UNISON Higher Education Service Group Conference

2nd March 2017 Bournemouth International Centre

Report by Tracey Holland & Lucinda Wakefield

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**Conference Overview**

The conference was opened by UNISON's assistant general secretary Roger MacKenzie. An overview of his opening remarks can be found on UNISON's website [here](https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2017/03/he-mckenzie/).

We then moved onto the business of the conference. There were 18 motions to discuss and vote on ranging from workplace bullying, this year's pay claim, outsourced workers and an organisational motion about the timing of conference.

One of the more significant debates was around last year's pay claim and Conference voted for the motion that questioned the decision by the Service Group in 2016 not to recommend strike action following the ballot of members who had voted to reject the pay offer of 1.1% from the employer.

Areas of potential interest to our branch that came out of the conference were:

* Workplace bullying - review the policy and share as good practice / amend as necessary;
* Closing the gender pay gap - to continue to pursue changes in practice in respect of part time and job share vacancies in SHU;
* Higher education workers deserve fair pay & campaigning for £10 an hour minimum wage across HE - what can we do to encourage / promote the benefits of being a living wage employer to SHU?

Mid-day there was a speaker from the [Hope not Hate](http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/) organisation. He encouraged each University to ensure their students are on the electoral register. He also spoke about the street party events being held in memory of Jo Cox during the weekend of 17-18 June - more details of which can be found on the Jo Cox foundation website [here](https://www.jocoxfoundation.org/).