

# Talk in UNISON

SPEAKING UP FOR SUPPORT,  
PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC  
RELATED STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

Summer 2015

## Pay 2015

Following the branch ballot, UNISON, along with the other trade unions have noted the university's pay offer and it will be paid from August.

The pay rise itself, whilst slightly above inflation for the lowest paid, is disappointing, however we know it would have been significantly worse if it was not for the action we all took together in 2014. We know the University can afford to pay their staff more and we will be launching another pay campaign jointly with the other trade unions in the autumn. The full pay rise is on the branch website.



Branch members joined the 250,000 people protesting against Austerity in London in June - [www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk](http://www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk)

## Jobs risk in EPS

Professional staff in EPS have been put at risk of redundancy as a result of three Schools merging into one. UNISON are deeply disappointed that we were not consulted before the decision to merge the three Schools was taken.

Students' wishes are also being ignored as the consultation is being done over the summer when many students are working away from the University.

UNISON have strong reservations over a restructure that is funding more academic-related roles by cutting front-line support staff. We believe this is counterproductive to improving student experience and School ratings.

UNISON are committed to ensuring there are no compulsory redundancies and may yet be asking for members support across the University, if this is not achieved through negotiation.

## When is a Living Wage not a Living Wage?

The government have announced an increase in the minimum wage, calling it a living wage. In fact, it is well below the independent level annually calculated by the Living Wage Foundation (whose rate takes into account the cost of living). The government's living wage also will not apply to anyone under the age of 25! In addition, cuts to tax credits are likely to wipe out any increase in wages families will see.

## Keeping you updated

We send regular updates by email. If you don't currently get branch emails, please email Lee on [l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk) - it can be a work or personal email.

## UNISON Key Contacts

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## Policy negotiations updates

### Family Leave policy

The family leave policy has been updated. You can now apply to take annual leave instead of emergency unpaid leave for dependants. There are also enhanced legal rights for paternity and adoption leave.

See <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/leave/family> for full details.

### PDR

Last autumn, many of you filled in our PDR survey. We are currently meeting with University management and based on your survey results we are pushing for:

- A separate scheme for one-off payments
- PDR scores to be given automatically to all staff
- All feedback used in the PDRs to be given to staff
- Improvements on non-job related training
- Publishing the number of staff receiving rewards in each area and the dates and membership of moderation panels
- Improvements to moderating those not recommended for increments—not just those who are
- An annual audit of different departments to be done, to ensure the PDR scheme is being operated as fairly as possible. The current policy only involves checking five staff members' paperwork per year—out of over 2000 support staff!

## Know your rights

Do you know what's in your contract? We all have basic rights—make sure you know what they are and if you have any problems, get in contact with the branch or your local steward. See the contact details on the left!

Did you know  
Unison offer a  
wide range  
of training courses  
and workshops,  
and that you can  
often get paid time  
off for these?

Visit  
[www.learninunison.wm.org.uk](http://www.learninunison.wm.org.uk) to find  
out more about  
current courses  
and opportunities.

## Check out our updated website

Our website has recently been re-organised to make it easier to use, so why not take a look at [www.birminghamunison.org.uk](http://www.birminghamunison.org.uk)?

We also have a new Twitter account—follow us @bhamuniunison for the latest branch news and updates!

## Self-organised groups

We currently have two self-organised groups: an LGBT group and a Disabled Members' Group.

### Disabled Members' Group

The Disabled Members' Group welcomes any self-identifying disabled members - including anyone with a physical or sensory impairment, mental health condition and/or long-term health condition.

The group is an opportunity to chat to others about your experiences, as well as campaigning to make the university a better place for disabled people to work. Some of the issues we have been discussing are:

- Training for managers
- Long-term sick pay for support staff
- Disability-related absences and how they are recorded
- Guaranteed interview scheme.

Our next meeting is on 22 September at 12noon in Arts G37. We also have a mailing list for email communication. For more information, please contact Vera Kubenz on [v.kub@gmx.net](mailto:v.kub@gmx.net).

### LGBT Group

A survey regarding the brand-new LGBT group was emailed to members by email a recently and the first meeting will be arranged shortly.

If you missed the survey and would like more information about the group, or to get involved, contact Claire McHale on [c.e.mchale@bham.ac.uk](mailto:c.e.mchale@bham.ac.uk).



UNISON LGBT members  
at London Pride

We are also hoping to organise a Women's and a Black Members group, please get in touch if you would like to get involved!

## Branch attend Citizens' UK Assembly

Several members of your branch attended the Citizens' UK Assembly, which was held in the Great Hall in April 2015.



Branch members before the Assembly in the Great Hall

The key topic of the event was the resettlement of refugees affected by the war in Syria, with pledges from politicians to accept an additional 1,000 refugees in the UK.

It was also a great opportunity to get involved more closely with Citizens' UK, and the branch committee is hoping to work with them on our ongoing Living Wage campaign.

## Immigration Myth Busters

Did you know that...

- Between 2001 and 2011, migrants made a net contribution to public finances of £25 billion in taxes.
- Migrants are on average younger than the total population, so by paying taxes, they help to fund pensions for everyone.
- Overseas visitors using the NHS account for just 0.1% of total NHS expenditure.
- The UK is the only country in the EU which has a lower unemployment rate for migrants (7.5%) than nationals (7.9%).
- Between 2011-2, foreign students contributed £8.8bn to the economy.

Source: Centre for Labour and Social Studies



**Fact:**

**In February 2015,  
over 1 million  
people claiming  
Housing Benefit  
were in low-paid  
work — more than  
twice the number of  
employed claimants  
in 2010.**

**Source: Department  
for Work and  
Pensions**



[www.unison.co.uk](http://www.unison.co.uk)

## Trade union rights under attack

Trade union rights are under attack with new Tory plans to make legal strict action much harder. Ballots for strict action currently only need a simple majority. Under the new rules, a ballot result will need at least a 50% turnout, plus support from at least 40% of all those eligible to vote. Other changes include lifting the restrictions on using temporary staff to cover for workers on strike.

The UK already has some of the toughest strike laws in the world, but this new threshold will make legal large-scale strike action, such as national strikes, almost impossible to achieve, so has a huge impact on our ability to campaign effectively for our rights and fair treatment. Find out more on the next page about a public rally to oppose this undemocratic bill.

## Disabled People hardest hit by austerity

Disabled people are one of the groups most severely affected by the government's austerity policies and seem to be set for another 5 years of cuts and erosion of their fundamental rights.

Within hours of the election, the Tories announced planned cuts to the Access to Work programme, which funds adjustments and support to remove some of the barriers disabled people face in the workplace. These cuts could potentially force many disabled people to have to give up their jobs.

A few weeks ago, a high court ruled that the significant delays in assessing claims for the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP) were unlawful. Disabled people face on average £550 extra costs each month for being disabled, so the delays have left many in poverty and building up huge debt.

PIP is supposed to cover some of the extra costs of disability, but thanks to government reforms, large numbers of disabled people no longer qualify for it as anyone able to walk just 20 meters with walking aids no longer qualifies for the enhanced rate of PIP. Disabled campaigners fear that many people will lose their Motability vehicles as a result.

July also saw the closure of the Independent Living Fund, which enables disabled people with high support needs to live in the community. Losing the ILF will set back disability liberation for 30 years, leaving many of those losing their support no option other than residential care, where negligence and abuse are still widespread. You can sign a petition to help save the ILF at <https://t.co/y3I8SepX5z> or google "Save ILF" to find the petition.



**SAY NO TO THE GOVERNMENT'S TRADE UNION  
BILL AND YES TO WORKERS' RIGHTS**

## **No to Austerity. Yes to Workers' Rights**

The Trade Union Bill currently before Parliament is unfair, unnecessary and undemocratic.

We're campaigning to oppose this attack on the rights of working people and their unions. Will you help us?

### **Public Rally**

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> September

**Time:** 7.00pm

**Venue:** Church Room, Carr's Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX

#### **Speakers:**

- **Professor Keith Ewing**, President of the Institute of Employment Rights
- **Candy Unwin**, PCS Sacked Representative from the National Gallery
- **Ravi Subramanian**, UNISON Regional Secretary
- **Kate Hudson**, CWU Midlands Regional Secretary
- **Lee Barron**, TUC Midlands Regional Secretary

**Chair:** **Joe Morgan**, GMB Regional Secretary; TUC Midlands Regional Chair



**#tubill**   [www.tuc.org.uk/tubill](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tubill)



The 'short, sharp shock' of austerity we were promised by the Conservatives continues into its sixth year – with no sign of ending.

Weekends off, maternity and paternity leave, a national minimum wage and pension provision were all won through trade union campaigns. But they can all be taken away. And the Trade Union Bill seeks to silence your union when we speak up for you.

On the first day of the Conservative Party conference make your voice heard. Say 'No' to austerity and 'Yes' to workers' rights.

- 12 noon Assemble Oxford Road (from All Saints Park, southwards)
- 1pm Rally
- 1.30pm March

Find out more and download materials at:

[www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

[www.tuc.org.uk/notoausterity](http://www.tuc.org.uk/notoausterity)



Join UNISON: [Joinunison.org](http://Joinunison.org) or call 0800 171 2193

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# APPLICATION FORM

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Other:					
First Name:		Other Initial(s):			
Surname:		Date Of Birth:			
Job Title:		Department:			
Grade / Band: Academic / Academic Related / Support* Full Time / Part Time / Reduced Hours* <small>*delete as appropriate</small>		Email Address:			
National Insurance Number:       -       -		Tel:			
Home Address:		Payroll Number:			
		Signature:			
		Date:			
<b>Authorisation:</b> I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.  <input type="checkbox"/> I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf. I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date.  Other ways to Pay (please tick if appropriate): <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Debit <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque  I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription: <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliated Political Fund <input type="checkbox"/> General Political Fund  <input type="checkbox"/> Please tick here if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille)		<b>Political Fund:</b> <b>UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF)</b> is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliated to the Labour Party.  <b>UNISON's General Political Fund (GPF)</b> is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.  It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes above. Your subscription shown below includes a political fund payment so you do <b>not</b> pay any more by being in one of the funds.  <b>If you have been a member of a Trade Union before, please state which one:</b> _____			
Please tick the appropriate box below for your earnings before deductions:					
<b>Band</b>	<b>Weekly Pay</b>	<b>Annual Pay</b>	<b>Subs Per Week</b>	<b>Subs per Month</b>	<b>Tick Box</b>
A	Up to £38.47	Up to £2000	£0.30	£1.30	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	£38.48 - £96.16	£2001-£5000	£0.81	£3.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	£96.17 - £153.84	£5001-£8000	£1.22	£5.30	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	£153.85 - £211.53	£8001 - £11,000	£1.52	£6.60	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	£211.54 - £269.23	£11,001 - £14,000	£1.81	£7.85	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	£269.24 - £326.92	£14,001 - £17,000	£2.24	£9.70	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	£326.93 - £384.61	£17,001 - £20,000	£2.65	£11.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
H	£384.62 - £480.76	£20,001 - £25,000	£3.23	£14.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
I	£480.77 - £576.92	£25,001 - £30,000	£3.98	£17.25	<input type="checkbox"/>
J	£576.93 - £673.08	£30,000 - £35,000	£4.68	£20.30	<input type="checkbox"/>
K	£673.08 +	Over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid: Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/>					
Please tick this box if you are student member in full time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10.00 per year. <input type="checkbox"/>					
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Please return your completed form to:

Lee Crutchley c/o CELC, Ashley Building, University of Birmingham