



University Of Birmingham Branch

Talk In ...

Summer Edition

July 2011



Meet our new Pensions Officer

Public Sector strikes against cuts to Pensions and Birmingham Council workers pay great success

The recent strike by public sector workers was a magnificent success.

In total, three-quarters-of a-million Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), University and College Union (UCU), Association of Teachers and Lecturers: the education union (ATL) and National Union of Teachers (NUT) members took strike action in June. Unions and their members were upset over the current coalition government attacks on their pensions, jobs and work conditions. Teachers, lecturers and civil service workers walked out. Council workers in Birmingham, Doncaster and Southampton struck too. Government and the right-wing press had portrayed strikers as a threat to the nation. Thousands of strikers held firm and marched across towns and cities all over the UK from Truro in Cornwall up to Scotland. Around 13,000 schools out of 21,000 were affected by the strikes. The PCS union said that 84% of members walked out. Ten thousand Birmingham Council workers also joined Unite walkouts, marching through Birmingham.



Council workers took strike action over cuts to pay, working conditions and jobs. Branch secretary Matthew Raine joined the picket line at Lifford Lane. He spoke to a low-paid home care assistant, who said: "I'm going to lose over £3,000. They want us to work day and night for lower wages." She added, "we're here against the cuts—all the cuts. We're so proud to be out with the other unions, supporting each other."

Big thanks to our UNISON members who took the afternoon off to show their support by joining the march!

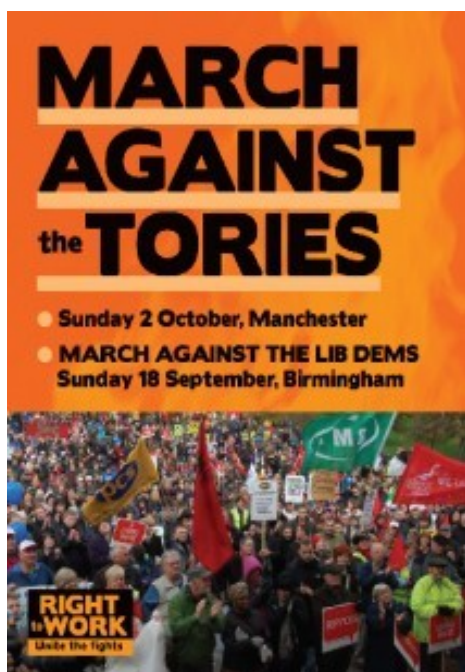
Hi everyone, I just wanted to introduce myself to members. I have been working as a Teaching Technician over in the School of Biosciences for the last nine years. I am an alumnus of this university, for what it's worth, and graduated back in 1992 from the School of Chemistry.

I think pensions are an extremely important part of our remuneration package and I want to raise awareness about the value of our pensions and how we can protect them.

There is so much happening on the pensions scene at the moment (see my article later in this newsletter) and I would welcome any member contacting me for an informal chat, or if there are any other issues you wish to discuss.

Sajid Awan 01214147799
S.J.Awan.1@bham.ac.uk

I work term-time only, but I will still be contactable by e-mail from 23rd July until 4th September.



Public Sector Pensions

In June national strikes were instigated by teaching unions and Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS). The industrial action was supported by Unison, a decision was made not to ballot our members until the outcomes of the detailed government negotiations are known.

BPAS Pensions

All members of BPAS should have received a letter and form from the Pensions Office outlining the options available for your membership of the scheme from 1st August. At first glance the options for this year look almost identical to those from August 2006 apart from the increase of option 1 from 6.7% to 6.8%. The more significant change is for the annual increases to pensions in payment to be linked to the value of the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rather than the Retail Prices Index (RPI). This will only apply to that element of your pension built up after 1st August 2011.

This change is happening as a result of the government announcement in the 'emergency budget' in June 2010 that all public sector pensions will be increased by CPI and not RPI from April 2011. In the detailed BPAS rules it is indicated that pensions in payment will be increased at whatever rate is used for the public sector. This is being challenged at a national level and Unison has joined a judicial review application (legal challenge of a government decision) to have this change to the pension schemes reversed. This is the ONLY way RPI may be maintained for BPAS and it is in our interests to support our members in the national fight to protect public sector pensions. To see what Unison are doing nationally see www.unison.org.uk/pensions/protectour.asp

2011 Pay Claim

Academic and Academic Related

Our university employers have offered a flat rate rise of £150 per year. UNISON have expressed our disappointment with this and made it clear it does not reflect the needs of our members with rising inflation. The National Higher Education Service Group executive voted to enter into a formal dispute with the employers to force further negotiations.

Stop PressSupport staff Pay Claim

We have just received a final pay offer from the University of 1.4%. A branch meeting on the 7th September will vote on the pay offer and more details will come out after your branch committee have met in August.

Newsletter put together on behalf of:
Executive Committee
Unison, University of Birmingham Branch
Newsletter Editor: Sarah Lilly

Overtime—make sure you are paid what you are owed

If you work your first or second rest day you are entitled to overtime or time off in lieu at the same rate.

Many managers are trying to force staff to take time off in lieu instead of being paid the overtime. Your contract of employment is quite clear, it is up to you the employee to request time off in lieu instead of overtime. Your manager can not force you to do this

Overtime details are in the support staff contract of employment. If you would like a full copy it is available online or email Matthew Raine m.j.raine@bham.ac.uk.

If you are concerned that overtime is not being paid correctly or feel pressured in any way please get in touch with your rep or a member of the branch committee.

Ways to contact your branch (A full list is on our website www.unison.bham.ac.uk)

Branch Secretary

Matthew Raine
m.j.raine@bham.ac.uk
Text 07904 960 442

Deputy Branch Secretary

Lee Crutchley
l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk
0121 414 7622

Chair

Paula Anne Beasley
p.a.beasley@bham.ac.uk

Vacant Posts

- ◆ Environmental Officer
- ◆ Women's Officer
- ◆ Academic Liaison Officer
- ◆ Health & Safety Officer (reserve)
- ◆ Young Members Officer
- ◆ UNISON Labour Link



**Celebrating Unisons success
at the University of
Birmingham Branch
Good news for HAS**

**Pay Grading/
Banding**

We are close to agreeing a new procedure for reviewing the job band/grade of support staff. Currently many staff take on additional responsibilities each year which over time can mean their job band should be re-evaluated.

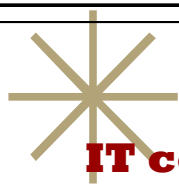
In some instances as employees we may be asked to take on a large chunk of additional responsibility. New procedures will allow staff to request for their job band to be re-evaluated. This should always happen whenever significant new responsibility is taken on. We hope to be able to email out the new procedure by September this year.

Over the last few months Unison has been in consultation with Hospitality and Accommodation Services (HAS) management over proposals to restructure catering operations in the HUB and Avanti. The original proposals put forward by management placed three of our members at risk of redundancy. A further eleven members faced losing up to 50% of their income due to reduced hours and a switch to term time only working.

Unison is delighted to be able to say that we have negotiated solutions for all these members. No Unison member has been made redundant and no members have been forced to lose income as a result of this restructuring exercise. We have worked rigorously with the University and HAS management to find alternate solutions that protect the job security and income levels of our members.

It is now important to have more support and more members, we encourage you to either join us as a Unison member or tell your friends. Departments across the university are now being asked to come up with plans to save money so financing staff and funding are increasingly important issues. In the last year we have represented many members at different consultations across campus and are proud to say we have never lost a member to compulsory redundancy.

For more details please contact our HAS Officer Howard Mower on 0121 414 4863 or email h.n.mower@bham.ac.uk.



September, Evening Courses

IT courses, Numeracy Skills, Literacy Skills

ENROL NOW.

If you have not studied for a while, why not make an easy start with UNISON's short 5 and 10 week courses.

By spending just a little time each week, learning at your own pace, you will improve your skills and notice the difference straightaway.

For more information contact Marian Jordan on 0121 414 6989 or m.a.jordan@bham.ac.uk.

**£10 voucher for every member
who recruits a new member!**

Contact Lee for more information: 0121 414 7622 or l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk

