



SPOTLIGHT
REVENUES AND BENEFITS
NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2019

UNIVERSAL CREDIT STAFF TO STRIKE!



UNISON members may have seen from the news that staff who administer Universal Credit have voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action. Here in Revs and Bens we are well aware of the many issues with UC and the many changes that have taken place. UNISON send our full support to our sister union in the civil service, the PCS.

The key demands that the workers are striking for are -

- 5,000 new staff, permanency for our fixed term staff
- Limit the number of phone calls per case manager
- Limit the size of the national telephony hub; no to contact centres, yes to service centres.
- Improve consultation – no changes to our offices without union agreement.
- Quality-focused approach – no more management by statistics.

The PCS website explains

“274 staff were balloted for strike action at Wolverhampton and Walsall service centres with over 90% of those who took part, voting ‘yes.’”

The decision will mean two days of strike action on 11 and 12 March at UC centres in Walsall and Wolverhampton.

The beleaguered service has faced severe under investment, staff shortages and criticism from claimants on how they are treated.

Workers at Universal Credit sites in Wolverhampton and Walsall are demanding the recruitment of more staff, permanent contracts for fixed term staff and a decrease in workloads.”

Whether in the Civil Service or Local Government the pressures on staff are the same. The root cause are austerity cuts which mean we are doing more work, with less staff when demand on public services are higher than ever. Things need to change.

HELP US BUILD THE UNION

Forward this newsletter to a colleague who is not in the union and encourage them to join UNISON. <https://join.unison.org.uk/>



UPDATES IN OUR AREA

Below are a number of issues that UNISON have been involved in. If you think are issues that the union should be taking up, get in touch!

- The union held a very successful meeting for members in the Benefits Service with branch secretary and corporate rep Sarah Feeney in attendance. We discussed the ongoing campaign regarding workplace culture, stress etc. As a result, we will be meeting with senior management in the coming weeks to discuss feedback. We will keep members posted.
- UNISON have continued to represent members in the Promoting Health at Work process. We strongly advise that if you have a meeting, even if it appears 'routine' that you take a union rep with you. PHAW is a formal HR process.
- Across the Council UNISON are taking up the issue of mental health in the workplace. Meetings have been held with members to share experiences of what is taking place - UNISON are collating the feedback that has been received so far. More updates soon.

ARE YOU TAKING A COURSE IN YOUR FREE TIME?

YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO A £300 GRANT FROM UNISON

As a UNISON member you may be entitled to a Learning Grant of up to £300. A growing number of UNISON members in Coventry have applied for the grant and received funding to help with their development. The funding can cover any course up to and including under graduate level and can be academic or just for personal development. There is a short application form that we can help with, and you just need to provide proof that you are paying for the course fees yourself.

Get in touch for more information - email paul.hunt@unisoncoventry.co.uk

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