

RIISING TOGETHER FOR BETTER PAY

HIGHER EDUCATION PAY 2023/24



University of Brighton
UNISON | Branch Newsletter

April 2023

Welcome to our April newsletter!

This month, we have articles on our forthcoming pay ballot, the launch of our Self-Organised Groups and UNISON's NEC elections.

From 17th April, ballot papers to elect the National Executive Council will be posted out to all members' home addresses (at least all members who were full members on 17th January). If you don't get one within a week or so, this is an important indication of whether UNISON has your correct address or not, so please let us know or check yourself at MyUNISON.

www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/

The election is important because the NEC is the highest decision-making body of the union between conferences. Who we elect will determine how the union responds to the national and local issues affecting all of us - pay, pensions, working conditions etc.

Please read the information provided and return your ballot paper in the envelope provided. If you look carefully, you'll see that our branch has made nominations based on votes taken at our branch committee.

Obviously, how you vote in this secret ballot is entirely up to you, but on page 3 we have a reminder of who we've nominated and why.

The important thing is that you do please make the effort to vote, for the following reasons:

1. This is a practice for our pay ballot in early June. Ballot papers going to the correct home addresses is what we want to see.
2. We want the NEC to represent the members. The more people vote, the more the new NEC has a democratic mandate to act on our behalf.
3. We want a branch and a union of engaged members, willing to participate in the democracy of the union. It's not too much to ask to spend a few minutes putting crosses on pieces of paper and posting them back. **This is your union, so please have your say.**

Ivan Bonsell, Branch Secretary



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2023-24 Pay Ballot

If you've been a member for more than a few months, you'll know we've been campaigning for better pay for the last few years. Since the pandemic, we've had pay rises well below inflation and for the year due to start in August 2023, we've had the imposition of 5% - 8%, some of which was backdated to February this year.

The 5-8% is much more than we'd have got had we not been prepared to vote for, and then take strike action, but it's still much less than we need to prevent our pay falling further and further behind the cost of living.

So, even though the employers have paid some of it, with more to come in August, we're in dispute and have agreed to ballot all directly-employed members over strike action. Our ballot will start at the end of May and last for two months, so we'll hopefully have a mandate to put further pressure on the employers in time for the Autumn term.

For this to happen though, we need a significant vote in favour of strike action and a turnout in excess of 50%. We've done this before, but we can't afford to be complacent, so we'll be chasing up every member to make sure you've voted.



Ahead of that, it's necessary to make sure we have members' addresses up to date, because the law, designed by Margaret Thatcher to make it difficult for us, but never repealed by successive governments, says that it has to be a postal ballot with ballot papers posted to home addresses.

We can't get round this, so we have to make sure members receive their ballot papers and post them back in the envelopes provided.

You can check that your address is correct on our system by registering at MyUNISON:

www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/

Or feel free to get in touch with us and we'll do it for you.

In the meantime, the more members know that we're going to ballot the better and anyone joining now will get chance to have their say, so please spread the word.



National Executive Council Elections

Elections take place by postal ballot from 17th April until 19th May. Please make sure you vote!

You're free to vote for whichever candidates you like in this secret ballot, but please read the candidate statements.

Our branch committee nominated the following candidates:

South East Regional Seats



Jac Berry



Dan Sartin



Abi Holdsworth

Higher Education Seats



Kath Owen



Jo Tapper

Black Members' Seats



Shazziah Rock



Julia Mwaluke



April Ashley



Hugo Pierre



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SCAN JOIN
to

UNISON Self-Organised Groups

Equality is at the heart of UNISON. We challenge discrimination and win equality in the workplace and beyond. Everyone shares responsibility for equality in UNISON.

But our equality work includes groups for members who experience particular types of prejudice and discrimination.



These groups meet locally and nationally to discuss, campaign and organise around the specific issues that affect them. They help UNISON understand equality and meet our equality aims.

Our four self-organised groups are for **Black members; disabled members; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members; and women members**. We also have equality groups for young members and retired members.

What we'd like to do in our branch is establish branch-wide groups for the following members:

Women, Black*, LGBT+



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If we get enough members interested, we'll organise regular meetings and the groups can then decide what they would like to do and how to do it.

We're going to launch these at our all-members' meeting on **Thursday 27th April, at 12 noon.**

If you can't make it, and would like to be involved, feel free to get in touch and we'll add you to the relevant group. We can also look at a disabled members group if we have enough interest.

*In UNISON, Black is used to indicate people with a shared history. Black with a capital 'B' is used in its broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in Britain that have suffered colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today's society.



The terms 'minority ethnic' and 'ethnic minority' are in widespread official use today. However, these terms have clear disadvantages in terms of the connotations of marginal or less important and in many neighbourhoods, towns and cities in Britain it is statistically inaccurate or misleading to describe Black groups as a minority.

Historically in the UK the term Black has been used routinely in anti-racist campaigns starting in the 70s. 35 years ago when four Black MPs Bernie Grant, Paul Boateng, Diane Abbott and Keith Vaz were elected at the height of 1980s Black activism, African, Arab, Asian and Caribbean communities had come to realise the importance of unity in our common struggle against racism and under-representation and campaigned under the political term 'Black'.

Language changes and evolves but terminology is always important in terms of intention and direction.

Using Black is about creating unity in our fight against deep-rooted racism that sees Black people disadvantaged in housing, education, employment and the criminal justice and health systems.

