

# STRIKE ON 31ST OCTOBER

## The 'ghouls' of neoliberalism'

**F**ollowing the decisive 'yes' vote – UCU members are on strike with Unison and Unite in defence of our living standards on 31st October – Halloween Day.

We have seen a fall in the real value of our wages of 13 per cent in the last three years. Now we have been offered a miserly 1 per cent and a refusal to negotiate on other important issues. Meantime universities have built up huge reserves and Vice Chancellors have awarded themselves hefty increases in their salaries.

But the anger runs much deeper than pay. Lecturers and academic related staff have faced increased workloads and are constantly bombarded with targets on publishing and the 'student experience' while the students that we teach are saddled with a lifetime of debt.

## A mood to fight back

The experience of UCU (and other university workers) is part of the wide spread anger among working class people at the draconian austerity measures that have meant that living standards have fallen for the first time since the Second World War and vulnerable members of society are hardest hit.

But there is a real mood developing. People want to see a fightback.

The 50,000 who turned out for the recent Manchester demonstration outside the Tory conference are testimony to that, as well as the thousands of teachers who marched and struck together on 1st and 17th October and the hundreds of workers who came to the Unite the Resistance conference to discuss building the resistance.

And there have been big votes for action in the CWU and FBU.

Our colleagues in Further Education are starting a ballot for action the day we are on strike. The best way to break the pay freeze is for unions to go out together and there is real potential for joint action later in the term with teachers, civil servants, firefighters and postal workers.

## Everyone out on 31st October

Strikes have to be built and argued for. We need to contact other campus unions to get joint picket lines organised and leaflets for students produced. Halloween gives us the possibility of lively costumes and good slogans – the 'ghouls' of neoliberalism, 'slashers' of living standards.

Rallies and meetings in cities (or on picket lines) allow us to make links with other groups of workers on or going on strike - teachers, postal workers and firefighters. It is important that we explain to students that our pay dispute is about stopping wage cuts, but it is also about a broader defence of education.

## Next steps in winning the dispute

This strike is only a shot over the bows in the fight to defend living standards. We need to escalate the action.

On the 31st October we are starting a work-to-contract. We need to build on the fact that the refusal by lecturers and other staff to work hours of unpaid overtime is incredibly popular. It chimes with the widespread frustration at the increasing workloads heaped on us whereby we are continually asked to do more for less! We need to be organised to ensure that this is implemented. Meetings should discuss how we implement the work to contract in our institutions. We also need to be ready to support any institution where management chooses to take a punitive approach to the work to rule. See <http://uculeft.org/2013/10/winning-the-he-dispute>

## What we need to do:

- \* Organise picket lines with other unions for the 31st
- \* Leaflet students – invite them to picket lines
- \* Contact other institutions to offer ideas and support
- \* Get people to the rallies and meetings (organise them where they don't exist)
- \* Build the work to contract
- \* Come to the UCU Left conference on 9th November

## UCU LEFT CONFERENCE

### Building the fight in post-16 education: Organising to defend pay and education

A conference for all UCU activists. Speakers from other unions fighting austerity and from current campaigns. Sessions on organising action and solidarity in our pay campaigns, and campaigns against zero hours contracts. There will also be an Annual General Meeting session to elect UCU Left officer, a steering committee and to approve nominations for NEC elections.

Saturday 9 November, 11am-4pm

Book now at the UCU Left website:

[www.uculeft.org](http://www.uculeft.org)

Call 07877 401867 for details and enquiries

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