meet, particularly with RPI inflation still running at 14% as of the end of November, and energy usage generally at its highest over January and February.

Last year, the charity raised over £1m with its energy support appeal in order to support members through the unprecedented upturn in the cost of energy bills and two phases of grants from the resulting fund provided thousands of members with support. A third phase is due to be announced in the coming months.

The winter fuel grant programme will only be open to those who have not received a grant from the charity since 31 July 2022.

The grant programme is limited to 2,000 applicants and will close once the maximum number of applications has been received.

There's more information on UNISON's national website, here:

[Winter fuel grant opens 25 January | Article, News | News | UNISON National](#)



Our Annual General Meetings 2023



Our Annual General Meetings this year will be in the week commencing 6th March.

All the information about them is available on the AGM page on our blog, which you can find from Staff Central. We need to know if you're coming in person, or virtually, so that we can order the catering and send you the meeting links.

Our meetings are on the following days:

| | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| City Campus | 12 noon/12.30pm, Monday 6th March | Grand Parade 204 |
| Falmer | 12 noon/12.30pm, Tuesday 7th March | Checkland E423 |
| Moulsecoomb | 12 noon/12.30pm, Wednesday 8th March | Mithras House G4 |
| Eastbourne | 12 noon/12.30pm, Friday 10th March | Aldro Building 112 |

Our dedicated blog page also has the nomination form for branch officers and details of what you can do if you want to propose a motion or ask a question of the branch committee.

It's all here: [Annual General Meeting\(s\) 2023 | University of Brighton UNISON Branch](#)



Why we think you need to join a trade union



If you're reading this, the chances are you're already a member of UNISON, but whether you are or not, it's in all our interests that we strengthen our branch and our union by recruiting more members.

Trade unions are not groups of people who moan about everything, or clubs for lazy workers. We're organised workers who see the need for workplace organisation that's based around mass membership and collective interest.

We support all members with their individual problems at work, but the main reason we're all members is that we can do so much more when we have the weight of hundreds of members with us.

Many people working at the University will be concerned about what's round the corner. Universities like ours are facing all kinds of uncertainty. Public services in general are being cut, sold off and privatised. Workers' terms and conditions are being attacked, as those in charge are forced to run things as "efficiently" as possible. In short, we're all expected to work harder for longer and less money.

The entire system means we have to fight back. Trade unions are about working people seeing that we're much stronger together. You can fight and win on your own, but you're much more likely to win if you're fighting alongside hundreds and thousands of other people like you.



Please make sure you join a trade union and stick up for your rights at work.

If you're already a member, please ask those working alongside you to join as well.

You can join UNISON on-line, here:
or ask a steward for a paper membership form.

