

# UNISON

Sheffield College

NEWS

Summer 2019

News from the City of Sheffield Branch of UNISON

## COLLEGE STAFF PENSION UNDER THREAT FROM GOVERNMENT

*The government has launched a consultation on proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which UNISON believes would seriously threaten the pensions of college support staff.*

**The government's proposed changes would remove the legal requirement that FE colleges (including Sheffield College), sixth form colleges and post 1992 universities offer LGPS membership to all support staff.**

UNISON believes this is an unwarranted attack on the pension rights of our members.

Sheffield College is legally obliged to provide LGPS membership for support staff because historically it was part of the local authority, and the legal right to be LGPS members continued for support staff after the college became a separate employer in 1992.

While these proposals will not withdraw LGPS membership for current staff, our experience shows that this is normally the way pension schemes are undermined for all members by attacking future members of the scheme first.

UNISON is very concerned that the changes could be devastating for existing pension members. Members in FE and HE make up around 20% of the LGPS membership and if new employees are not joining

the pension scheme from colleges then the whole future of the LGPS could be seriously undermined.

These changes are likely to disproportionately affect the lowest paid staff and it is doubly unfair as there are no proposals to introduce similar arrangements for the Teacher Pension Scheme that the college is required to offer teaching staff.

On the contrary, the government has agreed to provide a £600,000 grant to meet the additional teacher pension costs in the college.

This is a consultation so the proposal is not yet the final government position. It gives us the opportunity to oppose the proposals and prevent these dangerous changes.

UNISON has already written to the minister responsible outlining our objections to these proposals and we are seeking an urgent meeting. UNISON's City of Sheffield Branch has written to the government to outline its opposition on behalf

of members. We are also encouraging all members to email their opposition to these plans to the government at:

[LGpensions@communities.gov.uk](mailto:LGpensions@communities.gov.uk)

Please take the time to email your MP and ask for their support.

UNISON has asked Chief Executive and Principal Angela Foulkes for the college's position on these

changes and has requested the plans are opposed. We are waiting for a response and an update will be provided.

It's really important that in order to stop these changes we grow as a union. The more members we have the greater our influence, so please encourage your colleagues to join to save our pension scheme.

“ UNISON believes this is an unwarranted attack on the pension rights of our members. ”

**Important meeting dates on page 2...**

  
**June**

# UNISON MAKES PAY CLAIM FOR 2019/20

**Sheffield College has invited UNISON to make a pay claim for 2019/20 and we have submitted the following request:**

- An extra £1 per hour for all staff with the Foundation Living Wage as the minimum pay point (£9 per hour)
- An extra 5 days of annual leave.

It is unfair that college staff have suffered years of real-terms pay cuts and it's time for a proper pay rise. The government's public sector pay cap has been lifted for NHS and local government workers, so it's time for FE colleges to pay-up too.

College senior management will now consider our pay claim and arrange meetings to begin negotiations.

Management has already agreed to review the college's pay structure and high pay performance points once pay negotiations on the cost of living increase have concluded. UNISON has made it clear how important this is to members as



the pay structure is no longer fit for purpose. The government's increases to the National Living Wage, while salaries have stagnated in the college due to real-terms pay cuts, have caused a pay squeeze in the college. Wages are being compressed at the bottom of the structure, and every year the difference in salaries between job roles is getting tighter or disappearing.

UNISON's aim is to negotiate for a fair pay structure with clear differences in salaries between job roles. If this problem is not tackled then more and more staff will fall onto the National Living Wage as it

rises potentially to £10 per hour.

Many people in FE colleges feel demoralised and undervalued by their employers and the government after years of below inflation pay rises. But we know that where we campaign and grow the union our members can come together and win real pay rises. We are committed to campaigning for a victory over pay at Sheffield College and to do this we need our members to talk to their colleagues who aren't in a union and ask them to join. The more members we have the greater our influence and the louder our voice!

## MEETINGS OVER PAY AND PENSIONS

*We will be holding members to discuss pensions, pay and other issues on the following dates. Non-members are welcome to attend and join UNISON.*

- **Monday 24 June 12.15 – 1pm Hillsborough, Presentation Suite S201**
- **Tuesday 25 June 12.15 – 1pm Peaks, The Attic**
- **Wednesday 26 June 12.15 – 1pm City, Lecture Theatre.**

*UNISON will also be in your workplaces with stalls on the following dates, so feel free to come along and have a chat:*

- **Tuesday 18 June 12.30 – 2pm City reception area**
- **Wednesday 19 June 12.30 – 2pm Hillsborough reception area**
- **Thursday 20 June 12.30 – 2pm Peaks reception area.**



## COLLEGE REFUSES TO RECOGNISE TRADE UNIONS FOR SPARKS STAFF

***If you work at the college for a Sparks subsidiary company your terms and conditions (T&Cs), such as pay, pension, annual leave and sick leave, are significantly worse compared to the T&Cs of college employees.***

Sparks staff are worse off because the college refuses to recognise any trade unions for its Sparks subsidiary companies. This means UNISON has not got the right to negotiate with the college on collective issues such as pay, restructures, sick leave, maternity leave or any big changes to the way you work.

Without a union to speak up on your behalf, the college has got away with creating a two-tier workforce.

It is unfair that staff are being treated in this way and it makes a mockery of the college's claim to be an "ethical employer" and an "employer of choice in the South Yorkshire region."

UNISON has formally requested to be recognised by the college but was told the college has no intention of recognising trade unions for Sparks staff.

That's left UNISON with no choice but to campaign for what's called statutory recognition through the government body, the Central Arbitration Committee.

But we need your help. To ensure recognition we need more staff to join UNISON. In fact, we need 50% of Sparks staff to join UNISON to guarantee that the college is legally required to formally recognise UNISON.

you can join us at [unison.org.uk/join](http://unison.org.uk/join). If you can't join now, then please sign our petition for recognition which is with UNISON stewards Kathryn Atkin or Stephen Fletcher. If you are already a member, then please encourage your Sparks colleagues to join or sign the petition

## SOLIDARITY SAVES JOBS FOR LRC STAFF

***A dispute over potential job losses and cuts to hours for staff in the learning resource centres has been resolved.***

The restructure could have resulted in compulsory redundancies and changes to hours resulting in pay cuts, but this was avoided after successful talks between UNISON and management. The union is proud of its members who encouraged their colleagues to join UNISON and then stick together through a very anxious time. The solidarity was demonstrated when they voted overwhelmingly for strike action, which ultimately was avoided after negotiations.

Our members have shown that our union can defend jobs and pay when we all come together.

## ANNUAL LEAVE CHANGES

***College management is making changes to annual leave which means some new starters will receive an additional 5 days of leave.***

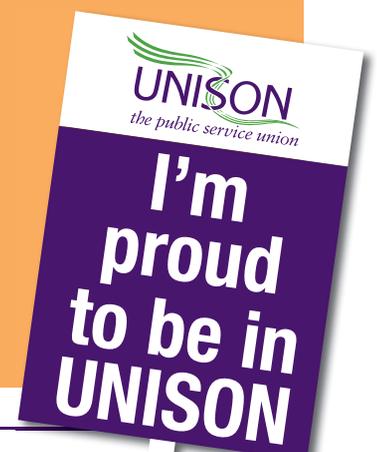
At the last UNISON meeting we discussed the college's proposal and many members felt the changes were unfair. The additional 5 days leave for some existing support staff with long service was a reward for their loyalty and this change has taken away that special recognition.

Members have told us that after years of below inflation pay awards, and now taking away this extra leave for loyalty, they feel undervalued. This decision has

further drained the morale of long-serving support staff who feel like they are not properly respected.

UNISON repeatedly told management that members would feel undervalued by this change and asked for the college to maintain extra leave for long-serving support staff. But management ignored your concerns which shows that on this important issue they are out of touch with the workforce.

At our next meeting we will discuss these changes to ask members what steps and potential action they wish to take on the matter.



## JOIN UNISON'S MEMBERS COMMITTEES

We have set up member committees at Sheffield College where members discuss the latest issues at the college with our stewards and organisers. They are good opportunities to

raise any concerns and plan what the union needs to do in the college. So far we've organised meetings at City Campus and Hillsborough but would like to meet at all

campuses.

***If you are interested in getting involved then please email Jordan Stapleton at [J.Stapleton@unison.co.uk](mailto:J.Stapleton@unison.co.uk)***

## The 'Recruit a Friend or Colleague' Scheme



**Do you know of any friends or colleagues who deliver public services in Sheffield and are not yet members of a trade union?**

**If so, you can earn yourself £10 for each new member you recruit to UNISON.**

### ***Terms and Conditions***

1. For every member recruited to Sheffield UNISON by either stewards or members there will be a payment of **£10** which will be paid after the recruited member remains in membership for 13 weeks.
2. Only those application forms received at the branch office by either post or hand will be eligible for inclusion in this incentive. Any forms submitted either online or to national/regional office will therefore be excluded.

**If you do recruit a friend/colleague, can you please write your name and membership number on top of their application form so we know who to pay after the 13 week period has expired!**



## Change of Address?

Have you changed your address, telephone number or workplace? If so please contact us to update your details, or use the enclosed form and pop it back to the Branch Office.

### **Email address - are we up to date?**

It is vital UNISON keeps in contact with its members. The most effective way to do this is via email. This will improve speedy communication and cut down on postage costs, currently at 10% of the branch income. Let us know your email address by contacting us by phone or using the enclosed form. **Many thanks!**