

## Picketing myth buster

### ● **What is the law on picketing?**

Peaceful picketing is entirely legal. Picketing is a legal activity to peacefully persuade members not to go to work and should be carried out at or near an entrance or exit from a site at which the pickets work. When others who are not in dispute come into work or use these entrances or exits, pickets must not interfere with them.

Pickets should wear an armband indicating they are on duty. Placards and posters should be displayed stating 'OFFICIAL PICKET.'

### ● **I am not a UNISON member. Can I take part in the strike?**

We would like everyone to respect the picket lines and not go into work, but if you are not a UNISON member you will not be legally covered and we will not be able to support you if the university or college decides to take disciplinary action against you. However, you are able to join UNISON and take part in any action up to the day of the strike taking place.

### ● **What if I am part time?**

UNISON believes that any deduction must be pro-rata for part time staff. The deduction must only be for your contracted hours. Please contact your local UNISON rep if your employer attempts to deduct more than they should.

### ● **I have external work commitments on the day(s) of the strikes - should I cancel?**

If your commitments are part of your normal work for the university or college, you should not attend them on a strike day(s).

### ● **Annual leave**

Taking annual leave on strike days is not regarded as participating in the action and members should be discouraged from this.

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#### ● Contractor staff

UNISON members who work for a **private contractor** are not covered by the strike. UNISON cannot advise them not to attend for work or not to cross a UNISON picket. If these individuals choose not to attend work or cross our picket lines, then UNISON will represent their interests.

#### ● Strike pay?

The standard level of strike pay is currently £15 per day and it will apply in most disputes. Where a strike is of less than four days' duration, no payment of standard strike pay will be made. Once a fourth day of action has been undertaken strike pay becomes payable from the first day.

To qualify for payment, a member must have participated in all four days of action. The only exception to this relates to part-time workers who, due to their pattern of work, have participated in less than four days' action. In their case, payment will become due once the dispute has entered its fourth day. The days of action need not be consecutive. The Inland Revenue does not regard strike payments as taxable earnings.

Branches can supplement this in certain circumstances. 15 out of 20 members are in branches who hold local Industrial Action Funds. Branches with Industrial action funds have been encouraged to publicise the financial assistance available to members involved in the dispute and should maintain strict confidentiality in administering and making payments to members who claim.

#### ● Exemptions from strike action:

It is UNISON practice to ensure that members who would suffer long-term financial loss can work normally during industrial action. They are:

- employees in their last year of service who are in a pension scheme.
- pregnant women who have notified their employer of the expected date of the birth (unless there is a clear commitment from the employer that the member will not suffer detriment).
- people whose state benefits may be affected if they take part in strike action.
- members who are not actual employees.

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## STRIKE FOR FAIR PAY!

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