



## SCORES OF BHCC WORKERS FACE UNCERTAINTY AT WORK AS PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS ANNOUNCED

After 13 years of austerity policies and successive Tory governments who seem to have contempt for local government and local government workers; Brighton & Hove is following many other councils who face huge deficits in their budgets.

In an attempt to close a £32m shortfall, you will no doubt have seen that the city council has put forward cuts proposals that include deleting over 120 jobs, and that will leave around 50 staff at risk of redundancy or redeployment.

We know that this is a deeply distressing and anxious time for all BHCC workers - not just those whose

jobs are at risk, but also those who will now have to do more for less, yet again, in an attempt to deliver services from teams with unfilled posts.

**If you believe you are at risk of redundancy or redeployment, or are part of a team going through a restructure or consultation and haven't yet reached out for support, please do.**

You can also **share our poster** (see page 4) and help make sure as many people at BHCC as possible are unionised and have that extra layer of protection. We are stronger together, and it's now or never to unite our voices and demand an end to cuts and decline in local government.



### FIGHTING CUTS TO YOUR UNION SUPPORT AT BHCC - WHAT YOU CAN DO!

We have been overwhelmed and moved by the response to our open letter to BHCC staff (see page 5) calling for testimonials in support of our fight to a proposed 25% cut to trade union facilities time. Scores of workers, from planners and care workers to refuse workers and seafront officers sent statements calling on the administration to ditch the proposal, particularly at a time when workers at the council most need the support of their union.

We're passing all responses on to councillors, so do have a look at the open letter and **if you'd like to add your voice please send your statement to:**  
[contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk](mailto:contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk)

### CARE WORKERS CELEBRATE UNISON WIN ON BANK HOLIDAY PAY



We were delighted to visit members at Wayfield Avenue who **between them had settlements totalling £10,000** following our branch's successful dispute on equalising bank holiday pay at the city council so that all bank holiday workers, particularly large groups of women care workers, get the same bank holiday pay as their colleagues in Cityclean. Everyone who works bank holidays at BHCC **now gets fair bank holiday pay** - a real victory for Brighton & Hove UNISON and **a win that benefits 800 council workers.**



# ADULTS' SOCIAL WORKER STRIKE ACTION TO ESCALATE



Our social work members who support vulnerable adults in the city have agreed, after consultation, to escalate their strike action to three days at the end of this month and move to re-ballot to extend their strike mandate.

The social workers are striking over pay parity with social workers in Families, Children and Learning, and to improve pay progression and professional development. BHCC pays less to its adult social workers than East or West Sussex, Portsmouth and Southampton -

despite having a considerably higher cost of living. Many of our social workers are spending between 50% and 70% of their take home pay on rent alone and newly qualified social workers take home as little as £11 an hour.

We are focussed on finding a resolution to the dispute and are in regular meetings with the employer. Without a resolution our members tell us they will leave BHCC as the pay is simply not competitive. This would be a disaster for the city.

## OPEN TO ALL: UNISON WOMENS' CONFERENCE FRINGE EVENT, FIGHTING BACK AGAINST BULLYING & HARASSMENT IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT,

To tie in with UNISON Women's Conference at the Brighton Centre next week Brighton & Hove UNISON and MeTU are holding a free, open to all lunchtime event on Friday 16th of February at 12.40pm.

MeTU is a grassroots movement of women and non binary people who came together following reports into misogyny, bullying and harassment into unions, such as the TSSA, GMB and RCN.

Come along and find out how sisters can come together and and fight against sexism, bullying and sexual harassment in trade unions and the Labour movement. **To express an interest and get sent full details email [corinna.edwards-colledge@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:corinna.edwards-colledge@brighton-hove.gov.uk)**



## LIKE TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN YOUR UNION?

Here's just some of the ways to get more involved, develop new skills and meet new people:

### **CONFERENCES:**

Unison has a busy and exciting calendar of conferences. If you're interested in being in a branch delegation for Local Government, National, Women's, Black Members, LGBT, Young Members or Disabled Workers conferences let us know.

### **VACANT OFFICER POSTS:**

We currently have vacancies for a **Young Members Officer** (has to be aged 30 or under) and **Communications Officer**. Both roles are a great way to learn new skills and meet new people, and there's comprehensive training for the roles too.

### **WORKPLACE STEWARD:**

The help Stewards provide to their colleagues is vital to our union. They also get comprehensive training & support.

### **WORKPLACE CONTACT:**

A great role if you aren't sure if you want to be a Rep but would like to help spread the word about the benefits of being in a union.

### **CAMPAIGNING:**

Help the branch with campaigns & promotional work.

## MEET CASEWORKERS JULIE ARTHUR & ANDY RICHARDS



Julie & Andy are two of the specialist case workers the branch employs, alongside Sue Beatty, to support our members in the community, voluntary, charitable and private sectors.

They have supported dozens of members, and regularly won for them in what can be a challenging sector in terms of pay and employment rights. Any queries: **[contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk](mailto:contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk)**.

## #GIVEITBACK CAMPAIGN GRAVEYARD OF JOBS & SERVICES IN PRODUCTION!

We are really excited that following being awarded £20k in funding to run our innovative #GIVEITBACK campaign against cuts to local government - work on the life-size graveyard installation of lost jobs and services has begun!

The graveyard will tour around the city to start a conversation about what we've lost, but also how we get excellent services and decently paid jobs back into local government. We also plan to take the graveyard to Westminster!

Find out more at [brightonandhoveunison.org.uk/news](http://brightonandhoveunison.org.uk/news)





**CONFIDENTIAL DISCLOSURE**

We are delighted that after lobbying the council to adopt a confidential disclosure tool as part of its new comprehensive new bullying and harassment policy, that BHCC has agreed and is now moving forward with procurement.

4 out of 5 women don't report sexual harassment because of fear of reprisals or not being believed so a route to confidential disclosure is essential to protect women and vulnerable workers.

**New series of Branch Blogs:**

We've launched a series of blogs on political and ethical issues.

To see more about what we're thinking and debating visit:  
[brightonandhoveunison.org.uk/news](https://brightonandhoveunison.org.uk/news)

**NEXT BRANCH COMMITTEE:**

**March 6th, 2-4pm, hybrid meeting Cttee Room 3 BTH and online.**

All Workplace Stewards can attend our BCMs and members can put forward issues/questions for discussion.

If you are a Steward and haven't received your invitation let us know

**Unions prepare to fight back against plan to bring back tribunal fees**

Despite the Supreme Court ruling with unions that imposing fees on taking employment cases to tribunal is unlawful, the government is once again trying to reintroduce fees:

<https://www.ier.org.uk/news/employment-tribunal-fees-put-a-hurdle-in-front-of-workers-seeking-justice-says-tuc/>

**OPEN UNIVERSITY OPENS DOOR TO UNISON MEMBERS!**

An exciting opportunity has opened up for UNISON members to take part in free CPD and Microcredential courses in everything from coaching to problem solving and project management. To find out more:

<https://learning.unison.org.uk/open-university-courses-microcredentials-and-cpd-short-courses/>

**WHO OWNS BRIGHTON?**

That was the question raised at a sell out webinar held by Brighton & Hove Community Land Trust. Watch it at:

<https://youtu.be/Nzg2tW5FhLc>

## GET IN TOUCH:

For urgent enquiries please call us on **01273 291611** otherwise you can email us at [contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk](mailto:contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk)  
[www.brightonandhoveunison.org.uk](http://www.brightonandhoveunison.org.uk)

This newsletter is also available in plain text via our [website](http://www.brightonandhoveunison.org.uk)





**AN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF CUTS TO JOBS AND SERVICES HAVE BEEN PROPOSED AT BHCC.**

**GET**



**UNIONISED**



**NOW!**

**IF YOU AREN'T ALREADY IN A UNION, JOIN ONE NOW. BRIGHTON & HOVE UNISON STANDS WITH YOU TO FIGHT EVERY POTENTIAL JOB LOSS & SCRUTINISE EVERY SUGGESTED SAVING. AS A UNION WE ARE COMMITTED TO CONSIDERING A STRIKE BALLOT IF THERE ARE ANY COMPULSORY REDUNDANCIES.**

**THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTACK ON LOCAL JOBS & SERVICES MUST STOP!**

**JOIN.UNISON.ORG.UK**



**WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER**

**01273 291611**

**contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk  
www.brightonandhoveunison.org.uk**

**#GIVE**

**IT**

**BACK!**

**BRIGHTON & HOVE**



# STAND WITH US TO DEFEND YOUR TRADE UNION SUPPORT AT BHCC OR LOOSE VITAL PROTECTION & ORGANISING AT WORK

## OPEN LETTER TO ALL BHCC EMPLOYEES FROM BRIGHTON & HOVE UNISON

**JANUARY 2024**

Dear BHCC Employee

These are incredibly challenging and distressing times to be working in local government, and come on top of years of decline. **It is a testament to you all that have you continued in your vital roles as public servants**, but we know that this has taken a considerable toll on many as you struggle to deliver to residents with ever dwindling resources.

We then also have the **deeply concerning and unprecedented number of jobs that are now at risk of deletion** following the council's proposals to address its £31m budget deficit. 125 roles stand to be deleted and up to 45 people will be at risk of redundancy. As we have said to the employer, **behind every one of those 125 jobs is an individual and a team**. An individual that will need support with redundancy and redeployment, and teams that will have to absorb yet more reduction to their staffing and resources, leaving them at high risk of stress and burnout.

In light of this, Brighton and Hove UNISON is shocked that the employer, particularly one that is led by a Labour administration, **is proposing to cut 25% of the facilities time that we rely on to support you, our members**, reneging on an agreement negotiated by recognised trade unions and BHCC. We are appalled that the employer is kicking employees when they are down by drastically reducing a key safety net and support for you all as well as reducing our ability to challenge poor management, influence decision making and help progress positive change.

UNISON is clear, **we will fight this cut to your vital trade union protection with all means necessary and demand an urgent rethink**. With just four full-time Officer roles, our branch represents thousands of BHCC staff and carried out over 500 individual pieces of case work last year. **Members rely on us for vital support** with grievances, disciplinarys, redundancy, pay discrepancies, bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workforce. To **reduce our ability to provide this at this incredibly challenging and upsetting time is simply unacceptable**.

To help us fight this cut to your support **please email [contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk](mailto:contact@brightonandhoveunison.org.uk) to let us know why you are standing up for your trade union support** and we will collate and share them all with the Labour administration. We, as ever, stand with you and will scrutinise and fight back against every cut, and remain committed to calling a full industrial action ballot if there are any compulsory redundancies.

Many thanks

*Corinna, Diana, Richard, Scott and Trevor*, BHCC Branch Officers



**JOIN A MODERN, PROGRESSIVE, FIGHTING UNION!**

**JOIN.UNISON.ORG.UK**

**01273 291611 | BRIGHTONANDHOVEUNISON.ORG.UK**