

## **Title: Motion on the 2021/22 UCU strikes**

Proposer: Ryan Larkham (Ordinary Member) on behalf of Sheffield Solidarity Group

### **SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION NOTES:**

1. The UCU (University and Colleges Union) have voted to go on strike at Sheffield Hallam University over the 'four fights' - pay, inequality, workload and casualisation. Staff are fighting for better pay, a fair workload, secure contracts and an end to gender and racial inequalities in the workforce.
2. When staff go on strike, they forfeit their pay and stop working for the university.
3. Over half of UCU nationally members have reported showing signs of depression. This is attributed to, among other things, the high workload staff have [1]
4. Of 4,689 staff at Sheffield Hallam University, 866 are on low-paid, precarious zero-hours contracts. [2]
5. On average, the national UCU members have seen pay decline 17% from 2009 to 2019, this is compounded by racial and gender pay gaps [3]
6. These are examples of the 'four fights' that have led to Hallam UCU voting to go on strike.
7. There will be members of the students' Union that are post-graduates and will be on strike and the Union has a duty to support them.
8. The strike will happen regardless of what the SU and students do, but the more support they have from students the shorter the strike will be meaning any disruption caused will be minimized.
9. The NUS is already supporting the strikes. President Larissa Kennedy has stated that 'Staff working conditions are student learning conditions and we stand shoulder to shoulder with our educators in fighting for a more just education system'. [4]

### **SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION BELIEVES:**

1. Teaching staff are taking this industrial action because of years of neglect by university management and striking is a last resort by staff to get their demands met.

2. Their complaints are justified and grounded in the reality of working at Sheffield Hallam University, not opinion
3. Campus unions should stand together because we are all part of the same fight for a better education system and university.
4. The longer the picket line, the shorter the strike- these strikes **will** disrupt students' learning but the more support the UCU has the shorter the strike will be so to minimise disruption, the SU should support industrial action.
5. When students are neutral on these issues it is used by university management as a weapon against staff, making the strike harder and longer, therefore causing more disruption.
6. Staff teaching conditions are student learning conditions- the better the working environment for staff, the easier it is for them to teach to the best of their ability so it is in students' interests that staff have a working environment where staff are fairly paid and not over-worked so students can get the best quality teaching.
7. Supporting the strike will be supporting better conditions for post-graduate students
8. The UCU is setting a precedent for standards in all workplaces, including the ones students are currently working in and will graduate into.
9. That it is right for the SU to support the UCU's campaign and all their demands.

#### **SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION RESOLVES:**

1. To stand in solidarity with striking staff and to lobby the University to meet all of Sheffield Hallam UCU branch's demands.
2. To actively support the strike and any student led campaigns to support the strike and encourage others to do the same
3. While supporting the UCU, make provisions to ensure students are not significantly negatively affected and support students who complain to the university- ensuring complaints are directed towards the university management rather than individual lecturers.
4. To lobby the university to put any pay docked from striking lecturers into student services such as mental health and sexual violence support

5. To allow the SU building to be available for student facing events run by the UCU including, but not limited to, events such as teach outs and Q&As.
6. To use its social media and email database to tell as many students as possible why the strike is happening, why the SU is supporting it, where they can get support during the strike and how they can get involved with supporting the strike (they can get involved by contacting the Sheffield Solidarity Group who have a society at Hallam).
7. To lobby the Vice-Chancellor to ask UUK resumes negotiations on the pensions dispute that is affecting teaching staff at other universities such as the University of Sheffield.

### **References**

[1] <https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/11839/Half-of-UK-university-staff-showing-signs-of-depression-report-shows>

[2] <https://nowthenmagazine.com/articles/exclusive-female-staff-at-sheffield-university-twice-as-likely-to-be-on-zero-hours-contracts>

[3] <https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/10342/Value-of-university-staff-pay-has-plummeted-in-last-decade-employers-own-research-reveals>

[4] <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/sep/26/universities-should-say-sorry-to-students-if-staff-strike-says-union-boss>

### **Additional notes**