



THE MEGAPHONE

The Strathclyde UCU Newsletter

Issue 12 August 2025



The question is no longer whether the world sees the truth, but what we will do with this knowledge.

Francesca Albanese, 2025

Welcome to Issue 12 of The Megaphone

Hi all, and welcome to the latest edition of The Megaphone.

Earlier this year, after many, many years of supporting the branch, Lynda headed off to enjoy her well-earned retirement. She was absolutely delighted with her leaving gift, so thank you to everyone who contributed. We can also now collectively welcome Fiadh as our new administrator, who started with us in July, and who you will be able to meet at a hybrid members' meeting to be held on:

Wednesday 20th August at 12.30

We are still arranging a venue. Please try to be there (either in person or online). Look out for the link and further details shortly.

Otherwise, committee members continue to attend Trade Union meetings with the senior leadership team on a monthly basis, as well as attending formal CJNCC (Combined Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee) meetings to discuss issues that are raised by members and represent our collective interests, and SUCU case workers continue to represent individual members, providing support, guidance and advocacy to individual members. If you would like to become more involved please do get in touch. We're all volunteers, but would love to extend our social calendar and branch solidarity, especially as we know that things are looking pretty dire in HE right now, with [unis all over the place facing cuts](#) - so get involved - any level of contribution is welcome. Building our enthusiasm, numbers and community now will mean we can be more ready to respond if needed here at Strathclyde.

Nationally, you will have seen that an indicative online ballot has opened in relation to another proposed cut to your wages. Please respond to this by 15th August; you can find more details about this below.

Looking forward to seeing you at the branch meeting, or future events,

Best wishes

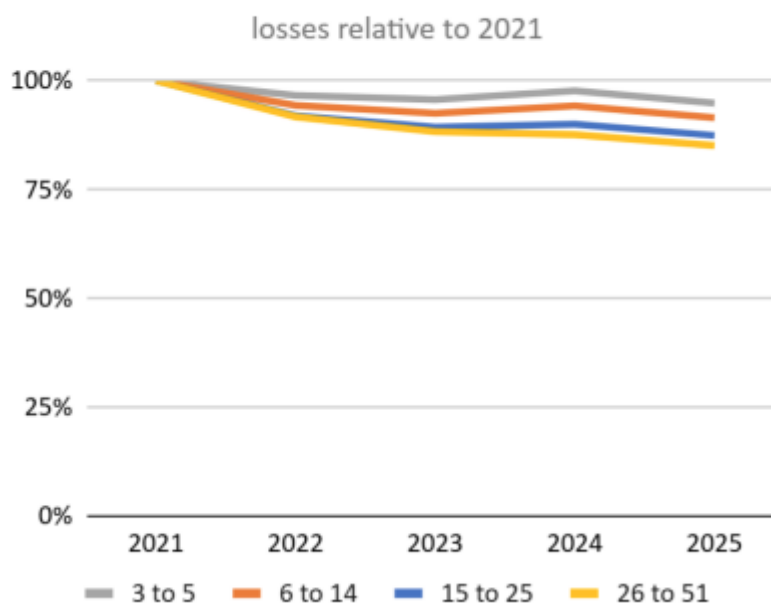
Jen

Branch Chair

Do you want your pay to be cut ... again?

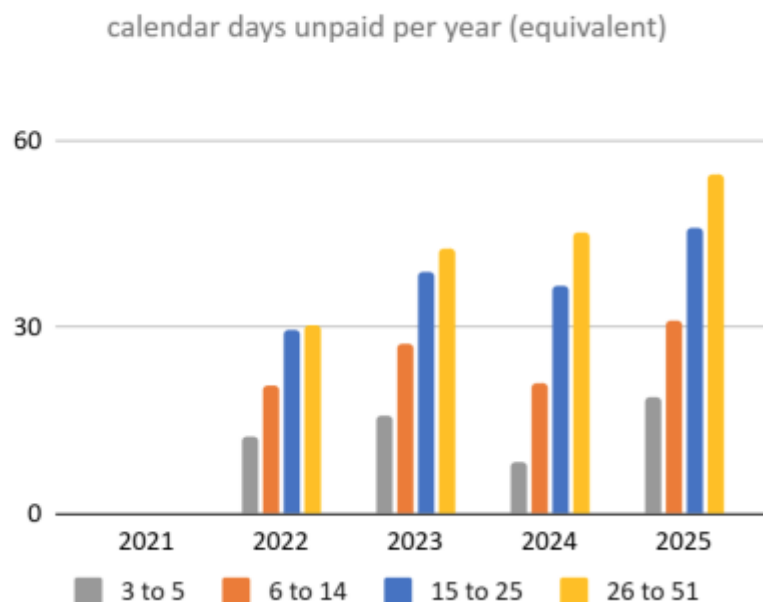
No, neither do we but that is what the university bosses organisation UCEA have proposed. Their 1.4% pay offer means that your wages aren't going to go as far as they need to. Your gas bill is going up, food is going up and by this point your blood pressure is going up too. Figure 1 below shows you the impact this will have on your ability to live the life you deserve, and have earned. Staff on spinal points 15-25 have lost 12.5% of their spending power compared to 2021, whilst for those on spinal points 26 and above it is 15%. This is on top of the 20% wage cut you took between 2008 to 2021.

Figure 1: Pay as percentage of 2021 pay rates after inflation



Another way of looking at it is the number of days you have to work for free in order to keep up. Figure 2 shows you that every year, staff across HE are working more and more days without the financial recompense for their labour. Staff on spinal points 26-51 are now working almost eight weeks for free. That's not fair.

Figure 2: Pay cut expressed as unpaid calendar days (30 ≈ 1 month)



That's why UCU - and all unions across HE - have launched a consultative ballot to gauge member's view on this and whether our negotiators should push back. [More information can be found here](#), and check your inbox for the voting link. The ballot closes at noon on 15th August. Your union is recommending that you **REJECT** the pay offer, and you vote **YES** to indicate your willingness to take industrial action. Along with the other unions we have the potential to exercise real leverage over UCEA, with all five union leadership advocating to **REJECT** the offer and to vote **YES** to support industrial action.

If you have not received your consultation email [you can use the replacement e-ballot request form](#), using your unique UCU membership number.

Facilities

As you know the university have refused to provide facilities time to committee members in order for them to undertake duties on behalf of members. **This is despite both the Fair Work agenda and ACAS calling for this, and a commitment in June last year from the university management to address this.** We have continued to push for this to be progressed but without much cooperation from our colleagues within senior management yet. We'll update you on this at our members meeting in a few weeks time.

Brief update from Congress and HESC

UCU Congress took place at the end of May in Liverpool. As part of this Congress, the Higher Education Sector Conference (HESC) met to take decisions on UCU's strategy for Higher Education over the coming year. [The full text of all motions passed at the HESC can be found here.](#)

HESC took place at a time when our sector is experiencing a crisis of severe underfunding, alongside a marketised model that sets institutions in competition with one another over research funding, and undergraduate and postgraduate student recruitment. As a sector we have faced years of below inflation pay increases, a freeze on recruitment and thousands of redundancies.

In response to this, HESC set out a clear strategy to secure a significant pay rise and protect jobs in HE (motions [HE1](#), [HE2](#), [HE3](#), [HE4](#), and [HE5](#)). This includes steps towards a UK-wide ballot in the autumn (HE2), with a clear timeline to allow for industrial action in semester 1 (2025/26).

So what does all this mean for UCU? Effectively Congress resolved to:

1. Run the next HE pay campaign linked to a political campaign for a fully-funded sector calling for emergency measures to save jobs, courses and the sector. (HE2)
2. To ask every Higher Education Institution to guarantee they will make no voluntary or compulsory redundancies for the next two academic years (HE5)
3. To submit a claim to UCEA in support of protection for all jobs, degrees, and departments (HE3)
4. To combine the national pay campaign and a campaign for sector-wide job security. (HE3)
5. To initiate a campaign to win an Industrial Action ballot, and timetable a 5-6 week ballot window to allow action to start in November, unless our demands are met. (HE2)

Congress also heard that all major trade unions across Higher Education were moving towards dispute over pay and job security with the prospect of UCU, Unite, Unison, GMB and EIS all taking action together.

A further motion was passed that could lead to Industrial Action and legal action against the UK Government ([HE14](#)). This is potentially very significant as the motion calls for UCU to open a trade dispute with the UK Secretary of State for Education over Higher Education funding and if necessary, to pursue Industrial Action to secure this; an approach that UCU has never tried before. Devolution will impact upon this, so there is a bit of thinking to be done. If you'd like to help in this regard please get in touch.

Workload Working Group

The university is currently examining workload and how it is allocated across the university. Your branch Chair (Jen Remnant) and Health and Safety Rep. (David Nelson) will represent staff on this working group. At this stage, the university has shared a series of principles that they feel should govern how workload is managed.

We would like to understand more about how workload is currently managed and allocated across the university, and gather views on the proposed principles. We have set up a workload survey [HERE](#). This is completely anonymous. Please submit your responses by Monday 11th August 2025. Please contact David Nelson (david.nelson@strath.ac.uk) with any queries, if you can find the time in amongst all the other stuff you have got to do.

Workplace bullying and harassment

Bullying across Higher Education is endemic. To help measure this and equip the union to fight back we encourage you to complete the two following surveys.

[This survey from Heriot Watt](#) is open to all researchers, Post Grad students, lab technicians and anyone who plays a role in research and innovation. The research is organised by the [EDI Caucus](#), a major research initiative funded by UKRI and the British Academy, and aimed at improving EDI in the R&I sector.

Next, we also urge you to complete [this survey from 21percent.org](https://www.21percent.org) that asks 17 questions about discrimination, bullying, harassment and lack of care. This is open to all staff and students. You can [find out more about 21percent here](#).

We know your time is under real pressure but contributing to these surveys can help us fight back against workplace bullying.

The Climate Emergency: a trade union issue

The fires, floods, heatwaves and droughts being experienced currently are a foretaste of the global impacts anticipated between now and the end of the century. There are also significant social justice reasons why trade unions should be campaigning and bargaining in this area. The climate crisis exposes the existing inequalities in society with women, people of colour and disabled people being disproportionately affected.

What is UCU New Deal?

It is not dissimilar to the New Deal policies of the US Government in the 1930s that were designed to deal with the financial meltdown after (yet another) Wall Street crash. Since then, Green New Deal has been used to describe various sets of policies that aim to make systemic change. In the UK it has broadly been described under five principles to guide a policy plan that will fundamentally restructure our economy to deliver good jobs and a habitable future:

1. Decarbonising the economy
2. Creation of millions of new, well-paid and secure jobs ensuring sustainable and meaningful livelihoods for all workers, including those in today's high emissions sectors
3. Reduction of social and economic inequality
4. Protecting and restoring vital threatened habitats and carbon sinks, and ensure the provision of clean water, clean air and green spaces, securing a safe and healthy environment for all
5. Building a resilient society prepared for the impacts of climate change, in ways that protect the most vulnerable

UCU have developed these principles into six objectives: 1. Declaring a climate emergency 2. Green reps recognition 3. Climate into the curriculum 4. Energy & carbon management 5. Ethical investment/banking 6. Food & land use

UCU have also created a "Green New Deal" guide outlining how we can take these demands into the academic workplace.

Want to help save the planet?

Nick Domminney is Strathclyde's Green Rep, charged with taking these objectives forward. Many are shared with students so we have talked to the student union with a view to joint work. The students have already been active in these areas, of course. Do you have particular "green" issue or issues, which you would like to pursue, or ideas for campaigning? Get in touch using the branch with Nick via ucu@strath.ac.uk

Welcome our new Branch Administrator!

We are delighted to welcome our new Branch Administrator who will take on Lynda's role. We look forward to building the branch with Fiadh's support.

With Fiadh now in place we also can announce amended branch office hours:

- Monday: 11:00 - 16:00 (remote)
- Wednesday: 11:30 - 17:00 (on campus)
- Thursday: 11:30 - 17:00 (on campus)



Fiadh

"I'm excited to support the Branch in running smoothly — from day-to-day queries to supporting the needs of members. To introduce myself - I was previously the administrator and union rep at a local charity. I'm also studying a Masters in Genealogy at Strathclyde very slowly. You can reach me at ucu@strath.ac.uk or feel more than welcome to pop into the Branch office to say hello."

Union Office

Our UCU office has seen busy times over the past years, specifically during strike actions. Many of you have come in and out with biscuits, pots and pans for our noise rallies, to collect leaflets, to sign in for the picket, or simply for a cuppa and a chat. Our walls featured many photographs as a testimony and wonderful legacy to these times, and so were the leftovers...crumbs, old leaflets, sticky cups...

However we are really disappointed to report that we have had to leave the office due to plans to reconfigure the McCance building. We are **temporarily** moving to a new office until a **suitable** one can be found that meets the needs of the branch, of our administrator and is a reasonable replacement for our old office in Livingstone Tower.

One more details are confirmed we'll let you know; please do pop in and meet Fiadh during her on-campus working hours.

Casework

Any members in need of UCU help with an individual problem about work for example bullying, discrimination, pay, promotion, attendance should seek advice or the help of a caseworker. To do this please complete the form found on [HERE](#) and send it in to ucu-casework@strath.ac.uk. This email address is dedicated to individual help to members and is generally monitored daily.

There may be trouble ahead

Strathclyde UCU was represented at the third Troublemakers at Work Conference in Manchester last month.

Troublemakers at Work is a body that organises democratically and without affiliation to any political party, organisation or particular union and is dedicated to encouraging unionisation, building workers' collective power and action and promoting democratic control of our unions, disputes and negotiations. It is a space for discussion, collaboration and the sharing of resources between trade unionists, across divides of occupation, sector and union affiliation.

The Opening Plenary was chaired by Troublemakers at Work organiser Sally Heier, herself a joint member of UCU and Unison, and we heard from a striking Resident Doctor from the BMA and a Binworker from the on-going Birmingham strike as well as a speaker from Unison's NEC and that union's Trans Equality Campaign.

During the day Strathclyde UCU attended workshops on How to Win when employers aren't the decision makers and How the US Labour (or should that be Labor) movement is resisting the far right where we learned that strike action amongst many public sector workers in the USA is technically illegal.

Sam Morecroft of University of Sheffield International College UCU also spoke at a workshop on Building Power before union recognition - an important discussion as 'start-up' and 'international' universities fight union recognition tooth and nail. But it doesn't stop us organising!

The UCU has always been well represented at Troublemakers and members met in sectoral 'breakout' sessions and had the opportunity to network and discuss the challenges facing our sector, considering what the barriers to rank and file organising against the redundancies and cuts that are in full swing at our universities.

All in all Troublemakers is a dynamic, open forum for discussion and for building grassroots organisation from below and was well worth our support.

Social Events

In addition to the struggles and actions highlighted above a range of social events are planned to provide a more informal way to share some time, to chat, and to get to know each other.

Digital:

You can join our SUCU Social Whatsapp group using [this link](#). Please share any ideas for collective adventures and fun facts.

On campus:

Our on campus socials take a rest over the summer. We will be back in September! If you have suggestions of a pool night, pizza, or zine making please let us know.

Lunchtime walk:

Every first Tuesday of the month starting 2nd September 2025. Meet at the UCU office for a 30 minute walk and talk around campus. That's the equivalent of walking along Cathedral Street twice or half way up Montrose Street.

Thursday Show and Tell:

Every last Thursday of the month starting the 25th September. At 4pm we gather in GH 511 to fill the open space with ideas, holiday pics, political talks. Suggestions welcome.

Want even more things to do to avoid your friends and family?

There a couple of in-person conferences that we want to highlight to members.

On 20th September [We Demand Change](#) will be holding their first event in Scotland, considering a wide range of socialist and environmental issues.

On 4th October [Scottish TUSC](#) are holding a conference to plan and discuss a socialist alternative to parliamentary politics in Holyrood. [Sign up here](#).

