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Members Newsletter/ Autumn 22

YOUR UNISON UOB



Your Updates

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Breaking News

UCU Have Voted “YES!”

Huge congratulations to our colleagues in UCU on achieving an incredible result in their recent ballot for strike action!

This is an unbelievable collective achievement- the only union which has achieved a national mandate for action since 2016.

[Read more here](#) and keep an eye out for future communications from us on how we can support our University of Birmingham colleagues in their endeavours for fairness in pay and pensions.

The Long Read

Pay Spine Talks Explainer

Band	Point	Pay
Band 400	1	£12.15
	2	£12.30
	3	£12.45
	4	£12.60
	5	£12.75
	6	£12.90
Band 500	1	£13.05
	2	£13.20
	3	£13.35
	4	£13.50
	5	£13.65
	6	£13.80

What is the pay spine and what are the discussions for?

The structure of grades and points is how our pay is organised. Our yearly pay talks mostly involve increasing everyone's pay by a percentage, but the pay spine talks are more nuanced and include negotiating the pay people begin on, how quickly they move up their grade and the maximum pay for each band and role.

Main Points for Discussion

- All of the bands have a lot of performance related points. These must be earned by being nominated by your manager for going above and beyond your job. It can take decades to reach the top of a grade and is very subjective because of this.
- Each yearly increase- especially the automatic ones- are very small.
- With lower grades, pay rises have been dealt with by chopping the bottom off the scale, meaning that band 200 has no automatic progression and band 300 has very little.
- The University has fallen behind many of their competitors in relation to pay. Pre-pandemic this was seen as an issue for band 400 and 500, now it is safe to say that all bands are much lower than they should be compared to similar employers.

Curious? [Continue our Long Read on our Blog](#)

Short Read

Pay and The PDR Process

Why have we asked for pay to be separated from the PDR process?

- To de-incentivise the PDR process would take pressure off staff during their yearly review, no need to compete for extra pay awards.
 - Very few people get to those bands reserved exclusively for performance related pay.
 - Performance related pay awards are highly subjective, dependant on your relationship with your manager to put you forward for a rise.
 - They aren't available to all, there aren't any performance related points for band 200.
-

How You Can Help

Talking to Colleagues About Your Union



The number of members we have makes a huge difference to our negotiations over pay and working conditions. Without our strength in numbers, it becomes more difficult to negotiate effectively. We are currently negotiating on the pay spine, **which is why we need your help more than ever.**

There has never been a better time to join a Union. With rising costs and wages falling behind inflation drastically, standing with our colleagues to demand better is more important than ever. There has been lots of publicity on trade union activity this year, through postal and rail strikes, people are more aware of trade unions, but might not know how joining would benefit them here at the University. Against the backdrop of the cost of living crisis and employers failing to support their workforce, more people might be considering joining.

Every team and every office is different. In some areas many colleagues are unionised, so talking about your union is probably open and a part of office conversation, which is fantastic. In areas with less members, this might feel a bit more daunting but we can help with that!

How You Can Help

If colleagues are discussing work issues, highlight how your union can help with these:

- We consult you and negotiate to improve pay and conditions for all support staff at the University- including this years pay rise, one off payment and pay spine improvements to come.
- Our reps improve health and safety at the University.
- We support you in meetings with management.
- We support you in the event of restructuring and redundancy.
- We offer members more and better training to help you progress (Do ask us about training)
- We provide advice on your legal employment rights.
- We offer debt advice and support.

Make sure to let new team members know we are here for them, pass on our details and let them know who their local rep is, if you don't know your local rep, we can provide their details.

It's great to give close-to-home and relatable examples- check out our "we did that!" sections in your newsletters for examples of the things we have achieved together, here at the University.

If you would like to help advise colleagues in your area, drop us an email and ask us about becoming a rep! If you are just curious and want a chat about being more active, just let us know. We also have regular committee meetings which members are welcome to join.

If you have co-workers who are academic or related staff, refer them to our colleagues in [UCU](#).

Support and Advice

The Cost of Living



vulnerable than others. Evidence suggests that the poorest will pay most as they spend a larger proportion on food and fuel, costs of which are the most inflated. In work poverty has risen sharply and in many cases strict budgeting might not be enough. We know that some of our members are very worried about money, we hear cases of people struggling and want to help to stop members from falling into debt with their food, rent, credit cards, gas and electric bills.

Terrifying [statistics from the TUC](#) are reporting that as much as one in seven are skipping meals to make budgets stretch further, [Birmingham Ladywood constituency is reported to have the highest percentage of people going without food](#)- 29%, nearly one in three.

If you find yourself in that situation, please don't struggle alone. It is really important to deal with these difficulties before they become bigger and disrupt your health, your sleep, your mental health and your family life.

Wherever you feel your financial struggles are, we want to provide some suggestions and a list of resources for different types of support for when you need it.

We have written a new blog post on the topic which directs you to financial support options for a huge range of issues we might all face in coming months. It contains information on government energy price support and how it will be paid as well as how to check your council tax and debt support options. [Read more here](#).

UNISON Financial Wellbeing:

UNISON have a webinar tomorrow on borrowing and debt:

[Friday 28th October 2-3pm Borrowing in 2022 What Can I Do to Borrow Cash This Year?](#): It is sometimes necessary to borrow money but not all debt is the same, when we are desperate we can sometimes make borrowing decisions we regret. Whatever you do for a living, the session is aimed at anyone with questions about borrowing money- past present and future.

Try the UNISON [Budget calculator here](#) and explore the [UNISON Financial support options](#) here, you can access these via your branch so do get in touch if any of these would benefit you and you think you might be eligible.

Spotlight

Experiences of Pride



This year around 75,000 people attended Pride over the weekend and the theme was “25 Years of Pride and Protest.” The protest element of Pride is still so important, when conversion therapy is still legal in the UK and many other countries and it is still illegal to be LGBTQIA+ in some countries. It is also a celebration which encourages LGBTQIA+ people to feel empowered, recognised and valued publicly without shame or discrimination.

Luke and Sam- UoB UNISON members.

Our members, Luke and Sam from Library Services were part of this years Pride Parade. They practiced for months on a dance routine, themed “Kings of Pride” with their dance class- “Burlesque Glitz Glamclass,” who have performed as part of the parade in previous years. The dance classes are taught by [House of Allure](#), a Birmingham based burlesque and cabaret group. The class were led by their teacher, Dominus Von Vexo, who aims to uplift and inspire dancers as well as encourage them to explore dance through their own creative lens. Everyone involved in the dance class, whether LGBTQIA+ or an ally, believes in celebrating, empowering and supporting their queer family and community whilst expressing themselves through dance.

You can watch a [video of their amazing performance here!](#)

Choreography: Dominus Von Vexo, Photography: Sarah Maiden, Video: Golden Core Studios and Jacques Visuals.

Jodie- UoB UNISON Branch Chair.

Pride is a fantastic example of all that's brilliant in Brum! It's a safe, welcoming & colourful celebration of kindness & love that brings communities & friends together. At home & abroad homophobic & transphobic attitudes cause unimaginable harm. Pride celebrations are an opportunity to learn more about LGBTQ+ issues & show solidarity & allyship with fellow Brummies.

Lizee- UoB UNISON Comms Officer.

parade was enormous, with a much bigger crowd cheering everyone who walked, wheeled, danced or trotted (there were many dogs) in the procession. I was delighted to see so many other trade unions in the parade carrying banners, the crowd cheered in solidarity for the [RMT](#) and the [CWU](#) who are still taking industrial action. It was a joy to find so many community groups represented among the throng, including the Birmingham Unicorns cricket club, [co-founded by an ex-UoB colleague](#). I was pleased that many of the companies who had corporate floats- including big companies from the retail and construction trades- are winning awards for equality initiatives.

This gave me some food for thought and along with the theme of “Pride as Protest” I wanted to reflect on how I could be more proactive. As a Bi person visibility can be a huge issue, often negative stereotypes and feelings of imposter syndrome force Bi people to remain silent. [According to a Stonewall](#) survey 46% of men and 23% of women said that they aren’t open to their families about their sexuality. In the spirit of visibility and acceptance, I wanted to promote the benefits of visibility within our University community. If you would like to support your LGBTQIA+ colleagues and students, you can attend a short course [via the Allyship scheme](#). When you have attended you will be given a rainbow lanyard- the easiest and most immediate signal of inclusivity on campus. Any LGBTQIA+ staff members can also get a lanyard by asking the Rainbow Network.

Upcoming Sessions are at 12-2pm on the following dates, please feel free to bring your lunch along!: [2nd November](#), [7th February](#), [4th May](#).

Save the Date

COP 27 Demonstrations



COP 27 Mobilisations: 12 November, Victoria Square 2pm.

one day or joint action and demand that the UK government cease their devastating climate plans during COP27 and commit to climate solutions which end the climates and the cost of living crisis.

This year COP 27 will be hosted in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt between 6-18th November.

Climate Justice Coalition is a UK based coalition, members include trade unions, environment and development NGOs, grassroots community campaigns, faith groups, youth groups, migrant and racial justice networks.

The Birmingham location is Victoria Square at 2pm, you can find all of the information [here](#).

Learn

Free Courses For UNISON Members



A new term of courses for UNISON members is now live and [available here](#). You can book using the online forms at the bottom of each page.

The programme includes courses that can help you professionally, if you fancy adding a few extra skills to your CV, such as Excel and Spreadsheets (Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced), Power to be You (Confidence Skills), Planning for Retirement as well as courses like Family History, Health and Wellbeing Skills and more!

**Remember that
UNISON helps our
members with a
wide range of
advice and
support.**

Please Contact: Lee Crutchley

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Progress

We Did That!

Some of the things your union has achieved and what we are working towards together.

- Probation: We successfully negotiated the change to provide full sick pay to all staff from day 1 of their probationary period.
- Support: We've supported members from across the University in a huge range of issues at work, in both providing advice and attending meetings.
- Pay: We successfully negotiated a pay rise of between 5-9% depending on pay grade and a one off payment to help with rising costs between £105-£350 depending on FTE.



University, to inform decisions on operations during this summers heatwave.

- Section meetings: We held a meeting this month with our members in Estates to discuss issues in their area.

[Read More On Our Blog](#)[Invite a Colleague](#)[Forward Our 10 Great Reasons to Join Unison](#)

Get in touch

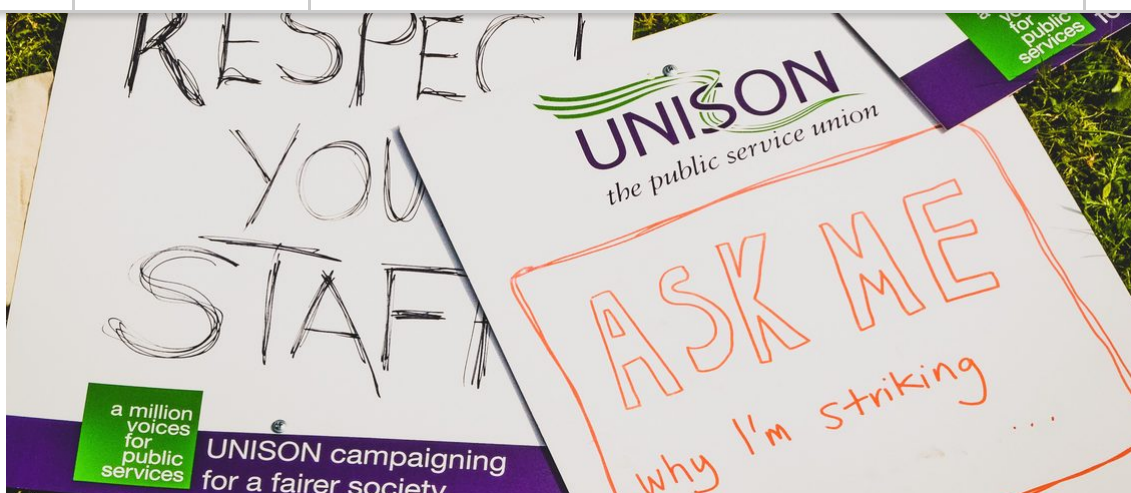
Call For Comments

Can you help us to be better?

We would love to hear your suggestions of what you would like to see more of in your newsletter, drop us an email and send us your thoughts.



Thank you.



best wishes from us all,

Your Unison Committee

