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Cambridge University Branch 0775M

<https://cambridgeuniteunion.com/>

Working to protect staff in Cambridge University

Introduction from the Secretary

Dear Unite Colleagues,

Unite members will be aware that Unite the Union Cambridge University is an active branch. We are especially good at earning reconciliation in individual cases. This reputation of fighting for our members has earned us the honour of being the branch with the highest level of membership in our Union's Sector.

But we do so much more!

Cambridge University exists in a bubble. Senior management and academics offer platitudes. They give voice to well-being initiatives, and offer sympathy for our high levels of stress. But there is little commitment to dealing with these and other realities. The high cost of living in Cambridge and low pay; poor transport links to villages; spiralling workloads as colleagues are not replaced and we have to take on extra work.

We want to tell you about our ongoing campaigns. You will find a few mentioned here.

Please pass this newsletter on to your work friends and colleagues. Ask if they too would like to join us. Print it and pin it up on department notice boards.

Spread the word.

At the moment we are achieving a lot. With an even larger membership it is highly possible that we will burst that bubble.

Will Smith
Branch Secretary

Housing – Increasing rent prices at Eddington

Eddington is a new settlement on the North West edge of Cambridge and is set to include a community centre, primary school, supermarket and affordable housing. In 2012 the accommodation was primarily aimed at Post Docs, but this was revised when Unite challenged the University's definition of key workers in the same year. In 2014 it was announced that this accommodation would also be available to Assistant Staff. The rent for the accommodation was calculated on 30% of net household income and excluded utility bills. However, in April 2018 the rent was set at a flat rate dependent on the size and type of accommodation. This model does not take into account the salary of the tenants. This has led to a situation where the rent increase from pre April 2018 to post April 2018 will almost double for future tenants.

The University's original promise was to provide a range of low-cost rentable housing for University employees. The change of charging model has now made accommodation at Eddington unaffordable to most University Assistant staff. Unite is disappointed by this change and requires the University to explain why it has introduced a new plan, which is detrimental to our members, without entering into any consultation with us. We are therefore asking the University to revisit these changes and honour its commitment to offering affordable housing to University employees.

Attached is a report, which provides much more detail on the former and current arrangements around the Eddington development.





Consultative Ballot on Final Pay Offer 2019/2020

A consultative ballot has been sent out to Unite Members following negotiations with the employers on the 2019/2020 pay offer. The final offer amounts to 1.8% for most staff. We are recommending Unite members reject this offer. Please ensure you register your vote so we can send a strong message to the employers. And if you are not a member, we urge you to join us and have your say.



University Bus

The Uni4 and latterly the Universal Bus service was a welcome and commendable initiative by the University. It connected the major parts of the University estate from one end of the city to the other, from West Cambridge to Addenbrookes. In July 2016, this service was extended to include a bus stop at Cambridge Station, which is extremely helpful to staff whom come to work by train. However, in January 2017 the bus service changed its route to one that no longer passed Homerton College and the Faculty of Education both located on Hills Road. This change has affected a large number of staff and students, and in particular, has been damaging to disabled students for whom the service was a cheap and accessible lifeline to the town centre and other University sites. There are no alternative buses and staff and students who need to travel to other University locations either have to catch multiple buses, or walk considerable distances.

The service promotes itself as “The University Bus for Everyone”. Unfortunately this is no longer true. We believe this to be extremely unfair. We are now campaigning, along with the CU Students Union, for the restoration of the original route – along Hills Road. Please show your support for this campaign by signing the CUSU petition at <https://www.cusu.co.uk/2018/05/08/universal-bus-service-petition-from-the-disabled-students-campaign/> and/or signing the attached generic letter to the Vice-Chancellor.



Benefits of Unite Membership – Join today

There are many benefits to being a member of the Unite Union. We will provide all the support and advice you need in the workplace. We are constantly working for better pay, working conditions, employees' rights, equality, security and safety. We also offer a whole range of benefits, such as financial advice, funeral care, free training courses, legal services and monetary rewards. Have a look at the Unite website, <https://unitetheunion.org/> to see how the Union can help and support you in your working life and your personal life. It's easy to join.



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