

FURTHER EDUCATION

2016 PAY CAMPAIGN

ACTIVIST BULLETIN No.1



● **What is the strike about?**

UNISON members in a consultative ballot voted to reject the Employers Pay offer of £230 for all Support Staff. Although the Employers then moved to change that offer to £400 to those earning under £22k and £230 to those earning more, UNISON members have voted overwhelmingly to reject that too and to move to take Industrial Action.

The EIS have received a settlement already in 2016 for Lecturing Staff of £450.

So, the strike is basically about justice and fairness. UNISON does not think Support Staff are SECOND CLASS workers – you work for the same employer; provide a professional service to the same student body; are equally qualified in your roles.

● **What about negotiations?**

The NJNC national bargaining machinery produced a £300 flat –rate settlement in 2015 for all staff , teaching and support (with the same yet disputed £100 supplement). There is a meeting in Glasgow on 25 August 2016. This is the LAST CHANCE for the employers to avert a STRIKE.

● **Do I have to go on strike?**

UNISON recognises that taking strike action is very challenging. However, all other options of negotiations with the employers have been explored. UNISON members are being balloted on whether they are prepared to take strike action in pursuit of an improved pay offer. If a 'YES' vote is delivered then UNISON asks that every member observes the strike and show solidarity with colleagues

Members who do not observe the strike undermine our bargaining power, and makes it harder for us to protect all our members. When UNISON calls a strike we ask that you do not go to work, but instead contact your local rep and volunteer to help out on the picket lines. This is not illegal, it isn't dangerous and it can be fun! It shows that everyone is united in taking strike action. UNISON only takes strike action once every other avenue of influence and negotiations have been exhausted.

● **What about the impact on students?**

UNISON understands that members do not like taking action that affects students. However when UNISON members have been lawfully balloted and voted to take strike action, UNISON is making a case for greater investment in and defence of the quality of the service members provide to students. It is the employer's responsibility to explain to students why services and classes are cancelled or disrupted on strike days.

Members should talk to students on campus before the strikes. You should explain why the union is taking this action and the impact of the squeeze in pay and living standards. UNISON is engaging nationally with the NUS to ensure that local student unions are aware of issues around the campaign.

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● Do I have to tell my employer that I am taking strike action?

Employer's might send you a formal-sounding letter asking you to declare in advance whether you will be taking industrial action. You are under no obligation to inform your employer in advance as to whether you will be taking part in strike action.

UNISON is legally required to give employers some statistical information about UNISON members taking industrial action, but we do not give individual names.

● Am I breaking my contract by taking strike action?

All effective industrial action is a breach of your contract of employment. The law protects workers from dismissal whilst taking part in lawful industrial action at any time within 12 weeks of the start of the action and depending on the circumstances, dismissal may also be unfair if it takes place later.

● Will participating in strike action affect my entitlement to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)?

UNISON normally exempts women who are pregnant from taking strike action so that it does not affect their rights to appropriate state benefits.

● How will it affect my pension?

In some strikes (particularly short ones) employers may not withhold superannuation contributions and therefore participation in strike action has not generally affected pensions. Nonetheless it is a possibility. However institutions that do choose to withhold contributions usually make provision for members to make up pension and Additional Voluntary Contribution deficits from their pay.

● How much money will I lose?

You should expect to have an equivalent day's salary deducted for every day that you take part in the strike.

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STRIKE FOR FAIR PAY!
