



**UCU Congress 2024**

## **Fringe meetings and social events**

*All events take place at the Congress venue, BIC (Bournemouth International Centre)*

*Fringe meetings take place in rooms on the first floor. These rooms are well signed within the venue, and all can be accessed via a lift from the main entrance.*

### **Tuesday 28 May (evening)**

#### **Early registration**

***Solent Hall 16:30-19:00***

Early registration will be available from 16:30-19:00, and delegates already in Bournemouth are encouraged to register. Everyone attending Congress needs to register their arrival in order to receive their name badge, without which there is no entry to the Congress Hall. Voting cards and a delegate bag will also be distributed at registration.

#### **Introduction to Congress**

***Bourne Lounge 18:00-19:00***

Chaired by Alan Barker, Chair of Congress business committee

Join members of the Congress business committee (CBC) for a friendly overview of Congress - including the role of CBC, and the procedures that operate when motions are debated and voted on. Justine Mercer, president and chair of Congress, will also take this opportunity to welcome delegates and set the tone for a constructive and inclusive event. Open to all delegates, particularly new delegates.

#### **Teachers' Pension Scheme - Our members deserve the best!**

***Bay View 2 18:00-19:00***

A briefing on current issues in TPS with scheme specific contextual information to complement and inform Congress debate. The session will cover the importance of protecting access to good defined benefit schemes such as TPS and the right for members to remain in the scheme. We will cover the rights of teachers to be in the pension scheme, recent actions by the government which undermine this, how the employers are

responding and what we are doing, and the union's campaign to protect decent pensions for all our members.

Whilst the session will be aimed mostly at delegates from the FE and post-92 sectors we would welcome all delegates interested in the principles of securing decent pensions.

### **A new Deal for FE – pre congress briefing**

#### **Bay View 2 – 19:45 – 20:45**

The Special FE sector conference in April resolved to campaign on a New Deal for FE England. This covers pay, workloads, and binding national bargaining. It represents a fundamental challenge to the status quo at college and sector level, and will be constructed on a coherent industrial, political, communication and organising growth strategy. A New Deal for FE has at its core a new national agreement, with binding sector wide outcomes. FE pay is lower than school and sixth form pay in England, workload is higher and retention rates worse. FE England starting pay is the lowest in when compared to the devolved nations: a key reason is the lack of any form of binding agreement. With a general election on the horizon, there is a mood for change, and UCU will be campaigning for a New Deal for FE to be a key part of that change.

## **Congress 2024 welcome reception**

### ***Solent Hall 19:00-20:00***

Delegates are warmly invited to attend a welcome reception. This is an opportunity for members to meet over a glass of wine with a welcome from UCU president Justine Mercer.

## **Fringe meetings, Wednesday 29 May, 13:00-14:00**

### **Minimum Service Levels**

#### ***Bourne Lounge***

Join UCU general secretary Jo Grady, Keith Ewing (Institute of Employment Rights), Matt Creagh (TUC policy officer), Paul O'Connor (PCS senior national officer) and others for a panel discussion on the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023, how it affects our sectors, and how we fight back against it as a whole trade union movement.

### **Combatting the far right in the UK and internationally**

#### ***Purbeck Lounge***

Across the globe, far right extremism is on the rise, in workplaces, in our communities, and online, while many far right policies and ideas are being adopted by mainstream political parties. Attacks on migrants and refugees, LBGT+ people and women's rights are central to the far right's agenda in the UK and internationally.

At this joint equality committee and international working group fringe, come and hear about how workers and educators are fighting back.

## **Wednesday 29 May, 13:00-14:00 continued**

### **How can the sector support post-92 branches?**

#### ***Bay View Suite 2***

Come along and share your experiences of working in a post-92 university. This will be your opportunity to feed into the workplan for the forthcoming year and help us shape the work we do to support our branches and members in post-92 universities.

### **UCU's campaign for prison education**

#### ***Purbeck Bar***

This important fringe meeting will give Congress delegates the opportunity to find out about UCU's campaign for prison education, the industrial strategy, the profile-raising political work and the organising within our branches. We will also discuss the roll out of the latest prison education contract in April 2025. Delegates will get updates from lay reps from the prison education branches and from officials, and the opportunity to discuss the campaign and support our members in prison education.

### **Love our ARPS**

#### ***Bay View 1***

This is a chance for academic-related, professional services staff (ARPS) members to get together to discuss the issues affecting them, hear about what ARPS members are doing in their branches, and let the ARPS committee know what we can do to support ARPS members. Like our online open meetings, this is a great chance to share your experiences and learn from others. Please come join us.

## **Wednesday 29 May, 18:00-19:00**

### **A fairer future for all: UCU campaigns reception**

#### ***Solent Hall***

Delegates are invited to our annual Congress drinks reception hosted by UCU campaigns. Speeches will be kept to a minimum, with the emphasis on coming together to socialise and reflect upon our campaigning across the education sectors we represent. Like you, we're proud to be UCU. So, come along and meet new activists, renew old acquaintances and relax after a busy day of Congress business.

## **Fringe meetings, Thursday 30 May, 13:00-14:00**

### **Future of Work in Post-16 Education**

#### ***Purbeck Lounge***

The Future of Work in Post-16 Education project will identify the threats and opportunities of the technology being used in the sector now and in the future, and how UCU should support members and branches to respond. A working group of members from across the

union has been set up which will feed in Congress 2025. This fringe will update members on this project and is a way for delegates to input into this work.

**Thursday 30 May, 13:00-14:00, continued**

**Trade Union Education: linking the professional and the industrial**  
**Bay View 1**

UCU's education offer is open to any member: for reps and activists we have an extensive offer of training, and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offer is open to any member, whether they are active in the union or not.

The fringe meeting aims to present the work that the CPD team are doing, the results of a 2023 survey which shows how it is meeting the aims, and a discussion of how we can build collective strength and solidarity in the union through educational opportunities around our bargaining agenda.

**How do we organise casualised workers in FE?**  
**Bay View 2**

This fringe meeting will discuss how can we increase UCU membership and activity from casualised members across FE. Looking at local and national strategies to improve the representation of casualised members working in FE colleges, prisons, and adult and community education (ACE).

**USS - Cementing our Victory**  
**Purbeck Hall**

The **USS – Cementing our Victory** fringe meeting will have speakers on two subjects. The first is a presentation of the action taken by SWG negotiators to deliver restoration, recovery and lower contribution rates for scheme members. The second will be to consider the implications of this victory for the changes needed to future valuation processes to better protect members.

**Everything Must Change (film)**  
**Purbeck Bar**

Cost of living, climate change, food, housing, land: the multiple crises we face are deeply interlinked, which means the solutions are too.

The environmental video "Everything Must Change" explains how these crises – and the accompanying spiraling price rises – have come about and shows how a just transition based on people's needs can solve all of them.

Drawing on the experience of numerous inspiring social movements, the film shows how climate change driven by profiteering from our global systems has destroyed our planet and increased inequality. We need to transform global infrastructure and services to be people oriented, by building a global mass workers' and peasants' movement to enact a just transition. Hosted by the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee.