

RIISING TOGETHER FOR BETTER PAY

HIGHER EDUCATION PAY 2023/24



University of Brighton
UNISON | Branch Newsletter

June 2023

Welcome to our June newsletter!

There are, of course, two big things happening this month - job threats and our pay ballot.

The first is the redundancies which the University is trying to push through. This is the largest attack on jobs that many of us have ever seen in our time working here. The vast majority of those threatened with redundancy are academic staff, and the University has asked for academics in certain areas to volunteer for redundancy. The likelihood though is that there will still be some compulsory redundancies that the University feels are necessary, to reach the savings targets.

Support staff are threatened in a few areas and we'll do what we can do support those individuals who do not want to take redundancy. We believe that there are around five UNISON members in this situation.

Obviously, every time our members are threatened, with job losses, falling pay and pensions etc. we have to weigh up what we can do i.e. what's possible given the power we have to exert pressure on the University through our members.

On this occasion, we didn't feel that a dispute, consultative ballot, and then a potential strike ballot would have been the best course of action, and this is consistent with the way we've approached the situation with security staff. This is because we didn't think we could realistically organise a strike ballot during our pay ballot, and this would also assume that we could get to a point where we could organise a ballot that quickly. UNISON's structures take time to get these things in motion.

So, we're trying to support members as much as we can.

Obviously we're giving full support to UCU over their plans to fight what for them is a massive attack on their members' jobs. We've contributed to their strike funds in the past and no doubt will do so again. Our message to the University is that if they achieve significant savings through volunteers then they should stop any compulsory redundancies, in part because it won't be necessary, but also because it will cause major damage to the University.

Ivan Bonsell, Branch Secretary



UnisonJoB



UniBtonUnison



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We're balloting all University-employed members throughout June and July, but please don't delay - get your ballot returned in the envelop provided as soon as you can.

This is the fifth ballot we've had at the University under the anti-trade union laws, which stipulate that the turnout has to be above 50% for the vote to count.

Four of these have been over pay, and part of a national series of disaggregate ballots across multiple university branches. The other was part of a local dispute with the University over closure of the nurseries.



All four pay ballots have been successful, but sadly, we came within a handful of votes with the nursery ballot, getting 49%.

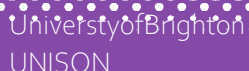
This experience underlines how important it is to get that turnout, because without it, the votes of hundreds of our members will count for nothing. Members not voting are weakening our ability to do anything.

So, please follow the example of Lise and Aras, and get your ballots posted back before you lose them.

As usual we'll be ticking off members as you vote, so you can really help the process by telling us when you've voted!

If you need a new ballot paper, you can call UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857 and ask for a new one. All ballots need to be returned by 31 July and we'll tell you the results soon after that.

Please make sure you vote!





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Why we need to campaign for better pay

It's understandable that many would think that a university which is making staff redundant can't afford to pay its staff more, but as trade unionists, we always have to campaign for jobs, pay and proper university funding.

We can't accept the "logic" of either fighting for jobs or pay. With this argument comes the race to the bottom, where we accept declining pay to save jobs or accept job cuts to pay for adequate income.

It is true that the University we work for does not have large cash reserves, but we're part of national pay bargaining and pay is settled by UCEA on behalf of most universities signing up to be part of it.

The only long-term solution for universities retaining jobs and decent pay, is for funding to match what we're demanding - that our pay does not fall further behind the cost of living.



It shouldn't be up to us to campaign for adequate funding for public services, but with a government intent on destroying large parts of the education system, that's what we have to do.

That doesn't mean failing to keep up the pressure for decent pay for university workers.

We all know that food, energy, housing and transport costs rise more and more, but our wages are not keeping up. Industrial action has made UCEA give us a small pay rise due in August, with some of that brought forward to February, but this falls well short of what higher education workers need. This was also a case of spending on higher pay workers when those on lower grades are still struggling.

Please make sure you have your say and vote in the pay ballot.

Ballot papers will be posted to home addresses in June and will look like this:

Please vote and return yours in the post as soon as you can.

