

Aston University UCU Branch
Local Hardship Fund
Industrial Action to Defend Our Pensions – February & March 2018

GENERAL POLICY

Introduction

1. The Aston University UCU Branch Committee has agreed to establish a Local Hardship Fund ('the Local Fund') to run in parallel to the National Fighting Fund. The Local Fund complements, and does not replace, the National Fighting Fund.
2. The Local Fund will be administered by a panel composed of the Aston UCU Branch Chair, the Branch Secretary, and the Branch Treasurer. This panel will establish procedures, assess claims, make payments and keep records of all decisions and payments of claims for audit purposes.

Claims

3. **Only Aston UCU members who strike may submit a claim to the Local Fund.**
4. Should claims exceed the available funding, then claims will be prioritised according to need.
5. The Local Fund is intended only for the alleviation of hardship.
 - a. Members suffering significant hardship are encouraged to apply.
 - b. Proof of loss of pay will be required, in the form of a scanned copy of the claimant's pay slip. Members who do not receive a conventional pay slip or cannot provide other evidence of loss of earnings should contact the Branch Treasurer for advice.
 - c. Members who wish their claim to be considered as a high priority claim will need to provide suitable evidence of their special circumstances.
6. To ensure the Branch can provide support to as many members as we can and in as targeted a way as possible, the maximum daily compensation that a member can claim from the Local Fund will be £50 per day, up to a maximum of £250 across the fourteen days of strike action initially called by UCU. This is intended to 'top-up' claims made to the national Fighting Fund, for members most in need.
7. Whereas no payments will be made from the National Fund till the fourth day of strike action, payments can be made from the Local Fund from the second day of strike action.
8. Timing of claims:
 - a. Members with special circumstances who want their claim to be considered as a **high priority claim** will need to submit the claim **within two weeks** of receiving the pay slip which proves loss of earnings.
 - b. A claim arising from this dispute will only be paid if there are sufficient funds and if it is received within two months after the date of the loss of pay.
9. Members claiming from the local Hardship Fund must confirm that they are already claiming from the national hardship fund and that the national claim is not enough to alleviate the hardship suffered from going on strike. They must certainly not be receiving more than the total loss of income from combined applications to UCU accredited funds (local and national).
10. A membership check will be made on all claimants. No claim can be met for members who are in arrears of subscriptions or for those who are not paying the correct level of subscription based on their earnings.

Further Information

To contact panel members about the Local Fund, please email astonucutreasurer@outlook.com including "Aston UCU Fund" in the subject line.

This policy and the application form are available here: <http://www.ucu.aston.ac.uk/node/210>

General queries, including to find out about picketing arrangements, should be addressed to astonucu@gmail.com

For UCU FAQs about the strike see <https://www.ucu.org.uk/uss-action-faqs>

For information on eligibility and claim process for the national Fighting Fund see <https://goo.gl/WwX4Tp>

To donate to the National Fighting Fund, see <https://www.ucu.org.uk/fightingfund>

To donate to the Local Fund, please email astonucutreasurer@outlook.com for further details.

INFORMATION FOR CLAIMANTS

Introduction

In support of industrial action the Committee of the Aston UCU branch has agreed that compensatory payments can be made from the Local Hardship Fund to members whose pay has been reduced as a result of the member's participation in the action.

The UCU Branch endeavours to give priority of payment to members most in need.

To ensure the Branch can provide support to as many Aston UCU branch members as we can and in as targeted a way as possible, the maximum daily compensation that a member can claim from the Local Fund will be £50 per day, up to a maximum of £250 across the fourteen days of strike action initially called by UCU. This is intended to 'top-up' claims made to the national Fighting Fund, for members most in need.

Payments are not made in respect of the first working day of action.

For information on the national UCU Fighting Fund see <https://tinyurl.com/yblmcwot>

Eligibility

To be eligible to make a claim against the Fund, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a current and fully paid up UCU member
- **Have taken part in the industrial action called by the union.**
- For each day of action to have been docked pay.
- Be able to supply a scanned copy, or photocopy, of your pay slip(s) showing the gross amount of pay deducted in respect of each day's participation in the action.
- **Your combined applications to UCU accredited hardship funds (local and national) will not exceed your total loss of income**

When you submit a claim, your membership will be checked and no claim can be met for members who are in arrears of subscriptions. Before you claim, therefore, check [here](#) ensure you are paying the correct level of subscription according to your earnings and are up to date with your subscriptions. Note that the local subscription is an additional £1 per month.

If you cannot locate your membership number, please email membership@ucu.org.uk.

How can claims be submitted?

To submit a claim please complete the claim form available [here](#) and email the form and supporting evidence to astonucutreasurer@outlook.com with 'Aston UCU Hardship Fund' in the subject line. On receipt, you will receive a confirmation email and a claim reference number. If you need to contact us about your claim, you will need to email us at astonucutreasurer@outlook.com and please quote the claim number in the body and subject line of the email. We will answer all email enquiries as quickly as we can.

Timing of claims:

Members with special circumstances who want their claim to be considered as a **high priority claim** will need to submit the claim **within two weeks** of receiving the pay slip which proves loss of earnings.

A claim arising from this dispute will only be paid if there are sufficient funds and if it is received within two months after the date of the loss of pay.

What evidence is needed to support a claim for compensation?

Applications to the Local Hardship Fund must be accompanied by evidence of pay deduction (i.e. copies of the relevant pay slip from Aston University) for the days for which you are claiming. This is essential to avoid liability for tax on the compensation paid. Claims cannot be paid without this evidence. However, we can assure you that your payslip will be treated in a strictly confidential manner. Scanned pay slips can be submitted in PDF or JPEG format.

We will retain documentation for audit and HMRC purposes.

In what circumstances might claims be rejected?

Claims not accompanied by the evidence of pay slip(s) showing the deductions will be rejected.

Claims from

- non-members
- members in arrears of their subscription
- members not paying the correct UCU subscription according to their annual earnings

will not be paid.

All claims are at the discretion of the union – UCU Aston Branch reserves the right not to meet a claim if it is not satisfied about the eligibility of the claimant, the details of the claim itself or the supporting evidence.

How will successful claims be paid?

Payment will be made by BACs to your nominated bank account at the time of the claim. Please ensure that you enter correctly all the bank details. UCU may not be able to recover any payments sent to an incorrect bank account and, if that occurs, we regret it may not be possible to make a further payment from the Fund to recompense for the mis-directed payment.

Special circumstances

If you are in particular need of financial assistance resulting from the docked pay, for example if you are hourly paid and lost a significant proportion of your weekly earnings, you will be given priority of payment if you select “yes” to the special circumstances button on the claim form. We may ask you for additional evidence in these circumstances. But in no case can payments be made in excess of your actual loss.

APPLICATION FORM: CLAIM TO ASTON UCUC LOCAL HARDSHIP FUND

To apply to the Local Hardship Fund, please complete the form below.

YOUR DETAILS			
Forenames		Last Name	
UCU membership number		Daytime telephone number	
Email address		I am full-time / part-time	
Have you, or will you, make a claim to the national Fighting Fund in relation to the current dispute? Yes/No		Do you want to claim special circumstances? Yes/no	
YOUR CLAIM TO LOCAL HARDSHIP FUND			
Dates of strike action for this claim		Amount claimed per day	£
Total number of days claimed		Total claim from Local Hardship Fund	£
YOUR CLAIM FROM NATIONAL FIGHTING FUND			
Provide details below if you have claimed from the national Fund <i>or intend to do so</i>			
Dates of strike action for national Fighting Fund claim		Amount claimed per day	£
Total number of days claimed		Total claim from national Fighting Fund	£
YOUR BANK DETAILS			
Payment will be made by BACS to the bank account which you detail below			
Bank Name		Account name	
Account Number		Sort Code	

You must send a scanned copy of each payslip showing a pay deduction.

If you are claiming special circumstances, please explain what these are and what evidence you can provide to support your claim. Evidence related to your employment status and pay should be attached to this claim. Other evidence is not needed at this stage, but may be requested by the Aston UCU branch panel that is administering claims.

Description of special circumstances, and of supporting evidence

Declaration: I confirm that:

1. I took industrial action on the days specified
2. the information in this form is correct.
3. I meet all the eligibility criteria for the Aston Local Hardship Fund as specified in the Information for Claimants accompanying this form

Signature	Date
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Sign this form, scan it (pdf or jpeg format), and email your claim form and supporting evidence to astonucutreasurer@outlook.com.

Once you submit a claim you will receive an email confirmation and a claim number. Please cite the claim number if you need to contact us.