



University of Sheffield  
2 Hounsfield Road  
Sheffield  
S3 7RF

Tel: 0114 222 8976  
[ucu@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@sheffield.ac.uk)

Professor Koen Lamberts  
Vice Chancellor  
The University of Sheffield  
Firth Court, Western Bank  
Sheffield  
S10 2TN

28 March 2019

### **National pay negotiations**

Dear Koen,

We were appalled to see that the opening of the annual national pay negotiations led to the following statement from the employer representatives:

"The employers open the negotiations, on behalf of the participating universities, with an initial envelope for discussion of 1.3% across all the elements of the pay claim."

Not only does this propose yet another large real-terms pay cut, it fails to acknowledge the existence of the other hugely important aspects to the joint unions' claim, which seeks to address gender inequality, precarious contracts and workload as a matter of urgency.

We have lost count of how many times we have been told at negotiation meetings by this university's representatives that pay (and pensions) are national issues and hence outside of the university's control. We have also lost count of how many times we have made the point that national positions are informed by local input, a point as true for employers and their umbrella body as it is for staff and their national union. This branch has increasingly shaped national discussions and policy within UCU, and we have been disappointed at how slow this university's management has been to seek to influence their representatives.

Sheffield UCU members have passed the highly restrictive threshold for response rates in both of the locally counted ballots since the introduction of the Trade Union Act. Based on data we collected locally, we believe our response rate in the national re-ballot on pay not only crossed the threshold but increased to around 60%. The anger about the direction this university's leadership has taken us on in recent years was evident in the scathing responses to the recent staff survey.

We do not know what will happen if employers continue to fail to listen to staff on these matters, but we are certain that there will be significant ramifications, both across HE and here at this University. Staff morale and goodwill is dangerously low and falling. The sector is failing its staff and students, and we call on you to publicly denounce the opening position and demand an end to the low prioritisation of staff before the damage is irreparable.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Marsh, Branch President  
on behalf of the Sheffield UCU committee

cc

JUCC Staffside Representatives  
Lilian Jones, Sheffield Students' Union President