

# Effective strategy is made democratically

**Election runs from 25 January -1 March**

I have experience of being a union representative almost uninterruptedly at Wolverhampton, Sunderland, and Newcastle Universities since 1990, i.e. both sides of the 1992 divide. I spent five years in fixed-term or hourly-paid work at Wolverhampton. At Sunderland University, I joined the branch committee shortly after arrival, ultimately becoming branch secretary. Three times we prevented compulsory redundancies through balloting for and in one instance taking industrial action.

Since joining Newcastle University in 2006, I have served as a rep, committee member, secretary, membership, and am now chair. I played a prominent role in successful industrial action against performance management in 2016, writing this up for a Labour Research pamphlet. I helped to navigate the branch through five years of industrial action since 2018.

We made gains in the 2022 MAB over workload and anti-casualisation and negotiated a statement over USS that anticipated the imminent restoration of benefits. Industrial action can work. Mistaken conclusions from summer 2023 could easily return us to token strike-days and working-to-contract that was so damaging to pay and pensions between 2006 and 2018. Remember how we lost 25% of our real pay.

## **Vote Matt Perry for North East HE**



**Labour Historian at Newcastle University  
UCU Left supporter.**

I firmly believe in the union's equality and campaigning agenda, seeking to ensure union equality campaigning beyond the corporate kitemarks Athena Swann and Race Equality Charter. I chaired Sunderland Stop the War and campaigned against the BNP and ensured there was a branch response to the racist murder of an asylum seeker. I challenged the deportations of a Nigerian student and a colleague's husband. I campaigned effectively against bullying and harassment, alongside colleagues in UNISON.

I have served on UCU regional committee for over a decade and one spell on NEC. I take a transparent approach to HEC membership, being available to regional committees, branch committees, and branch meetings for questions, advice and solidarity. I represented the union on public platforms and in the press.

Our branch membership and density has grown significantly through emphasizing grassroots campaigning and dialogue, through unit meetings and building the reps structures. I initiated regular reps meetings, launched the anti-casualisation campaign in 2015, and ensured that we have meetings for our Professional Service staff.

We need solidarity with students: tuition fees undermine HE and widen inequality. Their presence on our picket lines have been an inspiration. Our joint voice can help to shape the agenda in HE. We should jointly campaign over equality, the planet, global injustice and Palestine.

Finally, solidarity and action make unions. Our membership have shown tremendous strength and spirit in the last five years. Effective strategy is made democratically from the bottom up and needs to be implemented.

**For more information about the UCU Left platform and candidates**  
<https://uculeft.org/ucu-elections-2024>