UCU SHU Branch Meeting (hybrid)
29 June 2026

Members present: 67 (62 online / 5 in person)

Update from Negotiating Team

The Negotiating Team updated the Branch about meeting with the Employer (UEB) earlier that day. The Employer acknowledged concerns about redundancy pools, but will continue with making £1 million savings and therefore proceed with CR (Compulsory Redundancy) process.

They are also reviewing the redundancy pools as a matter of urgency today and tomorrow, and indicated they would pursue all options to avoid CR. They may offer VR (Voluntary Redundancy) instead of CR. Roles from within colleges would be looked at and training would be offered for affected staff.

PILON update: Members do not have to accept PILON and can work out their notice and have a longer period on the deployment register.

There was a range of comments and questions from the floor including: scepticism about rationale for the process of pursuing CR; concerns raised about how UCU is misrepresented by UEB including false claim aspects of job descriptions and CR process have been agreed with union; discussion of submitting strike dates for October.

Strike dates and matters relating to job descriptions will be taken up at the Away Day and discussed with Regional Official.

Motion 1

Proposed by Jill Pluquailec

Seconded by Bob Jeffery

Motion: Requisition for a Special Higher Education Sector Conference on the SoS Campaign and Electronic Balloting

This branch notes:

1. The ongoing crisis in higher education and UCU's lack of a national response.
2. Rule 16.11 of the UCU Rules permits the convening of a Special Sector Conference upon receipt of requisitions from quorate general meetings in 20 branches from separate institutions within the sector, provided the intended business is specified.
3. HE14, committing UCU to pursue a dispute with the Secretary of State for Education over Higher Education funding (SoS Campaign), based on legal advice establishing the viability of such a dispute.
4. The National Education Union (NEU) has announced plans to launch a ballot over school funding in October to prevent redundancies and rises in workload.
5. There are no plans for UCU to allow electronic balloting for industrial action after it is introduced under the Employment Rights Act in August 2026.

This branch believes:

6. The SoS Campaign is necessary to defend jobs, pay, conditions, and the future of public higher education.
7. Coordinating with other unions in education is key to winning this campaign.
8. The failure to progress the SoS Campaign highlights serious democratic problems within UCU.
9. UCU needs to prepare for the introduction of electronic balloting to coordinate with the NEU timeline and organise effective local disputes going forward.
10. The union requires a democratic, member-led process to debate and determine the next steps in the SoS campaign and the introduction of electronic balloting.

This branch resolves:

11. To requisition, under Rule 16.11, a Special Higher Education Sector Conference on the specific business of:
    1. Opening the dispute and progressing the SoS Campaign.
    2. Coordinating campaigning and industrial strategy with other education unions, including the NEU.
    3. Developing a democratic process for electronic balloting for industrial action, both in the SoS Campaign and other disputes.

The meeting voted:

- For: 67
- Against: 0
- Abstain: 0

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion 2

Proposed by Jill Pluquailec

Seconded by Bob Jeffery

Motion to the National Executive Committee: Additional Fighting Fund Support for Sheffield Hallam University Dispute

This Branch Notes:

1. Members at Sheffield Hallam University have taken 13 days of sustained industrial action but have only been granted access to National Fighting Fund payments covering 8 of those days.
2. Through industrial action, members successfully forced the employer to withdraw plans to move the majority of staff into a subsidiary company in order designed to circumvent participation in the Teachers' Pension Scheme.
3. The dispute remains ongoing and further periods of sustained industrial action may be required.
4. Motion HC17 from Congress 2026 was carried referencing the need to fully support branches taking action to combat sham subsidiaries having national impact.

This Branch Believes:

1. This dispute is of national significance because it defeated an attack on pension provision that, if successful, could have provided a blueprint for employers across the sector to undermine access to the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

2. The victory secured by members at Sheffield Hallam University has benefited the wider union membership by demonstrating that such attacks can be successfully resisted.

3. Continued and enhanced strike fund support is essential if members are to sustain further action required to secure a satisfactory resolution to the dispute.

This Branch Resolves:

1. To request that the National Executive Committee approve access to National Fighting Fund payments for the additional 5 days of industrial action already undertaken by members at Sheffield Hallam University.

2. To recognise the dispute as having national significance due to its implications for pension provision and employment practices across the sector.

3. To ensure that members are not financially disadvantaged for taking effective action in defence of terms and conditions that benefit the wider membership.

The meeting voted:

- For: 67
- Against: 0
- Abstain: 0

The motion passed unanimously.

Any other business

- A message of solidarity from Unite South Yorkshire branch was read to the meeting.
- Details of Away Day to be circulated to members.