

Proposal for Establishment of a Branch Hardship Fund at OGM May 31st 2023

It is proposed that UWE UCU branch establish a hardship fund for the purpose of helping to alleviate hardship arising for members in precarious circumstances as a result of joining industrial action.

It is proposed that UWE UCU branch set aside a sum of £10,000 to support the hardship fund in the first instance for the current industrial action.

It is proposed that UCU UWE branch authorise hardship payments to members in addition to national funding available from the fighting fund of a maximum of £30 per day for up to 11 days.

Proposed operation of the fund is as follows:

Funding is available to all UWE branch members who take part in official industrial action but local funding is limited and a priority is made for those members suffering hardship. It is presumed that members are also eligible for support from the national fighting fund and have applied for that support in addition to local support.

A panel of three officers, including the Branch Treasurer, assess claims to the Fund and oversee payments made from it.

Monies may be donated or transferred to the Fund and will be held in a separate Unity Trust Bank account. Payments can only be made from the Fund's bank account specifically set up for the purpose [for proper audit examination] and made by internet payment to the member concerned. Transfer of money from the branch operating account to the hardship fund will be authorised by a quorate branch meeting. The local branch will retain in the operating account sufficient funds to cover annual operating costs plus a contingency of 10 % (currently about £12,000).

Claims must only be agreed and payments made on proof of loss of pay. Usually a copy of a payslip but other evidence may be accepted from members on insecure, hourly paid contracts. For example timesheets and comparative payslips that show loss of pay. Copies of evidence must be retained in the branch accounts, by the Branch Treasurer, for audit purposes.

The Fund must be submitted for audit as part of the annual audit of branch accounts and all records will be called in for the annual national audit of UCU accounts and at the end of a period of industrial action for national reporting purposes.