

SHU UCU – Branch Meeting 26 February 2025 (hybrid)

There were 59 members present (50 online and 9 in person).

There were no issues raised with the minutes from previous Branch meeting minutes from 16 October and 20 November 2024 and 15 January 2025.

Branch Secretary Update

The Branch Secretary thanked members for taking part in the ballot and voting. Despite problems with postal services, the branch gave a clear and decisive mandate with 84% of members voting for strike action.

The pressure from members and the ballot created a small movement early on during the voting period where the employer changed the pay deferral situation slightly. The pay deferral was ended in March, but this still leaves 7 months with no uplift which is worth on average £800 to members.

The offer of four shutdown days in recognition of loss of pay seemed positive at first, but when pressed management have refused to award the hours on academic work plans which would in reality mean members having to undertake 30 hours of unpaid work during the holidays.

The Branch Committee have discussed how to take this forward. It is clear that members want to take action, and that management has not shifted in any meaningful way. In addition, recent SHU accounts show considerable improvements and a cash surplus, although there are still the financial issues with covenants and student numbers.

The committee's position is based on the clear mandate from members to notify for strike action as soon as possible, and starting with 2 strike days at the end of this semester and before teaching ends. This is in order to apply more pressure for negotiating the rest of back pay and work planned hours for any shutdown days.

There was a wide range of questions and comments from members about the strategy and priorities for negotiations including: AWP negotiations, the overwhelming mandate for strike action, the need to send a strong message to SHU management; the lack of transparency and engagement from management re accounts; morale of members; threat of strike action creating movement in past, impact of publicity etc on SHU; how best to organise and support strike action; impact of lack of admin staff following redundancies in Professional Services; workload and work intensification as key issue for members; Branch's successful record of strike action; risk of members who won't strike; vital need for branch to maintain strength and to fight for better offer; good support from other campus unions; frustration reported from members when strike action previously withdrawn; practicalities of strike action including focussing picket lines/demonstrations in key location.

There followed a show of hands for the proposal from Branch Committee to notify management of strike action, beginning with two days of strike action before the end of teaching during this semester.

The committee's position was supported overwhelmingly with 56 out of 59 in support.

Motion 1

Bob Jeffery proposed the motion
Alex Marshall seconded the motion
There were no speakers against the motion.

Motion Supporting the End Not Defend campaign

- This UCU branch notes that the exposure of sexual harassment at McDonald's, and recent survey evidence that has revealed 1/3 workers experience workplace sexual harassment every single year.
- This branch also notes that currently workplace sexual harassment is regulated by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, but that body – unlike the Health and Safety Executive – has no powers around pre-active inspection and limited powers around enforcement.
- This branch believes that there is an urgent need for legislation to protect workers from this toxic behaviour, alongside increased campaigning on the issues by trade unions.
- This branch resolves to support the '[End Not Defend](#)' campaign by the Workers Policy Project to campaign for:
 - i. a Specialist Sexual Harassment Reporting System (SHRS) where workers can anonymously report sexual harassment to trained advisors, ensuring safe and supported disclosure.
 - ii. Enhanced enforcement powers for when organisations fail to protect their workers or deal with sexual harassment.
 - iii. Annual published reporting to bring harassment reporting in line with gender pay gap reporting.
 - iv. Increased time limits for sexual harassment grievances in line with criminal complaints.
- We also call on the national UCU to affiliate to and support the work of End Not Defend.

The meeting voted on the motion:

Yes: 51

Abstain: 5

No: 0

The motion was carried with an overwhelming majority.

Motion 2

Bob Jeffery proposed the motion
Alison McCamley seconded the motion
There were no speakers against the motion.

Solidarity with UCU Dundee

UCU SHU notes:

- In November 2024 (NB corrected from 2025), the Principal of the University of Dundee revealed a £30 million deficit and resigned. Other members of the senior management team have also left the University

- The University has refused to rule out compulsory redundancies and have not yet announced the size of cuts or the number of staff they are looking to make redundant.
- After a successful industrial action ballot, Dundee UCU members have announced three weeks of industrial action starting on 24 February 2025 for three weeks.

UCU SHU believes:

- To fight against compulsory redundancies.
- Branches should support each other.

UCU SHU resolves:

- To send a message of solidarity to Dundee UCU members
- To make a donation of £200 to the Dundee UCU strike fund
- To publicise Dundee UCU's campaigns against job losses

The meeting voted on the motion:

Yes: 51

Abstain: 3

No: 0

The motion was carried with an overwhelming majority

Any other business

- The Branch has been contacted by University of Sheffield UCU branch. UoS branch has passed a motion about Sheffield City Council's adoption of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which affects and potentially criminalises homeless people.
- UoS branch has requested that SHU branch agrees to signing a joint letter to Sheffield City Council to protest about this.
- Member Ben Archer gave more details about the scheme and involvement at SHU.

There was a show of hands from the meeting with a clear majority agreeing to sign up to joint letter with UoS branch.