



Our newsletter is free to all members.

If you're not a member then we need you to join today. Ask one of our stewards or go to our blog to join.

University of Brighton Branch Newsletter

January 2018

blogs.brighton.ac.uk/unison

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The first month of the year has been particularly busy. We've had all the usual casework to deal with as well as a whole load of policies and procedures to look at, national and regional events to attend and our Annual General Meeting to plan for.

This year, we have two main speakers at the AGM, so we very much hope that you can attend. Details are on the next page.

A few weeks ago, some of us attended UNISON's Annual Higher Education conference in Chester. This is the body which debates and decides on national policy for the union, and the timing of the conference was brought forward for 2018 so that we could debate the 2018-19 pay claim in time for a joint claim with other unions to be made to UCEA, the employers' national organisation, without a delay.

The conference agreed to demand 7.5% or £1,500, whichever is greater, which would mean grades 1, 2 and those at the bottom two spinal points of grade 3 getting more than 7.5%. The pay motion also references campaigning for £10/hour, something we've been pushing for over the last few years, which, if implemented would effectively abolish the current levels of grades 1 and 2, so in a sense, the claim is contradictory, but positive in terms of addressing what's required to tackle low pay as well as making up for frankly terrible pay rises over the last few years.

This claim is designed to prompt UNISON's negotiators alongside those of the other higher education unions, to produce a joint claim not dissimilar to what we would like, and then argue it out with UCEA.

Of course they will say, things are difficult, money is tight, in the current climate blah de blah, we can't afford more than 1% or we'll have to make redundancies, we need more money for vice chancellors and we have to get the right people at that level etc. etc.

At that point it's up to our negotiating team to push the employers' side as far as possible (arguing that if necessary, the money has to come from central government) and then come back to consult us, the members, asking what action we would be prepared to take to push them further to find some more cash, which clearly exists.

The conference allowed for an open discussion on the pay campaign and what it should look like. Many delegates talked about the need to win over members to build confidence and be prepared to take action. What is clear is that if we are going to fight for a better pay rise in August then we'll have to win a national ballot, and this will be done by persuading all our members that you can put a case against low pay as convincingly as you like, but strike action is generally what tends to get results.

Ivan Bonsell, Branch Secretary



Come to our ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Cockcroft Hall, Moulsecoomb, Thursday 1st March

12.00pm for a free buffet lunch

12.30pm meeting starts, and we'll finish by 2.00pm

Speakers:

Sandy Nicoll, UNISON National Executive and UNISON branch at SOAS

Someone from NASUWT's Stress Network, to talk about stress at work

This is your opportunity to play a part on the branch, hold the officers to account and tell us what you want us to be doing.

We can't do everything, but we're a democratic, member-led branch, so we make decisions collectively and we accept the majority decision, so please come along and have your say.

All members welcome and non-members are welcome to join at the meeting.



- End the winter crisis with a cash injection to restore the NHS budget
- Commit to increased funding each year
- End the cap on NHS pay
- No cuts, no closures, no privatisation

Saturday 3rd February

Day of Protest – NHS in Crisis: Fix It Now!

Emergency Demo – London

Assemble: 12noon, Gower Street, London WC1E (near UCL Hospital)

Rally: Trafalgar Square or Whitehall (to be confirmed)

If you want to go to this, please let us know. There's a local rally with speakers at 9am at Brighton train station, ahead of the 9.58 train to London. If you want to go to London, we're happy to sponsor your travel costs—just let us know.