



# Talk in UNISON

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



Summer 2016

## It's Time for a Pay Rise - Because We're Worth It

UNISON, along with the UNITE and GMB, have submitted our pay claim for a 5% pay rise for all staff on bands 100 - 500, with the demand that the University pay a starting rate of pay of £8.25 (pay for Grades 6 and above is negotiated nationally).

### Because We're Worth it

- We have helped to make the University the Sunday Times University of Year & Graduate Employer of the Year
- Given a 'Top Marks' by the QAA for Teaching Excellence
- 89% of students satisfied in the National Student Survey results

UNISON believe this and much more are delivered by all staff in the University and we are all proud of these achievements. The questions is, will the University top brass recognise us?

### Staff Pay Down - University Income Up

A typical Band 400 member of staff has had a real terms pay cut of over £1,700 per year in the last 5 years. Whilst we have all tightened our belts the University's income has gone up by 25% from £462m to £577 million per year.

### The University Can Afford It

The University made a profit/surplus of £44.4m in 2014/2015 and £31.5m in 2013/2014. Whilst we are still waiting on some University data, the cost a 5% rise is less than £5million per year.

The full pay claim and the latest news are on our branch website  
[www.birminghamuniunison.org.uk](http://www.birminghamuniunison.org.uk)

### End Poverty in 21st Century Britain

**It's Time for the Living Wage - No Ifs, No Buts.** The Real, Independently agreed, Living Wage is set to keep families just above the poverty line. Outside of London it is now £8.25 per hour. With an annual income of £577million per year, it is a disgrace that the University are keeping staff and their families below the poverty line.

**It's great to have a new £55million Sports Centre – but it shouldn't be paid for by keeping staff and their families below the poverty line.**

Quiz time:

Which of these people gets paid

**£416,000** a year?

A) The Prime Minister

B) NHS Heart Surgeon

C) The Head of MI5

D) UoB Vice-Chancellor

Find the answer in the  
side bar on page 3!

**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.

# Consultative Ballot Against Redundancies closes Fri 3 June

## We need job security for everyone

Following a motion at UNISON's branch AGM on 15 March, all UNISON members should have received a voting paper for a consultative ballot in the internal post. A consultative ballot is designed to give your UNISON reps an idea of the strength of feeling in the branch regarding a particular issue, as well as to show the University how seriously our members consider a particular issue to be.

This ballot comes after UNISON members across the University found their jobs at risk in a series of restructures in the past year. Your UNISON reps have so far been able to protect members from compulsory redundancy through constant negotiation and casework – this is not guaranteed to work in every case, however.

Matt Raine, UNISON Branch Secretary added: **'We know the University could do a lot more to avoid making people redundant if they wanted to, through better and earlier training of staff, through wider and more effective use of voluntary severance or heaven forbid employing enough people that you're not stressed!'**

Compulsory redundancy entails the loss of employment with three months notice (based on your contract) and statutory compensation (based on the legal requirement). The amount of money a typical UNISON member would receive is calculated on length of service and age but there is no guarantee it will be enough to enable those with mortgages and other expenses to cope in the time it takes to find another job. In fact, after 10 years' service, a typical band 400 full time employee would only receive £3,832.30.

The original motion at the AGM was focused specifically on a restructure the University launched affecting staff who work in some of the smaller site libraries on campus. Your UNISON Branch Committee voted to broaden the scope of the ballot in response to concessions won in relation to this particular restructure as well as concerns about possible upcoming restructures in other areas.

The current ballot simply asks if members are prepared to strike if the University seeks to make any member compulsorily redundant. If the ballot is successful, members will be given another vote in a formal strike ballot after your UNISON reps have tried to stop any particular compulsory redundancy by other means.

**It's vital that we send a really strong message to the University about this issue – we need a big YES vote to help us in negotiations.**

Lost or not received your ballot paper? Please email Matt or ([matthewraine@outlook.com](mailto:matthewraine@outlook.com)) or Lee ([l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk)) or text Matt on 07904 960 442.

Quiz answer:

**D is the correct answer - the University's Vice-Chancellor earns nearly as much as the other three answers combined!**

**UNISON believe that all staff should be fairly rewarded for their hard work and continue to campaign for a decent pay rise and the Living Wage for all staff members.**



# The wider issues

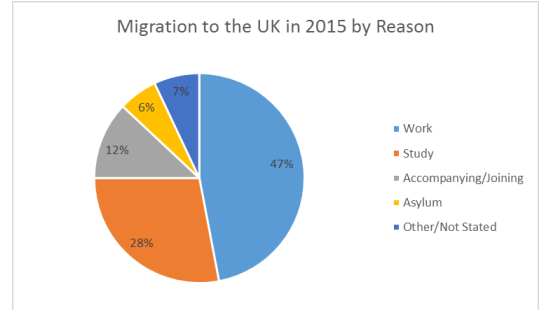
## Immigration Myth Busting

**MYTH: People who migrate to the UK are doing so to claim benefits – FALSE**

Based on 2015 immigration statistics from the Office for National Statistics, the vast majority of people who migrate to the UK are doing so to work or to study.

In numbers:

- 47% of migrants to the UK come here to work and of these, the majority already have a definite job to go to (Source: ONS)
- Foreign nationals in the UK are just as likely to be employed as British nationals (in fact, female foreign nationals are **more** likely to be employed than their British counterparts) (Source: Migration Observatory)
- 28% of migrants to the UK come here to study – this is the main reason non-EU migrants come to the UK. This directly translates into income and jobs in Universities like ours. Almost 80% of visas granted to study in the UK are for University education. (Source: ONS)
- Of the remainder, 12% of people migrating to the UK are joining or accompanying a family member (this could include those recently married to UK nationals or those accompanying or joining those with jobs), while only 6% are here to claim asylum. (Source: ONS)



## Opinion: Oppose the government on academies By Joe Ward (Joint Branch Chair)

In his March budget speech, George Osborne announced the government's plan to force all local authority schools to become academies by 2022, which was reaffirmed by a white paper launched by Secretary of State, Nicky Morgan.

Whilst 'academisation' has been on the political agenda since the latter years of New Labour, there has never been such compulsion placed upon schools to become academies, regardless of their performance. It is perhaps because Osborne and Morgan's plan is so overtly ideological that it has faced such staunch opposition, not only from the Labour party, local councils (including Birmingham), and across teachers' unions, but also from backbench Conservatives.

Indeed, the plans seem to have been drawn up without simple practical considerations, such as the fact that local authorities would still have to ensure school places for all children in their area, whilst no longer having the power to build and expand local schools. As the government only commands a slight majority in the House of Commons, the extent of the opposition facing them has led to another U-turn, with Morgan looking set to exempt 'well-performing' councils from the plans.

This is yet another example of how incompetent and exposed this government is: chaos over Europe; U-turn on tax credit cuts; climb-down on TU Bill. In such a situation, the importance of all opposition becomes clearest. By opposing their pernicious agenda, we can pressure them to reverse such policies.

# Your 2016 Committee



**Matt Raine, Branch Secretary**

As Branch Secretary, Matt is the lead officer within the branch. He is responsible for pay and policy negotiations with the University, deals with case-work and helps to get areas organised.



**Lee Crutchley, Deputy Branch Secretary**

Lee is the Deputy Branch Secretary and supports the Branch Secretary with the branch. Lee takes the lead role in supporting members with issues in their workplaces and dealing with membership queries.



**Joe Ward, Branch Chair (job share)**

As joint Branch Chairs, Joe and Abby facilitate all branch and committee meetings and ensuring branch, and union rules are followed.



**Abby Gulliver, Branch Chair (job share)**



**Rory Shannon, Branch Treasurer**

Rory is the Branch Treasurer and manages all of the branch finances, including keeping accounts, preparing budgets, dealing with expenses. Rory is also the Labour Link officer and brings union issues to the Labour party.



**Mike Moore, Health and Safety Officer**

Mike is the Health & Safety Officer and promotes all aspects of health and safety at work by making sure members and branch officers are aware of issues and attending meetings with University management to improve health and safety on campus.

# - Who is who?



**Sandra Glenn,  
Equalities Officer**

Sandra is the Branch Equality Officer and deals with any equal opportunities policies affecting staff, as well as attending relevant meetings with University management to ensure that equality issues are always taken into account in any negotiations.



**David Piela, Disabled  
Members' Officer**

As Disabled Members' Officer, David is a support point for any member facing issues due to being disabled. He also leads campaigns on disability-specific issues and organises meetings for the Self Organised Group for disabled members.



**Vera Kubenz,  
Communications Officer**

Vera is the Communications Officer and designs and edits your UNISON branch newsletter, as well as updating the website and the branch Twitter account. She has also produced posters and is involved in campaigns such as our '1000 Members' campaign.

## Want to get involved?

We are always looking for more people to help out, and you don't have to take on an official role to get involved! Anyone is welcome to attend the committee meetings and contribute as much as they can.

If you would like to take a more active role in your union, either in a general capacity or to campaign on a specific issue, let us know!

The branch committee usually meets on every first Tuesday of the month at 5pm - so why not come along to see what it's like? Contact Lee ([l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk)) beforehand for the location as this can change every month.

# Health and Safety News

## Stress in the Work Place

The University Branches of UNISON, UNITE & UCU have all expressed concerns to the University about how stress is measured at the University, and what can be done to identify and remove or reduce sources of stress. The trade unions have proposed that the University adopts the Health & Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards, including its survey. Discussions continue at the Wellbeing Advisory Group and Joint Safety Advisory Committee.

## Work-related Stress - some facts:

### • What causes work-related stress?

The following were listed as the most common causes in a 2013 poll of UK Workers; job reorganisation or job insecurity; hours worked or workload; lack of support to fulfil role; being subject to unacceptable behaviour; lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities; limited opportunities to manage own workload (Source: Ipsos-MORI on behalf of European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) 2013).

### • What is work-related stress?

Work-related stress is a reaction (which varies according to the individual and according to the pressures placed upon them); an individual who is underemployed at work (work not demanding enough, repetitive, no opportunity to develop) can become stressed by a lack of control over their work, frustration, boredom and under-involvement, while another individual who is subject to too many demands may become stressed by overload; competing tasks, tight deadlines and a lack of support making it physically impossible for an individual to complete all that is expected of them. Harassment and bullying can also cause work-related stress. Somewhere between underemployment and over-demand there is an ideal level where individuals are stimulated, creative and effective. **There is a tendency to confuse pressure with stress: there is no such thing as 'good' stress!**

### • What are the symptoms of work related stress?

- ♦ Change in behaviours;
- ♦ Tearfulness, irritability or aggression;
- ♦ Indecisiveness;
- ♦ Increased sickness absence;
- ♦ Poor timekeeping;
- ♦ Reduced performance (e.g. inability to concentrate);
- ♦ Overworking or failure to delegate;
- ♦ Erosion of self-confidence;
- ♦ Relationship problems (e.g. becoming withdrawn or argumentative);
- ♦ Increasing unwillingness to co-operate or accept advice;
- ♦ Excessive smoking, drinking or drug abuse.

(Source: WorkStress Handbook; UK national Work Stress Network (WorkStress.Net))

### • What can be done about it?

If you recognise some of the symptoms above in yourself, or in a colleague:

- Come and talk to your UNISON Health and Safety Representative and encourage your colleagues to do the same so that ways to change the situation can be identified.
- Contact the University's Employee Support Services:
  - ♦ Employee Advice & Listening Service: [j.harris.3@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.harris.3@bham.ac.uk) / 0121 415 8774
  - ♦ Counselling Service; [j.harris.3@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.harris.3@bham.ac.uk) / 0121 415 8774
  - ♦ Harassment Advice Service; [harassment@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:harassment@contacts.bham.ac.uk) / 0121 415 8774
- Other sources of information:
  - ♦ Health & Safety Executive; [www.hse.gov.uk/stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress)
  - ♦ The UK National Work-stress Network: [www.workstress.net](http://www.workstress.net)

**Did you know..?**

**It is estimated that there are 1.2 million cases of ill health caused or made worse by work, with 22.3 million working days lost due to work-related illness.**

**Source: RoSPA**



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

# H&S in workplaces

## New Main Library – Health and Safety Inspection

Your UNISON reps undertook an inspection of the new Main Library site at the start of April. We inspected every part of the building including all staff and student areas along with the research reserve closed access. As a new building the library does possess some innovations in terms of environment control and ecological impact. For example – it has been constructed with solar panels and the temperature and airflow of the building are designed to be self-balancing.

That being said, UNISON does have some concerns over particular features of the building. As with many new University buildings, staff spaces are open-plan, presenting clear difficulties when it comes to the need to allow staff to modify their own personal environment as an accessibility requirement and for general comfort. In particular, questions remain over how adjustable lighting levels are – a clear requirement for staff with light-sensitivity. We have also requested that the University look at the provision of blue badge parking bays near the Library, as the current provision could leave blue badge holders facing a walk of 50-60 metres before they are inside the building.

Your UNISON reps have also asked questions regarding heating, noise reduction, the accessibility of any new software, as well as safety features around atriums and the shelving in the research reserve. We are currently awaiting responses to our questions and will follow up on any issue that is likely to affect the safety of library staff and users when the project is complete.

## Health and Safety Issues Continue in Student Hub

Problems continue in the Student Hub in Aston Webb C Block, nine months after staff started to move into the newly refurbished building. It houses Academic Services staff from Student Services, Registry and Careers and a number of staff members have approached UNISON with complaints about their working environment.

UNISON have conducted a Health and Safety inspection as well as a survey of Hub staff. The survey showed that 78% of staff had problems with the office temperature, with many reporting headaches, joint pain and discomfort as a result, as well as complains about lack of fresh air, as the windows cannot be opened.

43% of staff also reported that the lights around their workplace were too bright, potentially causing headaches and eye problems. Other frequently raised issues included doors being too heavy, various problems with the bathrooms, and the general noise of the office environment.

While senior management have made efforts to resolve these issues, progress has been very slow, meaning many staff continue to experience significant problems.

UNISON will continue to work with the Hub management to get these issues resolved sooner. In the meantime, if you work in the Hub and experience any problems that particularly affect you, please contact David Piela, Academic Services Steward ([dpiela3@gmail.com](mailto:dpiela3@gmail.com)) or Matt Raine ([matthewraine@outlook.com](mailto:matthewraine@outlook.com)).



# 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"/>					
The information provided by you shall be recorded by Unison for statistical purposes and used for sending you Unison publications, ballot forms and other wise communicating with you. If you do <b>NOT</b> want any mailings from Unison, besides those required by statute please tick this box <input type="checkbox"/>					
To keep fully informed of the services we arrange for members we want you to receive details of benefits offered by or in conjunction with Unison's affinity partners. The affinity partners are organisations with close links to Unison that share our ambition to provide you with the best possible range of benefits. Under Data Protection legislation we can only disclose your details to our affinity partners with your explicit consent. Therefore if you <b>WANT</b> to receive details of the full range of benefits you <b>MUST</b> tick this box <input type="checkbox"/>					

Please return your completed form to:

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