

For Immediate Release from Birmingham University UNISON branch.

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£28,000 pay rise for University boss while cleaners struggle below living wage

Staff at the University of Birmingham are fighting hard over pay and conditions, in what they describe as a fight for basic living conditions.

Support Staff and Unions are asking for the Living Wage to be paid to all staff and argue that if the University can pay the Vice Chancellor a package with perks that amounts to more than half a million pounds and includes a chauffeur, a car and a house, then they can pay all staff a basic Living Wage.

Staff were shocked this week to learn that whilst the University claims it can't afford to pay them a Living Wage, a sum that would cost less than £100,000 a year, they awarded Vice Chancellor David Eastwood a £28,000 a year pay rise.

The Vice Chancellors £400,000 salary is 2.5 times that of the Prime Minister and a staggering £280,000 more than a Heart Surgeon.



Unison members demonstrate the injustice in pay scales. A High resolution photo is attached

The dispute is about pay and conditions for all support staff, the people who keep the University running. Cleaners, Catering staff, Security staff, Library Staff and the people who keep the courses running are just some of the people who have seen real term cuts to pay over recent years. With some of the lowest paid staff losing 10% of their wage and a typical member of staff now being £161.20 worse off each every month.

This dispute reaches every corner of the University with Lecturers and Academics forced to fight for a fair deal. They have seen their wages driven down like support staff.

Carol a cleaner added, 'It's really hard to get by and it's not fair that my family have to go without. Getting the National Living Wage would really help me. I have worked all my life and all I want is to pay my bills and still eat.

UNISON spokesperson Matt Raine said, 'The Vice Chancellor is now paid over 28 times more than the cleaners who start work at 6am every morning. It's a disgrace the University have the money to give a £28 000 a year rise to the Vice chancellor but won't pay the national Living Wage of £7.65 for its hard working staff. Over 80% of Unison staff voted to strike and it looks like Unite will be joining the action, we are not asking for a huge amount, simply enough to survive'

The beans used in the photograph were all donated to Bromsgrove Food bank to help others facing hardship.

Notes to Editors

- The Vice chancellors Pay is recorded in the University annual accounts <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/finance/UoB-Annual-Accounts-2013.pdf> (P.36).
- The National Living Wage is £7.65 per hour. The University of Birmingham currently pay 20p less per hour at £7.45 per hour for cleaning staff. More details are available at <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/> or <http://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/unison-campaigns/a-living-wage/home/>
- The Independent newspaper had a headline piece on Vice Chancellors wages on Friday 3rd January. <http://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/university-chiefs-under-fire-for-huge-pay-rises-after-tuition-fee-hikes-9034893.html>
- Further quotes and interviews with staff can be arranged.
- UNISON Members voted by 80% to vote for industrial action after the University imposed a 1% Pay Rise. Support staff who clean, cater and administer all the University functions have a had a real terms pay cut of 10% in the last 4 years
- A typical member of support staff on £19000 a year is now £161.20 a month worse off than they were 4 years ago.
- Full details of UNISON's pay claim are available on the branch website
- We gave the cleaner 2 cans of beans. Each can of beans therefore represents £6973. The Vice chancellor's salary is £400 000 representing 57 cans of beans (£400, 000 divided by £6973 = 57.3)
- <http://www.birminghamuniunison.org.uk/joint-trade-union-pay-claim-2013-14/>
- Additional pictures attached