

Sandwell College Phoenix

A Sandwell UNISON newsletter for college support staff

April 2024

Please pin a copy on your staff notice board for colleagues to read

PAY CLAIM 2024/25

Thank you to those staff who responded to the consultation online regarding the pay claim that UNISON should submit to your employer on your behalf. We are working closely with UCU to submit a joint pay claim for staff covered on both lecturers and support staff terms and conditions.

The consultation was 100% in favour of submitting a pay claim for a 10% pay rise. We also received feedback suggesting an increase in Mileage Allowance, as this has lagged behind other public body rates for some years. This will form part of the pay claim this year.

Previous pay rises have fallen significantly below inflation in the last two years alone, as the cost-of-living crisis raged. This is without looking into the deterioration to your pay in real terms since 2010.

In arriving at a proposed pay claim both UCU and UNISON researched the financial position of the College by looking at the published College accounts for 2022/23. Our findings were as follows:-

- College income increased by £4.5million to £53.5million.
- Salaries increased by £1.3million to £24.2million.
- The College achieved a £1.2million surplus before accounting for any other losses or gains.
- After a local government pension scheme actuary, the surplus was £9.3million.
- College reserves increased by £2million to £40million. There was also £11.5million in cash reserves.
- The College was assessed by EFSA as having “Outstanding” financial health grading for 2022/23. Please check this for [yourselves](#)

We will keep you updated with progress on the Sandwell UNISON [website](#) and consult you on the final offer, when we receive it. [Sandwell College 2024/25 Pay Claim – Sandwell General](#)

[UNISON Branch \(sandwellunison.co.uk\)](http://sandwellunison.co.uk)



Are you interested in being a UNISON representative in college?

Contact us for more details.

Urgent, Please Check!

Are your contact details up to date? Please check and update by logging on to [My UNISON](#) or calling the office. Thanks

Join UNISON Today

UNISON is the largest Trade Union for education support staff in the UK. We provide expert advice and guidance on professional issues such as administering medication, lesson observations and managing behaviour. We offer you support by trained representatives if you have a problem at work, legal advice and much more.

Join us by calling 0800 171 2193

or visit

Join UNISON
(right click here)

UNISON NEGOTIATES IMPROVED TERMS and CONDITIONS

Over the past two years UNISON has continually raised with the employer the unfairness of dual terms and conditions in place in the cleaning team.

Cleaners who were TUPE'd back in house from a private cleaning company were on poorer terms and conditions than those employed by the college. This meant that these staff were not in receipt of occupational sick pay or entitled to occupational maternity pay, yet they were some of the lowest paid workers in the college.

The college has undertaken a piece of work and has agreed to harmonise terms and conditions available to these staff. A number will be able to transfer onto the college terms and conditions and benefit straight away. There will be a small number who we will need to work together with to ensure they benefit from the improved terms and conditions without losing pay because they work in excess of 37 hours. Contact us if you need support with this.

The importance of UNISON membership is clear -better terms and conditions. We have a stronger hand if all your team are in membership!

MEASLES OUTBREAK

60% of UK's confirmed measles cases have occurred within the West Midlands, with a high number of these in Birmingham. Whilst it is on a downward trend clusters continue to emerge. If you are within a measles risk group (compromised immune system, pregnant, unvaccinated) we urge you to discuss this with your line manager or HR so that you can be informed of any confirmed cases in College.

**Get Involved in your
UNISON...**

We are always keen to speak to members about getting a little more involved. If you, or a colleague, or both together might be interested in making a difference at College please contact either Louise or Marie to find out more.

UNISON -The Only Union For support staff at Sandwell College

UNISON is the only Trade Union recognised by your employer to negotiate support staff terms and conditions. UNISON is the only Trade Union that can negotiate the pay award on your behalf. Other Unions in college have different recognition and negotiate for other groups of staff, such as teachers and lecturers or Senior leaders.

Make sure you and your colleagues are in the correct Trade Union to represent your interests.

**SANDWELL
UNISON
GENERAL
BRANCH**


UNISON
the public service union

PHASED RETURN TO WORK

If you have been off sick for a period of time you can request a phased return to work. This is a temporary adjustment of your hours and/or duties, recognising that often you don't just go from being ill to being well. It is a chance to return to work on full pay as soon as possible and to continue to build your fitness and stamina as you recover. If a Phased Return is refused and can not be accommodated, you can stay on sick leave to enable you to continue your recovery. You would need a further fit note from your GP. It is advisable to get a fit note from your GP stating you need a phased return for a period of up to six weeks as required. It should indicate that you are fit to work with an adjustment of hours and/or Duties. Your full pay should begin on your return to work—otherwise stay off sick.

Welfare Support Available

With the cost of living increasing, many working families are struggling to make ends meet.

Although the Pay award has been lodged, RPI was higher than last years pay increase and is still at almost 6%.

If you are experiencing hardship don't struggle in silence. Check out the welfare fund and support that is available, on line at [UNISON Services -there for you.](#) (click here).

UNISON: *there for you*

Know Your Rights Right To Representation

You have a right to be supported in meetings with your employer that are part of any formal process.

You can request support in 'Informal meetings' and responsible employers do not object, recognising that Trade Union reps can often help to resolve matters quickly. Trade Union support is not appropriate in Management or supervision meetings. We would advise that you always request trade union support.

UNISON Consults it's Members

As a Member of UNISON, Sandwell Branch will always consult you on key issues, such as pay, ensuring your views are accurately represented to your employer. Please respond promptly to requests.

A Union is only as strong as its members. The first step is to make sure you and all your colleagues are getting the right representation for you.

Contact Us

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www.sandwellUNISON.co.uk

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