



Members' Newsletter, September 2024

We're making this month's newsletter a practical guide to UNISON membership, which we'll also put on our blog.

Joining the union

Obviously we want all support staff to join us. There are lots of reasons why we think you should, but working people sticking together and being stronger as a result, is at the top of our list.

You can join UNISON two ways:

1. With a paper form, which you should be able to find from our stewards, or by downloading it from our blog. If you join this way, you'll pay your regular monthly subs via Payroll. Just fill in the form and email it back or post it in the internal post to our office in Mithras. Please remember to tick the boxes about how we can communicate with you.
2. On-line - just search for UNISON and you should find it.

Once we've signed you up, we'll be in touch to say welcome and we're working on a Form For New Joiners, which we'll launch soon. This will ask some additional questions and give you chance to claim some free stuff.



Our Four Week Rule

UNISON's rules say that you can access help for a workplace issue once you're a member, but there are limitations. If the issue you want help with happened or was on-going before or within four weeks of your membership, we won't be able to represent you if it gets serious. What we are able to do will depend on the branch, but there are strict rules about access to regional support and legal help that we have to stick to.

This is designed to stop you joining because you have an issue - **we want you to join anyway!**

Monthly Subscriptions

Sadly, union membership is not free, but how much you pay each month is determined by your income, so better paid members will pay more.

If you're signed up to pay through Payroll, this will be adjusted periodically, but if you know of any changes, you can always tell them: payhelp@brighton.ac.uk

Join the union!

Scan here:





University of Brighton Branch

If you're signed up to pay a monthly direct debit then it's up to you to regulate your payments. If you think you're paying too much or not enough, please get in touch, or you can talk to **UNISON Direct by calling 0800 0 857 857**.

If something big happens, like you're taking unpaid leave, on long-term sick leave or going on maternity leave etc, then you can ask for your subs to stop or be reduced, **but you have to tell us!**

Your line manger, Payroll and Human Resources will know what's happening, but they won't tell us, so please remember to let us know and we'll see what we can do.

Being a Member

We want all our members to be engaged and proud of union membership. Please let others know you've joined and ask them to join as well. Many people do not join because nobody asked them to - let's try to change that.

Membership entitles you to member benefits, which you can find here: <https://benefits.unison.org.uk>

If you don't want to be active, all that we ask is that you try to attend the Annual General Meeting and vote in important ballots and elections when we ask you to.

If you do want to be active, there's no limit to what you can get involved in.



We try to have monthly members' meetings and some of our members become stewards, health and safety reps or branch officers. Our branch committee meets monthly and makes all the decisions. If you do want to volunteer, you're entitled to facility time away from your job to be an activist.

UNISON is very proud of our equalities work. We have local, regional and national self-organised groups for members identifying as Black, women, LGBT+,

disabled and young (aged 30 or under)

If you want to get involved or just find out more, please get in touch.

If you need help

If you need advice on any work-related issue, just get in touch with one of our stewards. You can find a list on our blog. We can help you raise a grievance, make a complaint or defend yourself if you're in trouble.





University of Brighton Branch

UNISON Democracy

Our branch committee is made up of ordinary members who have volunteered to be stewards, safety reps and branch officers. All are elected by members like you at our Annual General Meetings, where we agree the way forward and priorities for our branch.

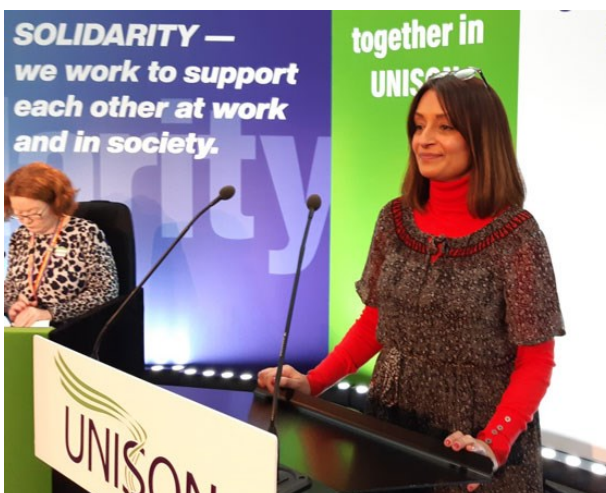
We meet every term with senior University managers, with and without UCU, to discuss issues relevant to members and our safety reps are members of the Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Our branch is represented by delegates elected to UNISON's South East Regional Council which meets three times a year.



We're part of **UNISON's Higher Education Service Group**, so we attend the annual conference and the Branch Seminar event. We also participate in UNISON's National Delegate Conference, which takes place every summer, electing delegates to move, speak and vote on motions.

UNISON is a massive trade union, with a labyrinthine structure, but it all makes sense when you get used to it. If you want to get involved in any of this - you know what to do!



Higher Education Conference takes place every January.



Leaving the union

As long as you work at the University, we want you to remain a member, but if you want to leave for any reason, then **please let us know**. We can then lapse your membership, which should stop UNISON calling for more direct debits, but it won't stop Payroll payments - you need to contact payhelp@brighton.ac.uk and ask Payroll directly. (We can't do that for you!)

If you're leaving the University then Payroll will stop your subs when you stop being paid.

If you have a direct debit, you will need to cancel it with your bank.

Transferring to another job

We try to keep track of where our members are working, so if you move job or default location, please let us know. This helps us find you, but it's also useful to know where our members are and if we give notice of a formal ballot, we need to provide limited information about our membership to the employers by law.

If you're moving university or to another public sector job, we can see about transferring your membership.

If you don't have another job to go to, you can remain an unemployed member for two years.

If in doubt - please let us know!

Retired Members

If you're retiring from paid work, you're welcome to become a retired member of UNISON. You need to fill in a form and pay the £15 one-off life membership charge. Let us know if you would like to.

Our branch has a Retired Members' Secretary and UNISON organises retired members regionally and nationally, with its annual Retired Members' Conference.



UNISON's National Delegate Conference 2024