

UPDATE

for UCU members in the

North West Region

UCU

University and College Union

November 2021

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Pay dispute continues at City of Liverpool College

Talks are ongoing as branch plans next steps

Other NW FE branches begin preparations for pay claims

UCU members at City of Liverpool College remain in dispute with their employer over pay. After a huge vote for industrial action in the summer, [City of Liverpool College staff walked-out for six days](#) when it became clear that their employer was unwilling to increase its inadequate pay offer. With support from local MP Kim Johnson, the UCU branch has brought the employer back to the negotiating table. Whilst talks continue, the branch is planning next steps to bring about a meaningful offer from the employer.



Huge HE ballot turnout in the North West

86% of NW HE members to take strike action over pay

Strike action begins with 3 days starting on 1 December

UCU members at 10 out of 14 universities in the North West have voted to take action over pay and conditions in the [4 Fights dispute](#). This is the largest turnout on pay in the region, up by 2.7% in relation to 2019. Turnout in the North West was also higher than the national average. Over 73% of North West voters opted to take strike action and 86% to take ASOS.

The highest turnout with a 'yes' vote was at [UCU RNCM with 70%](#) of members voting and returning an 89% vote in favour of strike action. Branch membership has more than doubled at the RNCM during the past 12 months as members have adopted an organising method known as "spider webbing." Other notable branches with high turnout using the spider webbing model were [UCU Chester with 62%](#) and [MMU UCU with 60%](#). If you want to find out about spider webbing and how to use it your branch, [contact us here](#). There was also a vote for strike action in the [USS pension dispute](#) at [University of Liverpool UCU](#) and [Lancaster UCU](#).

[Strikes will run for three days this term, from Wednesday 1 December to Friday 3 December](#). ASOS, starting with working to contract only, will begin on 1 Dec and run until 3 May 2022. Look out for local updates regarding pickets from your branch.

FE staff across England have seen their [pay cut by 30% in real terms over the past decade](#) and with workloads escalating, the AoC's 1% recommendation amounts to another pay cut in real terms. A number of other UCU branches have also taken industrial action alongside members at City of Liverpool College.

Meanwhile UCU FE branches across the region are now organising further pay claims. With [inflation predicted to hit 5% by early 2022](#) and [the cost of living soaring](#) due to a spike in energy and fuel prices, now is time for FE members to organise for a real pay rise.

#Rebuild FE

Invest in our **STAFF**

Invest in our **RECOVERY**

Invest in our **COMMUNITIES**

Share this with your colleagues. Get them to join UCU today: www.ucu.org.uk/join

If not now, when? Join the UCU NW Green Network



UCU NW Green Network launch on 25 November at 7pm

COP26 has concluded with a watered-down agreement on reducing fossil fuel dependence. UCU officers have been in Glasgow for COP26 these talks to discuss what can be done to avoid catastrophic Climate Disaster. Clearly education and training are essential to the task.

We are now launching a UCU North West Green Network to share ideas and look for practical actions we can take, with students, in our own organisation and across FE/HE divides. **Join us on 25 November at 7pm** on zoom to develop a regional plan of action.

[Book your place here.](#)

And join the Socialist Education Network Manchester Branch on from 2pm on Saturday 27 November for [Learning the Future: how should schools tackle the climate crisis post-COP26?](#)

NW Black Members' Network debates self-organisation

The UCU North West Black Members' network held a meeting in October to discuss self-organisation within the trade union movement.

Speakers included [Kim Johnson](#), MP Liverpool Riverside; [Roger McKenzie](#), General Secretary Liberation; [Shirin Hirsch](#), Manchester Metropolitan University UCU and the People's History Museum; and [Diljeet Bhachu](#), Royal Northern College of Music UCU and vice-chair of the Scottish Trades Union Congress black members' standing committee.

[For more information see their latest newsletter here.](#)

Look out for details of the next meeting and newsletter in the New Year.



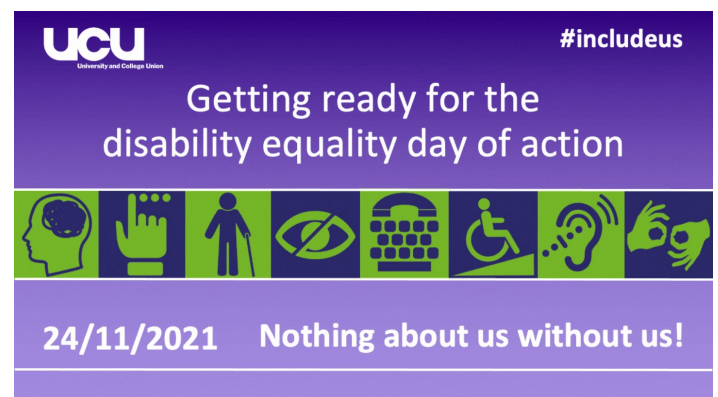
UCU day of action for disability equality Wednesday 24 November

Join Ellen Clifford for a discussion on the politics of disability

UCU's [annual day of action for disability equality](#) will be held on **Wednesday 24 November** and the theme this year is discriminatory language. The social model of disability challenges us to address society's inequalities, barriers and stereotypes that creates discrimination and oppresses disabled people. Using preferred language is an act of solidarity--for example, in the UK, the preferred term is disabled people, not people with disabilities. [Visit our day of action webpage for more information](#) on how to get involved and access to resources.

At 6pm on Wednesday 24 November, UCU's disabled members' standing committee are hosting an online discussion around the politics of disability. [Ellen Clifford](#), award-winning author of [The War on Disabled People](#), will join the conversation around understanding the political and social landscape of disability, UCU's approach to disability equality, and the role of all UCU members and allies in the fight for disability equality.

[Register here to attend.](#)



Support the Working Class Movement Library in Salford

UCU North West Regional Committee voted last month to support one of our other great historical jewels in the North West labour movement crown - the [Working Class Movement Library in Salford](#).

The library tells the story of how working people have worked together over the last 200 years to change society for the better. The collection includes holdings on the Peterloo massacre of 1819, two centuries of trade unionism, Chartism, socialism, the suffragettes, the General Strike of 1926, the International Brigade and many other movements.

[Find out how you can help here.](#)

University of Liverpool UCU branch wins campaign against compulsory redundancies



A long running strike action at the University of Liverpool ended in early October after [UCU won the battle to avoid any compulsory redundancies](#).

The six-month campaign included 24 days of strike action, a marking boycott and was built upon impressive organising within the branch. All-member dispute meetings were held daily for more than 90 consecutive days and a further five days of strike action had been scheduled for the first week of October but these were suspended when the university backed down.

The dispute began at the start of the year when the university announced plans to reshape its Health and Life Sciences faculty, including the potential removal of 47 members of research and teaching staff.

Ongoing negotiations and action, including the marking boycott, had brought that number down, but by the start of October the union said it would continue with walk-outs because two staff were still at risk of compulsory redundancy. However, UCU agreed to stand the action down after it was confirmed that no compulsory redundancies would be made. The news represents a huge victory for the union and is testimony to solidarity and organising power of the UCU members who walked out in protest at the planned job cuts.

A statement from the UCU branch at the university said: "Following an Emergency General meeting, University of Liverpool UCU has agreed to stand down the strike action planned for Monday 4th - Friday 8th October. Back in January, we were informed of the university's plans to make 47 compulsory redundancies. As a result of this action, not one compulsory redundancy has been made to a UCU member."

Support striking members

Throughout 2021 UCU members have taken strike action in all sectors. Please [donate to UCU's fighting fund to support your colleagues](#) who are taking action They are doing it on behalf of the whole of post16 education so please act in solidarity and give whatever you can.

UCU wins deal for prison educators

A long running dispute between prison educators at 49 prisons in England and employer Novus ended in October after the employer [agreed to UCU's demands to address health & safety concerns raised by prison educators](#).

Around 600 prison educators took four days of strike action between April and June 2021 after Covid-19 safety concerns were not addressed. UCU said the deal means its members will now be much safer at work. Investigations Novus had taken out against union members who raised health & safety concerns have also been dropped.



The agreement, secured through talks at Acas, includes improved risk assessment processes and systems of work to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of prison education staff. Regular meetings over safety concerns are taking place with meaningful engagement from Novus, and UCU welcomes this. Staff are already seeing practical benefits, such as the roll-out of CO2 monitors to assess ventilation. Novus will meet with UCU in December to review progress.

