



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
UNISON HIGHER EDUCATION
SERVICE GROUP
2016/2017**

Introduction

Dear Members

The Annual Report for 2016 shows the work the HESGE has done to act on the motions agreed at last year's conference. Motions which were, as always, democratically decided by HE lay activists.

I am sure that like me you are proud of our lay member led union, which stands for, amongst many things, equality and protecting our members' rights and terms and conditions. We should also acknowledge the important role we all play in promoting good practice within local, regional, UK wide and international communities.

Together with branches the HESGE has continued to negotiate and campaign for fair pay for all HE workers, especially the Foundation Living Wage for the lowest paid. We know that there is disappointment, frustration and anger amongst our members at continuing low pay offers from the employers. We must continue to engage with our members and grow our membership so that we are in a strong position to challenge our employers and this treacherous government on pay and the many other issues affecting us.

The HESGE continued to push the employers on the gender pay gap and casualization/zero contracts in 2016. Some progress has been made but we need to make further progress on these vital matters.

The obnoxious Higher Education and Research Bill continued to be a concern in 2016 for all HE staff and those with a social conscience. Our members, activists and staff have continued to challenge this and decisions made by this government, which seeks to promote a HE sector for those that can afford it, whilst ignoring the contribution to society of those who choose to study when they could be earning.

HE members also continue to fight alongside other sectors and sister unions against the vindictive Trade Union Act.

Support staff in HE have worked beyond the call of duty in 2016. We have worked for the good of our employers and the students. We need to have strength in numbers for 2017 and work together, as it is time that we reaped some benefits for all the hard work we have done in 2016 and many previous years.

On behalf of the HESGE I want to thank all HE activists and members for their support and dedication throughout the year.



Denise Ward
Chair of the Higher Education Service Group Executive

In line with motion 17 agreed at the 2006 HE conference this annual report highlights the implementation of policies agreed at 2016 HE conference — with individual motions highlighted in bold.

HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

Section A

UNISON Objective 1: Enhance our capability to meet the recruiting, organisational and representational challenges posed by austerity measures including cuts, workforce reductions, reorganisations, attacks on facility time and privatisation. Ensuring the union is relevant to all members who provide public services – including those who work in the private sector - regardless of the economic sector in which they work.

1. Recruitment

Table 1 Joiners by region

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Jan 16	Feb 16	Mar 16	Apr 16	May 16	Jun 16	Jul 16	Aug 16	Sep 16	Oct 16	Nov 16	Dec 16
Eastern Region - 1	154	261	243	221	217	18	29	11	23	18	19	14	16	15	12	28	14
East Midlands Region - 2	240	271	232	300	260	17	35	30	19	18	22	25	13	22	25	16	18
Greater London Region - 3	740	1,383	1,130	973	1,022	58	82	108	100	79	107	78	67	126	74	67	76
Northern Region - 4	166	389	261	199	235	17	11	17	25	20	21	26	16	13	26	28	15
UNISON Northern Ireland - 5	35	83	47	41	27	1	1	3	0	2	1	1	0	3	3	5	7
North West Region - 6	403	653	356	464	521	30	38	59	32	65	39	36	34	48	43	47	50
Scotland Region - 7	277	422	333	345	470	24	56	42	45	41	46	30	20	78	46	28	14
South East Region - 8	358	498	361	430	526	31	62	57	41	42	58	39	38	39	37	42	40
South West Region - 10	276	284	225	273	307	17	31	19	31	22	29	26	16	31	40	31	14
Cymru /Wales Region - 11	155	254	234	257	255	25	13	27	26	33	19	17	5	24	25	20	21
West Midlands Region - 12	335	392	324	324	326	20	27	29	25	27	34	26	26	29	33	33	17
Yorkshire - Humberside Region - 13	339	442	409	435	549	30	43	46	62	44	61	54	25	42	55	58	29
Higher Education	3,478	5,332	4,155	4,262	4,715	288	428	448	429	411	456	372	276	470	419	403	315

In common with the wider union, 2016 was another challenging year for recruitment in HE. Scotland and the Greater London region both saw an overall increase in members. However, overall the higher number of leavers led to a net reduction in HE membership during 2016.

Regions and branches continued to campaign, organise and recruit around key local and national issues in university workplaces across the UK. An increasing number of Fighting Fund Organisers (FFOs) have been working specifically with HE branches.

A presentation at UNISON's higher education branch seminar highlighted some good practice initiatives from the University of Birmingham branch.

UNISON's Freedom of Information (FOI) request to universities again highlighted the growing number of private companies working in areas such as catering, cleaning and security services across the sector.

The HESGE has acknowledged that recruitment and branch organisation is a priority and this will form part of the HESGE work programme for 2017/18.

Section B

UNISON Objective 2: Protect and secure fair and equal pay, good conditions, high quality employment, and pensions for UNISON members, building confidence for industrial action when required. Fighting for and promoting equality and challenging all forms of discrimination, including racism and hate crime, supporting migrant workers and promoting UNISON's alternative to austerity.

2. Pay

2.1 Pay 2016/17

In 2016 UNISON worked with other unions to agree and submit a joint pay claim that reflected UNISON's pay policy position agreed at Higher Education (HE) conference 2016 (**Motion 11**).

The joint trade unions held preliminary meetings ahead of UNISON's Conference in February 2016 to establish common ground. It was agreed that all unions support a 5% claim, the inclusion of the Foundation Living Wage, joint work to close the gender pay gap and joint work on addressing casualised/zero hours contracts. A request for a Scottish JNCHES sub-committee (proposed by EIS) was also supported. UCU raised issues including national pay rates for examiners and minimum rates of pay for roles within all occupational groups.

Agreement could not be reached on UNISON's request for a minimum uplift of £1,000 to be included in the joint trade union claim. In the interests of union unity the HESGE took the decision to submit a joint trade union claim from all five unions without the £1000 minimum underpin.

Other trade unions called for an early 'heads of claim' to be submitted to the employers (the Universities and Colleges Employers Association – UCEA), which would outline key elements of the claim. UNISON advised our sister unions that we could not be a signatory to any detailed submission ahead of our democratic conference, which makes decision on our pay claim. In the end the other unions submitted a 'heads of claim' to UCEA before UNISON's higher education conference. UNISON was not consulted on the final wording of the heads of claim. Subsequently, it became clear the heads of claim did not include any reference to London Weighting or the Foundation Living Wage, which were key UNISON demands.

After UNISON's HE conference decided on our claim, UNISON negotiators worked to ensure that the Foundation Living Wage and London Weighting were incorporated into the final joint union pay claim.

The first pay negotiation meeting was held in March 2016, where UCEA advised the other unions that UCU had written to all Vice Chancellors. The letter stated that unless universities met selected elements of the claim that UCU identified as important (not including Living Wage) by 30th March 2016, that a trade dispute would be lodged, which could lead to industrial action. UCU had not informed the other unions of this pre-emptive action. The unions presented the pay claim arguing for an early and meaningful offer. At the opening meeting the employers offered 1%.

Prior to the second negotiating meeting at the end of April 2016 UCU had already registered a dispute with the employers and had begun preparing for strike action. At the negotiations points raised by UNISON presented data to support the Foundation Living Wage being implemented and for action to be taken to address low pay. Subsequently, the employers agreed to offer a higher percentage pay increase to the bottom seven spinal column points. Although this was an improvement it did not meet the Foundation Living Wage rate. The employers only increased their opening offer for the majority of staff offer by 0.1%, but offered joint work on the gender pay gap and zero hours/casual work

The employer's final 2016/17 pay offer was:

- A 1.1% increase on all points from 1 August 2016 with additional payments at the lower end of the pay spine. In addition to the deletion of point 1 from 1/4/17 there would be an increase of 3.1% on point 2 and tapered higher increases through to 1.6% on point 7.

2016-17 (final offer)			
Spine point	Salary	Increase	Hourly rates (35hr)
1	14767*	3.1% (5.1%)	8.09
2	15052	3.1%	8.25
3	15356	2.7%	8.41
4	15670	2.7%	8.59
5	15976	2.2%	8.75
6	16289	1.7%	8.93
7	16618	1.6%	9.11
8	16961	1.1%	9.29

There is a shared recognition between the employers and the trade unions of the challenges to be addressed in closing the gender pay gap (GPG).

The specific work to be undertaken in the 2016-17 year:

- UCEA and the trade unions will consult Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and branches respectively to seek support for the new recommended gender pay gap benchmarks that

are in the 2016 data analysis report. UCEA to publish sector benchmarking data annually to enable sector level progress to be measured. To conclude this consultation by November 2016.

- ii) UCEA and the trade unions to establish a working group to review and re-issue of the previous Equal Pay Reviews guidance for HEIs. To conclude this work by March 2017.
- iii) Jointly organise a national event in the early summer of 2017 to launch the revised Guidance.

On casual and 'zero hours' contracts joint work to take place in 2016-17 to build upon the major New JNCHES Hourly Paid and Casual Staff Working Group Report published in July 2015.

The specific work to be progressed:

- iv) UCEA and the trade unions will continue and conclude the dialogue commenced during 2015-16 to find ways to improve the quality of the sector data on the employment of casual / hourly paid staff, engaging with both HESA and sector employers. This work will be concluded by December 2016.
- v) UCEA and the trade unions will establish a working group to produce a new report that explores practice in a sample of HEIs in their use of variable hours contractual arrangements, with a particular focus on those where changes have been made through dialogue with staff representatives. Produce a new report on HEIs' practice in relation to the support of individuals engaged on fixed term arrangements delivering teaching. This will be concluded by March 2017.
- vi) UCEA and the trade unions will jointly organise a national event to launch the two reports and showcase good employment practice. The event would take place in the early summer of 2017.

The HESGE considered this offer in May 2016 and it was unanimously rejected. A dispute was registered with the employers. Two pay dispute meetings were held with four unions. GMB didn't take part nor did it declare a dispute. The HESGE decided to conduct a full branch consultation on the offer. UCU moved straight to industrial action, taking two days of strikes in May, followed by local strike action at all campuses in either June or July.

In May and June UNISON undertook a full branch consultation on the final offer. The outcome was a rejection by most, but not all, regions and branches on a low turnout. The HESGE decided to make a request to the NEC's Industrial Action Committee for a membership ballot to take place in the late summer/early autumn. The HESGE acknowledged the need to build an improved turnout from members in the strike ballot, especially in branches and regions where a majority of members had voted to accept the employers' offer.

The HESGE agreed a strategy to build for a 'YES' vote and escalating industrial action at their meeting in July. Regional action plans were devised by HESGE members and discussed with branches. The HESGE considered how it would maximise member engagement and branches were supported by regional staff. National campaign materials

were produced which included leaflets, posters, a template newsletter, a salary loss calculator and an interactive map showing the pay increases of Vice Chancellors. Up to date information was circulated to branches and members by email and social media. Members were balloted for strike action in August and early September.

Unite and EIS carried out industrial action ballots on the same timetable, with a view to coordinating industrial action in the autumn term. Despite UCU having taken strike action the employers did not increase their offer and so UCU began a consultation on whether to take further action. UCU made it clear that they would not be in a position to take strike action in line with UNISON/Unite/EIS's proposed timescale.

In late August UCEA wrote to universities advising them to impose the pay offer. UNISON, and other unions, protested this act as hostile and unnecessary.

UNISON's ballot result was reported to a special meeting of the HESGE called in September 2016. The HESGE met and considered the outcome of the industrial action ballot. EIS announced their result on the same day and UNITE the next day – neither received a mandate for strike action. UNITE moved to settle the pay dispute and EIS started action short of strike action. GMB, having not entered into a dispute, wrote to the employers to accept the pay offer.

The result of the strike ballot showed that the turnout of members engaged in September 2016 had fallen from the branch consultation in June 2016, despite the best efforts of all to improve it. The HESGE considered the drop in member engagement, the low turnout and the position of the other unions. After lengthy deliberation the HESGE voted not to pursue strike action and subsequently grudgingly accepted the pay offer.

Following a membership consultation UCU decided not to proceed with further strike days or to launch their planned action short of strike action. UCU subsequently wrote to the employers concluding this year's pay dispute.

As part of the conclusion of the pay round, UCEA and the trade unions agreed to work together to produce a framework to assist HE institutions and their union branches to establish arrangements to facilitate the deduction of trade union contributions at source (DOCAS). This would comply with the 2016 Trade Union Act.

As four unions had settled UCEA wrote to universities asking those who had not implemented the 2016/17 pay offer to do so by the end of December 2016.

2.2 Pay 2017/18

In early 2017 the trade union side of New JNCHES will meet to begin to consider the content of the 2017/18 claim. The first pay negotiating meeting of JNCHES is scheduled to take place 30 March 2017.

Following a discussion at the 2016 HE branch seminar the HE pay motion submitted to HE Conference 2017 seeks a £1200 increase for all staff. A comprehensive Freedom of Information (FOI) request was submitted to all HEI's in November 2016. The results will inform pay negotiations and be made available to branches.

3. JNCHES Working Groups

3.1 JNCHES Review

As part of the 2007 settlement and the establishment of New JNCHES, it was agreed to undertake regular reviews of JNCHES arrangements. The next joint review is due to take place in 2017.

3.2 Strategic Conference

The annual JNCHES Strategic Conference took place on the 1st March 2016. The conference heard reports on pay settlements across the economy and on developments in the higher education sector within the UK and in devolved nations. Case studies were presented on ways to tackle the gender pay gap in universities. Round table discussions took place between trade union and university representatives on low pay.

3.3 Hourly Paid and Casual Hours Working Group

The 2015/16 pay settlement included a commitment to conduct joint working on casualisation and the prevalence of zero hours contracts across the sector. Building on previous years' work the unions and UCEA further engaged with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to review statistics on casual support staff that they produce. An agreement was reached with UCEA to call for markers to be established on HE staff records for hourly paid staff, zero hours contract staff, apprentices and students that are also working at the HEI. In addition the joint trade unions requested an aggregated staff record for support staff that work on a casual basis.

HESA will consult with HEIs in early 2017 to ascertain the feasibility of adapting the HE staff record. It is hoped that this more detailed reporting of casual and zero hours staff will be available from the 2017/18 period onwards.

3.4 Gender Pay Gap Working Group

As a result of the 2016/16 pay settlement a joint technical working group was established to review the method of data collection. analysed the pay data from both HEIs and comparator organisations. Data was drawn from different sources including HESA (Higher Education Statistical Agency), ASHE (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings) and ONS (Office of National Statistics). Discussions took place with HESA on how best to capture this information. A report was published in September 2016. The main output was the analysis of the gender pay gap and the production of a set of benchmarks for the sector. This will allow individual universities to compare their performance against others in the sector. This will allow us to establish a baseline that is accurate and the next stage is now to actively eliminate the pay gap.

4. Living Wage

UNISON continued to name and shame HEI's that refused to pay the accredited Living Wage as a minimum to workers on university and college campuses across the UK (**2015 Motion 12**). Universities and colleges should be amongst the most progressive employers in the country, but are often not. The 2016/17 pay award increased the salaries of those on the

lowest spinal column point, but the employers moved away from ensuring the lowest paid receive a salary that meets or exceeds the Foundation Living Wage. The lowest paid staff will receive the equivalent of £8.25p per hour from 1 April 2017, but only where employers have a 35 hour working week.

The Foundation Living Wage rate was revised in November 2016 to £8.45 per hour and the London Living Wage amended to £9.75 per hour. This meant that all HE staff on the lowest salary point once again became paid below the Living Wage. UNISON continued its campaign for Universities to become Living Wage Foundation accredited employers and will write to Vice Chancellors across the UK encouraging all Universities to become Living Wage accredited employers.

Branches continued successful local Living Wage campaigns by working with local student and community groups.

In 2016 UNISON sent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to all universities and colleges. These sought information about minimum and maximum pay, the numbers of staff paid below the Foundation Living Wage, an equality analysis of the cuts to staffing and the wider reward packages offered to senior management. This was a follow-up to the FOI surveys conducted in March 2013 and October 2014 and November 2015. The findings are used to support branches and regions in campaigns around the UK and to inform the 2017/18 pay negotiations.

5. FE and 6th Form Colleges

The Higher Education Service Group is entitled to send a delegate to the Further Education (FE) Committee. UNISON members working in FE in England received a 1% national pay recommendation from the national employers' organisation the Association of Colleges (AoC). This was accepted by the FE Sector committee following a branch consultation. FE members in Wales received a 1% pay rise. FE members in Scotland received a £450 pay rise which was achieved following a concerted campaign to achieve parity with teaching colleagues. This included industrial action with strikes and action short of strike.

6. Pensions

6.1 Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The Universities of Newcastle, Northumbria and East London began the process of employing new staff in arms length companies to avoid their legal obligations to offer the LGPS to directly employed staff. The HESGE supported branches against the introduction of these hugely detrimental proposals and were able to get additional safeguards for existing staff and improvements in the alternative schemes. However, we were unsuccessful in our campaign to stop them entirely. UNISON is committed to opposing and campaigning against similar proposals in other universities.

UNISON also worked alongside other sectors in the LGPS Trade Union side in promoting representation on LGPS Boards and improving governance in the LGPS. Each of the funds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are still undertaking their 2016 actuarial valuations and need to publish these by April 2017. UNISON continues to work with LGPS reps and Board members, advising of the need for fund actuaries to make realistic assumptions as

these that have a significant impact on scheme costs. UNISON also campaigned strongly to throw light on the hidden fees paid to fund managers.

The LGPS Benefits and Administration Sub-Group are currently reviewing the ill-health early retirement pension entitlement conditions and tiers of award. UNISON is pushing strongly for the lowest award (Tier 3 pension) to be removed and to be replaced with an ongoing pension for life. Currently a Tier 3 ill-health pension cannot be paid for longer than 3 years at which point it either ceases entirely or less commonly is upgraded to a Tier 2 ill-health pension.

6.2 Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

In April 2016 the USS introduced changes to the scheme. The changes included closing the final salary section of the scheme and capping the level of earnings that qualify for the defined benefit element of the scheme. There was a small improvement in the accrual rate for staff in the 'career average' part of the scheme. The scheme also introduced a Defined Benefit (DB) section available to all members in October 2016.

The HESGE provided advice to branches on the changes to the scheme and on the DB scheme. We continue to campaign for full representation rights of support staff on the USS board and its negotiating committee.

6.3 Local Schemes

We continue to support members in a number of branches across the country where support staff schemes have come under further attack.

The SAUL pension scheme introduced new scheme rules from April 2016, moving all current members to a CARE scheme. The next triennial valuation is due to take place in March 2017 and the SAUL negotiating committee will consider the outcome of this valuation.

We supported members in a number of branches across the country where support staff schemes have come under further attacks, including Exeter, Hull and Leicester Universities.

Changes to the state pension system from April 2016, particularly the end of 'contracting out' increased employer national insurance contributions and could result in a further wave of attacks on support staff schemes. Further advice and support for branches affected is planned with a pension seminar being considered for 2017.

7. Devolved Nations and Regions

7.1 Northern Ireland

UNISON branches at the University of Ulster continued to consider merger talks, to meet the challenge of new private employers Noonans and Mount Charles. The company remains resistant to providing full trade union facility time for our activists. Local stewards challenged employers on health and safety issues using their legal entitlement to facility time. Branch reps resolved many issues at local level such as annual leave, lack of cleaning materials and staff car parking charges.

UNISON pressed for national terms and conditions for all staff providing a service in public sector. Since privatisation, the workforce has been reduced and sickness levels have risen. These are issues which could be resolved in proper negotiation as shown by UNISON's partnership work in other areas.

A new Belfast campus is under construction, which will result in major relocation of the workforce. To support our members in the University of Ulster and related employers, a Regional Organiser was allocated to take a lead on negotiations with the contractors and the University. A fighting fund organiser has also been allocated on a part time basis to support recruitment initiatives.

At St Mary's College of Higher Education staff retained their employment following robust negotiation by organising staff and lay activists. UNISON worked closely with the University at the time of the pay consultation to engage with members and identify new stewards. UNISON will continue to fight against the privatisation of staff and services.

7.2 Scotland

2016 was a busy and successful year with UNISON membership and number of stewards increasing overall.

Whilst all Scotland's Universities pay the Foundation Living Wage, we continued to press for the uplift in the Scottish Living Wage to be paid as soon as the uplift is announced. A third of Scottish Universities are now accredited Foundation Living Wage employers, which provides additional safeguards for members working for private sector employers.

The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 came into force in December. There will be two trade unions seats on Court alongside the staff seats. UNISON plan to train, support and build a network for our Governors on Court. The Chair of Court will play a strategic role and will be elected from the staff, students and existing members of Court. UNISON is involved in reviewing the Code of Practice for Courts to reflect these changes and aims to get further accountability.

Audit Scotland reported on University funding. One of the main findings highlighted that the Scottish Government Priorities which are sent to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) are not fed through to the Universities. The Outcome Agreement between the SFC and the University do not reflect these. There is also concern that the universities' teaching grant should be fully funded for what they deliver, which is not currently the case.

The Scottish Funding Council is likely to be disbanded and its functions merged with Scottish Enterprise, Highland and Islands Enterprise, and Skill Development Scotland under a single board. UNISON has some concerns about this, as whilst we seek greater accountability of Universities, it is not clear whether these changes will deliver that aim.

In line with the joint pay claim for 2016/ 2017, we are still talking to the employers about setting up a forum in Scotland to talk about issues of importance to our membership. These issues cover a wide variety of topics, but specifically exclude pay. Universities in Scotland face different issues due to changes in legislation and policy. UNISON thinks that a Scottish Forum could help to address these issues.

In the last year, we have run training on Prevent, and Equality Impact Assessments. We have carried out mapping the terms and conditions across the Universities with the aim of putting in local claims to improve issues like “the working week” and “holiday pay” and increase Living Wage accreditation.

7.3 Cymru / Wales

UNISON Cymru/Wales Higher Education Committee met regularly through 2016, including a two day seminar to develop our work plan for 2017.

The Welsh Government commissioned two reviews which recently reported. The Diamond review recommended moving from the current system of student fee subsidy to providing means tested maintenance with a minimum payment for all students. The Hazelkorn review, amongst other things, recommends establishing a joint funding body for HE and FE.

Along with many other public service employers, universities continuously review, restructure, re-align, reorganise and generally disrupt our members’ workplaces. Thanks to all branch officers and workplace representatives who have worked hard to protect and promote members’ interests in the face of continual change, while also exceeding their recruitment targets for the year.

7.4 South East

The challenges in higher education during 2016 affected all universities in the South East Region. Government policy changes have led to concerns about the threats to the survival of what has been a greatly successful enterprise.

Locally, Brighton University branch has campaigned against the proposed closure of the university’s Hastings campus. Members employed by the Student Union rejected an inadequate pay offer. Solent University announced the closure of Warsash Maritime Academy. These are a handful of examples of the contraction of the sector in 2016 across the south east.

On a more positive note, most of our HE branches substantially exceeded their recruitment targets in 2016, helped in part by the fantastic efforts of two Fighting Fund Local Organisers. Thanks to branches’ hard work, we ended the year fit and ready to fight for our members’ futures in 2017.

7.5 North West

HE Institutions across the North West continued to feel the strain of cuts to higher education funding, a situation not helped by the uncertainties associated with leaving the EU. Last year saw a large number of restructures take place across the sector. UCLAN was hit particularly hard with approximately 200 staff leaving. Attempts to outsource services such as security, catering, IT and other support services continue and branches have been engaged in protecting terms and conditions and attempting to secure recognition agreements within Private Contractors.

The Further Education Area Review process had an impact on a couple of Universities. Bolton University and UCLAN have been considering the viability of closer working / merging with local FE Colleges. This presents a number of challenges for our members, with threats of shared services and changes to work locations.

Regional recruitment figures were very good. Despite leavers (leaving jobs and retiring) branches worked hard to maintain consistent membership levels through regular recruitment events.

7.6 West Midlands

The West Midlands Regional Higher Education Committee continued to raise awareness of the issues facing members in the HE sector, against a backdrop of increasingly difficult times for UNISON representatives and members in the region. The biggest issue facing nearly every institution was the sheer amount of restructuring, cuts and in some cases closures that resulted in a number of job losses. UNISON branches worked tirelessly to defend members' jobs and terms and conditions. Some employers adopted a more co-operative and conciliatory approach than others when negotiating with UNISON.

Slow but steady progress was made on the issue of representing members not directly employed by HE institutions, with some employers more flexible and accommodating around time-off arrangements. In most cases it makes sense for members who belong to HE branches (but are not directly employed by the institution) to receive advice and representation from the branch rather than the region. Although a regional "Case Referral Unit" was set up in the West Midlands the vast majority of HE case work has been dealt with by local branches, which is testament to their endeavour and commitment.

Unsurprisingly, recruitment of new members and representatives is far from straightforward in the current environment, but there is evidence of new stewards coming forward and being trained, though not in great numbers.

Coventry University branch ended the year growing by nearly 10%, Birmingham University branch also recruited well, while University of Wolverhampton broke even. Active recruitment took place in other branches too, with most HE branches adding new members in each month of 2016.

7.7 Yorkshire and Humberside

2016 was another extremely busy year in Higher Education, with almost all institutes in the region undergoing campus wide reorganisations and restructures. The sector seemed to be in a constant flux of change reacting to the increased marketisation of Higher Education and in response to the Research demands placed on Universities and cost saving initiatives. As a result all of the region's branches have been stretched to capacity.

We continued to see the widening gap of inequality, whilst pay for support staff compared to Vice Chancellors is at unacceptable levels. We continued with our campaigns to raise the awareness of these inequalities at every opportunity and called for the real Living Wage amongst substantive employed staff and contractors. Universities in the region did not take firm positions on the EU referendum, but there has been great unease about the impact of leaving the EU and the effect on staff and student numbers. We have engaged with UNISON

centre and campaigned to support members who might feel anxious about the future and to demonstrate they are valued by their colleagues and their union.

We recruited record numbers of members into UNISON in all universities, partly because of the insecurities outlined, but also because the regional organising teams worked closely with branches on dedicated recruitment and organising campaigns. Unfortunately, while we lost members through reorganisations and retirements, the net growth in membership is challenging.

2017 looks set to be no less challenging as we campaign, bargain, support and represent the region's HE members.

7.8 East Midlands

At De Montfort University there was a move towards 24/7 working to give students more access to labs and kit. Tech Instructors were asked to work until 9pm for 27 weeks of the year with no extra pay. The University doubled its surplus from £8 million to £16 million, but has seen its credit rating downgraded due to a £90 million loan. One of the greatest financial risks across HE in the region is the UK's exit from the EU and the need to maintain or increase student numbers. The University of Lincoln had problems implementing a 24/7 service in areas. Issues around staffing and compliance and health and safety made it difficult to implement.

At the University of Nottingham one of the key challenges was 'Project Transform', which led to redundancies and a new computer system that didn't work. Employees have been highly stressed due to the level of repetitive tasks and increased workload. Following a review of a previous job evaluation exercise a number of issues around equal pay were highlighted by UNISON. There will be a negotiating meeting with ACAS for Equal Pay claims as the review is almost over. There were 31 appeals out of 86 job roles.

There have been many restructures and redundancies affecting mainly academic staff at the University of Leicester. The university is currently looking to review their manual and ancillary framework agreement with UNISON and Unite. In addition the employer is looking to move weekly paid staff onto monthly pay.

7.9 Northern Region

Last year saw the biggest impact so far on our region's Universities, with all facing departmental and faculty reviews, restructures and potential redundancies. Despite this, our retention of members was strong and our university branches are well organised and equipped to deal with the challenges. Redundancies have been kept to a minimum and branches successfully challenged and influenced changes through effective lobbying of their respective employers. These challenges present opportunities to recruit and organise, and that remained a primary focus of the regional service group, which actively shared good practice between branches.

7.10 Eastern

Eastern Region contains 9 HE branches. During 2016 the HE Committee welcomed to its meetings a representative from the newly formed University of Suffolk branch. Most HE branches remain engaged with the HE branch seminar and with HE Service Group

Conference. Both events provide welcome opportunities to network across our region and nationally.

The geographical structure of the region remains a challenge for the Committee. Some branches are very distant from others. The Committee rotates meetings around the region to enable attendance but this has been a challenge for some branches. During 2016 the committee trialed video conferencing to enable national officers and committee members to participate in meetings.

Whilst challenges exist, one of the strengths of the committee has been the strong relationships that exist between the active branches, enabling support and sharing of information across the region. The committee also appreciated the support received from area organisers and national staff.

Restructures and the contracting-out of services remained constants in universities across the region. These created ongoing issues requiring full engagement by branch officers, which has impacted on their availability to engage at region or national levels. Recruitment activity occurred on the back of these experiences; however some branches saw a loss in membership due to redundancies. Non-pay benefits, such as annual leave entitlements, differ across institutions within the Eastern Region. Our membership have asked us to seek improvements in pay and non-pay benefits, which we will try to progress in 2017 by sharing information and best practice and working with the HESGE to achieve improvements.

7.11 Greater London

The Greater London Regional Higher Education Committee met several times throughout 2017 and increase numbers attending compared to previous years. The annual Higher Education Training Day was held in July and attended by delegates from across the region. Workshops included organising outsourced workers, collective bargaining, dealing with stress as a workplace rep and building participation in the upcoming ballot. Speakers on the Outlook for the HE Sector and the Impact of the Trade Union Act were well received.

HE membership in Greater London grew slightly, due in part to an emphasis on recruitment and organising around local issues-based campaigns. Four branches were supported by two Fighting Fund local Organisers (FFLOs) in the first part of the year. This later increased to five branches being supported by three FFLOs. The projects have seen an increased number of activists as well as successful local campaigns and increased recruitment.

London Living Wage campaigns and campaigns to secure parity with directly employed staff continued. Middlesex University branch succeeded in winning the London Living wage for all employees including the cleaning and catering staff. ISS reps at SOAS secured a commitment by the University to bring all cleaners in house by September 2019 and further negotiations on future of the remaining outsourced workers. In addition, all cleaners, porters, security and maintenance staff had their terms and conditions improved to be in line with directly employed staff. Meanwhile, recognition agreements have been signed with outsourced companies such as ISS and NVIRO. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine members launched a campaign to stop the outsourcing of their in-house caterers and remaining in-house cleaners and were successful in galvanising the support of academics and students, talks for an in-house bid continue.

Members of the King's College branch employed by the cleaning contractor, Servest, are currently in dispute and have taken 2 days of industrial action. This follows months of lengthy negotiations with Servest management to try to resolve the contentious issue of understaffing. Staff shortages have meant that members have faced intolerable levels of extra work with no additional remuneration. Whilst King's College reassured cleaning staff that they are 'valued members of the King's family', they have shown reluctance to assist in resolving the dispute

UNISON and UCU continued to lodge a joint London Weighting claim with a number of pre-92 universities. The first agreement was secured in University of London where London Weighting will rise to £3,500 by 2018, with annual increases linked to national pay awards thereafter. Similar deals have been accepted by members at SOAS, Birkbeck, the Courtauld Institute and the Royal Veterinary College. Campaigns were re-launched at UCL and the Institute of Education, but the employer has refused to negotiate with the unions. After numerous meetings, we finally reached an agreed increase to London Weighting at Kings College. Employers agreed to an increase to £3,500 in staggered payments, commencing in August 2016 and concluding in 2019. This was a hard fought campaign and great credit has to go to the branch for their drive and tenacity.

Other negotiations covered a range of issues. Senate House branch submitted an Annual Leave claim to uplift annual leave for grades 1-6 to achieve parity with higher grade staff. Members voted to accept an offer of an additional two days and the branch clearly stated that they will seek to continue discussions to achieve parity. Middlesex University branch submitted a similar annual leave claim and will begin negotiations in 2017; their campaign is continuing to gain support and momentum. The University of East London Branch working with their FFLO negotiated voluntary union recognitions with cleaning contractor, NVIRO. Goldsmiths Branch worked jointly with their employer on an equal pay audit (gender and race) which they will use to campaign for pay equality and raise the profile of the union. The LSE branch negotiated a tri-partite agreement between their cleaning contractor, Noonan, and the University, committing all parties to joint consultation and negotiation on key issues including improving sick pay and annual leave.

The second edition of the Regional Higher Education Newsletter was produced with contributions from branches and stewards across the region, including articles on the Trade Union Bill, London Weighting, the economic impact of trade unions and the rise in wholly owned subsidiaries. The next issue will look at self organisation and a wall calendar will be produced with key dates and recruitment ideas.

7.12 South West

2016 saw some of the region's HE branches without branch secretaries. Despite this it was a good year with recruitment and organising in HE branches continuing to be a high priority. The committee set itself a number of tasks under UNISON's objectives for 2016. Organising and recruiting included running training in understanding university finances and procurement and 'having the conversation'. Bargaining and representation objectives included negotiating zero tolerance to domestic violence policies and procedures with all HE employers, raising 'ageing workforce' issues with employers in joint consultation and negotiation forums and to agree a South West Region conference motion for 2017 Conference and elect a regional delegate. The committee also increased its efforts to fill the women's seat on HESGE.

Much of the committee members' time and efforts were of course spent on campaigning and communication, especially on the 2016 Pay Campaign. In addition the committee promoted the use of branch surveys to establish the identity and pay levels of outsourced companies in south west universities and campaign for the Living Wage to be paid to these staff. The committee's 4th objective was to promote the building of an Efficient and Effective Union and to that end resolved to hold at least one of its meetings by Video Conference.

To promote and inform members the region continued to produce an HE Newsletter, which can be adopted by branches and also goes onto the Regional website. Editions over the last year included: local and national news, pay, UNISON's promotion of the remain campaign in the EU referendum, The TU Bill, We "Heart" Unions week, a "who's who" of committee members and information on branch and regional events such as Pride and Respect festivals as well as information for members on Thompson's services for members.

Following on from last year's successes where two HE branches scooped awards, Bath Spa University branch won the South West Region's "Branch of the Year" award, which was presented at the Region's recent "Get Active" weekend. Special mention must be made of the contributions of Tina Green, AO who worked with the branch over the last year to make it possible. The committee also wishes to record it's thanks to Judy Wilson their committee secretary who retired in January 2017.

8. Equalities

UNISON submitted Freedom of Information requests to the appropriate devolved bodies (HEFCE, HEFCW, SFC and DELNI) in March 2016 to seek an understanding of the gender and ethnic breakdown of governing body members **(2015 Motion 1)**. Unfortunately the results were inconclusive as the bodies refused to supply meaningful information.

Scotland issued guidance in relation to its governing bodies that will lead to greater openness and accountability. UNISON used this as evidence in its submission to parliament on the Higher Education and Research Bill. UNISON met with the Labour Lords front bench in November 2016 to brief them in more detail. Additional briefings were also sent to MPs and members of the House of Lords to inform the debate around amendments to the Bill in January 2017.

UNISON continued to work alongside the national Black Members Officer to explore areas of joint working on the Race Equality Charter (REC) mark in order to assess the value for Black staff and students **(2016 Motion 5)**. A circular was sent to branches in February 2017 that listed those institutions that have been awarded the REC and provided advice and support on how branches can work with institutions to tackle race discrimination. UNISON's guidance 'Challenging Racism in the Workplace' was circulated in order to support branches in engaging with their employers.

Work commenced on producing specific guidance for LGBT UNISON members working overseas in higher education **(2016 Motion10)**.

A review of national collective bargaining identified that there are currently no higher education collective bargaining agreements in place other than for pay **(2016 Motion 13)**. In 2017 work will be undertaken to put together a 'business case for equality'. UNISON's higher

education social media has actively promoted information from self organised groups and young members.

In response to **2016 Motion 14** work with UNISON's Bargaining Support Group will continue in 2017 to produce guidance on age discrimination, highlighting issues that can affect an ageing workforce. Further work will continue with the National Disabled Members Committee in 2017 to fulfil the provisions of **2016 Motion 16** and the latest guidance from the Health and Safety Unit on reasonable adjustments has been circulated.

9. Higher Education Policy

In response to **2015 Motion 5** and **2016 Motions 1/15** UNISON continued to campaign for fair and equal access to higher education. UNISON worked with the National Union of Students and UCU to promote the 'United for Education' demonstration held in London in November 2016 and distributed materials demanding a fair and fully funded education system. Bethan Dudas from the NUS attended UNISON's HE branch seminar where future higher education policy and the impacts of the government's action to raise tuition fees was discussed. Social media has been used to promote UNISON's policy of a fully funded education system with no tuition fees for students wanting to access higher education.

UNISON's commitment to an end of tuition fees and the reintroduction of student grants was also contained in the UNISON submission to the consultation on the Higher Education and Research Bill. UNISON has worked with Labour Link during 2016 in order to ensure that UNISON's voice is heard at all parliamentary levels. UNISON briefed all Labour MP's in relation to the Higher Education and Research Bill and worked with Wes Streeting MP (former NUS President) to submit an amendment seeking a staff representative seat on the governing board of the new Office for Students in England. In addition UNISON has submitted responses to the Diamond Review in Wales and the Governance Bill in Scotland.

10. Vice Chancellor Pay and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The HESGE submitted a Freedom of Information Act request in 2016 in line with **2015 Motion 10** to establish what KPI's are used for Vice Chancellors' and other senior staff earning in excess of £100,000 per annum. The information received will identify any link between performance and remuneration for senior HE managers across the UK.

11. Defending Trade Union Rights in Higher Education

There is no national negotiating framework in the sector for any issues other than national pay bargaining however, the issue of trade union rights in the sector will be raised with UCEA during 2017 as more detail is published on various aspects of the Trade Union Act. In accordance with **2016 Motion 3** work has taken place with UNISON's Bargaining Support Unit to compile a guide to support HE activists that believe they are subject to victimisation.

As part of the pay settlement UCEA and the unions agreed to produce a joint framework to assist HEIs and union branches in establishing arrangements for the deduction of trade union contributions at source (DOCAS) to ensure compliance with 2016 Trade Union Act. Further work will take place with the employers during 2017 to explore establishing arrangements on other aspects of the Trade Union Act, including the use of agency workers during strike action.

12. Impact of the Trade Union bill in Higher Education

In line with **2016 Motion 4** activists were encouraged to campaign in their workplaces and communities and talk to their employers, MPs, AMs, MSPs and members of the House of Lords as the bill continued through Parliament during 2016. Higher Education branches played a particularly important role in the lead up to the House of Lords stages, by engaging with their vice chancellors and encouraging them to speak up in support of the rights of trade unions. Some key concessions were made by the government which limited the impact of some deeply damaging clauses on UNISON as a result of campaigning, rallying and lobbying by trade union activists. The Trade Union Act received royal assent 4 May 2016. However, each clause requires secondary legislation to be enacted. Regulations enacting the clauses on industrial action, picketing and political funds are progressing through Parliament at the time of writing. Details about the implications of the Act will be communicated through UNISON publications and on the website throughout 2017 to ensure that branches are made aware of impacts in their workplace.

13. Control of Risk and Hazardous Substances in Higher Education

The UNISON COSHH Guide was publicised to branches in Nov 2016 in accordance with **2016 Motion 7**. UNISON promoted safety inspections as part of European H&S week and national inspection day in October 2016. A presentation on COSHH was delivered at the HE branch seminar in November. A new leaflet has also been published on the topic. The HSE is currently reviewing their guidance on hazardous / dangerous substances with a view to merging the guidance. UNISON's Health and Safety Unit has been part of the consultation group.

14. Student Unions

The HESGE agreed to form a sub committee to look at how we can engage with staff employed by student unions in line with **2016 Motion 9**. The committee will produce a survey during 2017 to be circulated to UNISON members/branches and via social media. The results of the survey will inform guidance for branches on a wide range of aspects of working with student unions on campus.

In line with **2016 Motion 17** a discussion was held with the NUS in November 2016 which we will build on further in 2017. UNISON were asked to contribute to an NUS event and provided a speaker on the impact of the EU referendum on the HE sector and ran a workshop on the Foundation Living Wage for newly elected sabbatical officers. In response to **2016 Motion 2** on the issue of voter registration changes and the impact on students the HESGE promoted the work of Hope Not Hate and also encouraged local branches to work with NUS and university employers.

15. Fair Annual Leave

The HESGE requested information via the annual Freedom of Information request in line with **2015 Motion 15** to establish what annual leave entitlements exist in HE. The information received will identify best practice and inform the compilation of a toolkit for branches to negotiate improvements to provision with employers.

16. Information is power

Information on catering/security and cleaning contracts is collected annually as part of by UNISON's Freedom of Information requests to higher education institutions and published in a report. Monthly updates on new contracts for tender in higher education are received from UNISON's Bargaining Support Group and are passed to branches and regions.

In 2016 to support the pay campaign an interactive map detailing all of this information, and other key statistics was made available to branches and members. This was a well received method of disseminating the information requested by **2016 Motion 8**.

17. University wholly owned subsidiary companies

The higher education branch seminar 2016 discussed the impact of private companies working across higher education. Further work to establish the growing use of wholly owned subsidiary companies and the impact in higher education, particularly on employment rights and collective bargaining will continue in 2017 in line with **2016 Motion 12**.

18. Higher Education as a Service Group

Higher Education Service Group specific web pages are now available on UNISON's website. UNISON HE specific social media is produced for Facebook and Twitter. All materials and campaigns run by the service group were clearly badged as UNISON Higher education in line with **2016 Motion 18**.

19. Changes to NHS Student Bursaries and Fees

In line with the provisions of **2016 Motion EM1** UNISON HE branches and members were encouraged to participate in the campaign to stop government changes to the student nursing bursary and to attend a lobby of parliament in May 2016. UNISON has been in contact with civil servants to seek further information and had meetings with members of the House of Lords and MPs to brief them.

Section C

UNISON Objective 3: Develop our public service campaigns in support of quality public services, in defence of the NHS, and all public services, building our political influence, forging alliances with unions, appropriate campaigning and community groups to challenge the austerity programme, including challenging the attacks on the Welfare State. To campaign for the election of governments in Westminster, and the devolved nations, which value public services and working people, rejecting the arguments of UKIP and other far-right parties.

20. Funding/Redundancies/Cuts

20.1 Funding

In March 2016 the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) set out its position on the public funding of universities in England. This detailed a further reduction of central government funding. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had a total of £3,712 million to distribute for the 2016-17 financial year. BIS stated that it expected that

income the sector earns from fees would increase as a direct result of the removal of student number controls in September 2015. The government estimated that this income would rise from £8.1bn in 2015-16 to £8.6bn in 2016-17 and £9bn in 2017-18. BIS also advised that further wide ranging reforms were to be introduced.

The BIS grant letter re-emphasised the government aim of widening participation and with reference to research funding HEFCE was asked to support and engage in the Stern Review of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in developing proposals for the next REF exercise to be completed in 2021.

Following the EU referendum in June 2016 and political changes that followed there have been significant announcements on higher education funding and a shift in government departments, with the main responsibility for HE being moved to the Department for Education, although some areas remain under the remit of BIS. In August the Chancellor announced a 'guarantee' that research projects currently funded by the EU will be underwritten by the UK government after the UK leaves the EU. UK universities carry out 76% of publicly funded research in the UK. In the Autumn Statement delivered in November 2016 an additional £2bn funding per year was announced for Research and Development but it was not clear how this would impact the higher education sector.

The Higher Education and Research Bill (HERB) detailed further increases to student tuition fees that were implemented in September 2016. Further marketisation of the sector is proposed with increased numbers of private providers accessing public funds. One key proposal is the proposal to merge a number of existing agencies to form the Office for Students (OfS). UNISON responded to the government consultation and urged caution in changes to higher education at this point given high levels of uncertainty in the economy following the EU referendum and reiterating our policy of free education (**2016 Motion 1**). We have also briefed MPs and members of the House of Lords.

2016 saw challenges for higher education in Wales as a result of leaving the EU, the Wales government response to the Diamond and Hazelcorn reviews and the impact of the UK Parliament's Higher Education and Research Bill in the devolved nation. In April 2016 Welsh Government in its funding letter stated that there was 'no doubt' that the UK Government's policy of austerity was having a lasting impact on spending decisions. Funding of £118m was announced, but with a provision to delay final payment until later in the year when more robust data on expenditure would be known. In October 2016 the new Education minister wrote and confirmed that the final funding figure for £2016-17 would be £117m.

A total of £1,014 million in funding for Scottish universities was announced for 2016-17 covering 19 universities. This figure is split between teaching, research and other projects and grants. This was a further reduction from 2015-16. The Scottish Funding Council highlighted that £11.7 million would be used to provide match funding for research infrastructure investment from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

In January 2016 it was announced that higher education in Northern Ireland would become part of the Department for the Economy following elections. In March the scale of the cuts to higher education in Northern Ireland were announced. The executive's expenditure budget for the teaching grant fell from £230 million in 2010/11 to £174.3 million in 2014/15. In June 2016 an additional £14.6m funding was allocated to higher education for 2016-17, however,

by July 2016 there was considerable uproar at proposals to raise tuition fees in Northern Ireland following a proposed 10% cut in the teaching grant for 2016-17.

20.2 Cuts and Redundancies

UNISON branches around the UK have been involved in many local campaigns against local cuts and redundancies. In January 2017 closures commenced of a number of Open University Regional Centres at a cost of hundreds of jobs. Details of UNISON's other numerous local campaigns are outlined in the regional reports.

21. National Union of Students

UNISON worked closely with the NUS in 2016 on a range of issues. These include Living Wage campaigns on campus and the consultation on the Higher Education and Research Bill. The NUS Policy Officer Bethan Dudas attended the branch seminar in Brighton in October 2016. UNISON and NUS continued to work together on issues affecting young people (**2016 Motion 9 and 17**).

Section D

UNISON Objective 4: Ensure that the union's structures including organisational, lay member, ICT infrastructure and internal management systems are efficient and effective to meet the changing needs of all sections of the union and its members.

22. Branch Seminar

The HESGE organised the branch seminar in 2016 in Brighton. The seminar opened with a panel discussion on the landscape of higher education. A number of speakers including Roger McKenzie, UNISON Assistant General Secretary and Bethan Dudas from NUS participated in a panel debate. Practical workshops supported by HESGE members covering a range of topics took place including: supporting members with mental health issues, pensions, pay, and outsourcing. A useful session discussing the challenges facing branches around membership density suggested areas of organising and recruitment best practice that had been used at Birmingham University.

23. Higher Education Conference 2016

There were a number of key messages arising from Conference 2016, including how to challenge the attacks on the staff working in higher education arising from privatisation, shared services and cuts. It was agreed that UNISON activists need to be aware of their rights; that there needs to be engagement with HE employers and UNISON needs to address wide ranging equality issues that affected our members. Delegates were reminded of the challenges facing members who were outsourced to arms-length companies, and those facing employment and income uncertainty when employed on zero hour contracts. Conference also reinforced its commitment to challenging all employers in the sector that refuse to pay employees a Living Wage.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE 2016 – 18

(Pending outcome of HESGE by-elections to be announced 14 February 2017.)

Region	HESGE Representative
Eastern	Margaret Meredith
East Midlands	Vacant
Greater London	Luanne Higgins, Susan Parkin
Northern	Lorraine Brown, Denise Ward
Northern Ireland	Vacant
North West	Andrew Beech, Linda Holden
Scotland	Margaret McParland, Davena Rankin
South East	Adrian Dolby, Sarah Pickett
South West	Mike Hines
Cymru / Wales	Dan Beard, Charlie Bull
West Midlands	Matthew Raine, Amelia Rout
Yorkshire & Humberside	Kath Owen
NEC	Tomasa Bullen, Elizabeth Baptiste

Single Pay Spine for HE Academic Support Staff 2016 / 17

Spine Point	£'s from 1/8/15	£'s from 1/8/16
1	13953	14323
2	14257	14599
3	14631	14953
4	14959	15258
5	15356	15632
6	15765	16017
7	16131	16357
8	16577	16776
9	17039	17209
10	17528	17703
11	18031	18211
12	18549	18734
13	19083	19274
14	19632	19828
15	20198	20400
16	20781	20989
17	21391	21605
18	22029	22249
19	22685	22912
20	23386	23620
21	24057	24298
22	24775	25023
23	25513	25768
24	26274	26537
25	27057	27328
26	27864	28143
27	28695	28982
28	29552	29848
29	30434	30738
30	31342	31655
31	32277	32600
32	33242	33574
33	34233	34575
34	35256	35609
35	36309	36672
36	37394	37768
37	38511	38896
38	39685	40082
39	40847	41255
40	42067	42488
41	43325	43758
42	44620	45066
43	45954	46414
44	47328	47801

45	48743	49230
46	50200	50702
47	51702	52219
48	53248	53780
49	54841	55389
50	56482	57047
51	58172	58754

Spinal column point 1 to be deleted with effect from 1.4.17