



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNISON HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE GROUP
2022**

Welcome from the Chair of the Higher Education Service Group Executive

Dear UNISON Members,

It is a great privilege to have been elected as the Chair of the National Higher Education Service Group Executive (SGE) in 2022.

Despite all the personal and workplace challenges, branch activists have adapted in supporting, representing and communicating with members on and off campuses. Higher education branches have run successful campaigns from protecting pensions to fighting redundancies, working closely with other trade unions to achieve our joint aims.

In 2022 we were unable to hold a conference in person, so we had to move it online at short notice. The SGE have been working to progress and deliver on the motions from conference.

Our members are experiencing the worst cost of living crisis for over 30 years, so it is right that this year SGE has prioritised pay campaigns, including running consultations, ballots and re-ballots. We have seen the success of our strike action with some employers coming forward with offers to settle our disputes. We have seen the number of branches that achieved a mandate for industrial action double over the last year with more hopefully joining us in the re-ballots.

Our members working in higher education have faced more than a decade of below inflation pay offers which translate into real terms pay cuts. We know that members need and deserve decent pay and that UNISON will continue to campaign for fair pay in higher education and across our public services.

The employers say they value the hard work of our members in continuing to adapt and deliver services, keeping universities open and students supported. Actions speak louder than words and now is the time for the higher education employers to show that they mean what they say by offering a decent pay rise. I know that members, branches and the national SGE will stand together in our campaign for fair pay.

It was great to be able to deliver our HE seminar in person this year and see so many existing and new activists attend.

I want to say a huge thank you to our branch activists, regional and national colleagues who have been working together to support our members.

Mobina Begum, Chair of the Higher Education Service Group Executive

HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Section A

UNISON Objective 1- Recruitment and Organising

We aim to:

- *Enhance our capability to recruit and retain members and meet the organising and representation challenges facing the union in the changing world of work.*
- *Ensure our union is relevant to all members who provide public services – including those who work in the community and private sectors.*
- *Identify and develop leadership and encourage union activism from across the union, particularly among young members and provide support and resources for them to lead campaigns.*
- *Enhance our democracy by increasing and widening participation of our activists and members.*
- *Identify strategic growth areas such as social care and under-5s education and implement a national organising strategy in those sectors.*
- *Encourage the recruitment of local stewards and health & safety representatives.*
- *In all trade union activity to promote the benefits of the organising approach.*

1. Recruitment

The table below reflects the work of branch activists, members and regions to recruit and retain members. The SGE is provided with statistics so that they are able to understand national and regional trends and to seek out best practice. Discussions on recruitment and organising also took place at branch and regional levels to devise regional strategies for growth and increasing density.

The year has seen an increase in membership across the UK. This is most likely linked to significant industrial action balloting and strike action taking place across the UK in many sectors, as well as continuing economic uncertainty and the cost-of-living crisis. The largest increase in membership occurred in the North West region, with over 1,000

new joiners. The month-by-month membership data is detailed in the appendices at the end of this report.

		YTD 2020	YTD 2021	YTD 2022
Eastern	Joiners	264	214	314
	Leavers	-227	-234	-272
	Change	37	-20	42
East Midlands	Joiners	320	214	306
	Leavers	-229	-363	-352
	Change	91	-149	-46
Greater London	Joiners	1,078	730	931
	Leavers	-822	-819	-929
	Change	256	-89	2
Northern	Joiners	208	150	257
	Leavers	-183	-235	-255
	Change	25	-85	2
Northern Ireland	Joiners	31	23	32
	Leavers	-31	-28	-39
	Change	0	-5	-7
North West	Joiners	619	460	1,063
	Leavers	-560	-569	-589
	Change	59	-109	474
Scotland	Joiners	427	319	781
	Leavers	-351	-351	-416
	Change	76	-32	365
South East	Joiners	587	320	504
	Leavers	-413	-426	-525
	Change	174	-106	-21
South West	Joiners	403	247	602
	Leavers	-291	-299	-400
	Change	112	-52	202
Cymru/Wales	Joiners	266	141	180
	Leavers	-198	-249	-217
	Change	68	-108	-37
West Midlands	Joiners	397	261	348
	Leavers	-270	-481	-424
	Change	127	-220	-76
Yorkshire and Humberside	Joiners	582	381	787
	Leavers	-440	-456	-488
	Change	142	-75	299
UNISON	Joiners	5,182	3,460	6,105
	Leavers	-4,015	-4,510	-4,906
	Change	1,167	-1,050	1,199

Diverse representation

The SGE has examined equality data for HE membership from UNISON's membership system and worked to identify challenges and actions arising from it. Branches and regions have been encouraged to develop targeted campaigns to

improve representation, and reports on such activity are presented to every SGE meeting.

Section B

UNISON Objective 2 - Bargaining and Equalities

We aim to:

- *Deliver increased funding for public services and secure real terms pay increases, improved terms and conditions, and high-quality employment and pensions for UNISON members.*
- *Build confidence for industrial action when required, identify and support strategic industrial disputes at national and branch level and seek to co-ordinate action wherever possible.*
- *Promote equal pay and equality in public, community and private sectors.*
- *Actively challenge all forms of discrimination including racism and sexism; against LGBT+ people; against disabled people; and discrimination based on age, religion or social class.*
- *Provide support to migrant workers.*
- *Bargaining and lobbying to end two-tier workforce in outsourced public services and rolling out a strategy to ensure national agreements are awarded to outsourced workers.*
- *Provide assistance to those branches supporting outsourced members.*
- *Campaign for better facility time arrangements for our members in public services.*

2. Pay

2021-2

At the start of the year UNISON was in the midst of disaggregated ballots for industrial action over the 2021-22 pay offer, closing on 28 January 2022 and 9 February in Northern Ireland. Ballots were held at 37 HEIs across the UK, eight in Scotland, one in NI and the rest in England.

Nine of these reached the required turnout of 50% or above, which was an increase of five from the previous year. The aggregate turnout across all ballots was 38% - an increase of 7% on the previous ballot.

As far as possible branches coordinated with UCU over strike dates. GMB did not ballot and EIS balloted on an aggregate basis and did not meet the threshold.

Days of strike action were taken from February to the end of June in the dispute over 2021-2 pay.

2022-3

The joint higher education unions met on 19 January 2022 to discuss and agree the joint pay claim. After Higher Education Conference 2022, the SGE engaged with our sister trades unions over the contents of motion 4, in the context of the changing economic situation. Subsequently, the joint unions submitted heads of claim seeking the following:

- a pay rise of at least inflation (RPI) plus 2% on all pay points.
- a minimum wage of £12 per hour.
- an increase in London Weighting and all other allowances if negotiated nationally.
- a 35-hour week as standard, with no loss of pay.
- a Scottish sub-committee of New JNCHES to be established.
- action to address pay injustice in terms of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, taking an intersectional approach in relation to these.
- Living Wage Foundation accreditation in all HEIs, including for outsourced workers.
- a national agreement to reduce precarious employment, casualisation and zero-hours contracts, bringing staff onto permanent contracts as far as possible, establishing an agreement to end outsourcing and bringing outsourced workers back in house.
- action on excessive workloads, unpaid work and the stress and mental ill-health that this leads to, taking into account covid-related changes in working practices.
- a joint fundamental review of the national pay spine to tackle low pay and compression at the lower end of the scale, ensuring all grades have incremental progression and equitable differentials between pay points to conclude by 2024.
- working groups on career development, progression and training opportunities for all staff.
- establishing a UK higher education redeployment facility.

The Universities and Colleges Association (UCEA) did not make any offer on pay in the first negotiating meeting on 30 March. UNISON subsequently sent out a joint

statement to branches on 4 April and wrote to all Vice Chancellors and Principals on 22 April to express our frustration with this and asking them to intervene.

UCEA made their initial offer to the New JNCHES trades unions by letter dated 21 April, offering a 2.75% increase on the majority of spinal column points with a taper at the lower end of the scale of up to 6% for the lowest paid.

At the second meeting on 25 April UCEA increased this offer to a 2.9% increase for the majority of staff and a taper at the lower end of the scale up to 7.5% for the lowest paid. UNISON subsequently sent out another joint statement to branches on 26 April and wrote to all Vice Chancellors and Principals of HEIs again on 29 April, asking them to lobby UCEA for a serious offer.

At the third meeting, on 5 May, UCEA increased their offer to 3% for the majority, and a taper at the lower end of the scale of up to 9% for the lowest paid. Increases in London Weighting and other related allowances negotiated nationally were offered at the same percentage rates. If the joint trade unions had accepted or noted the offer without going into dispute there was an offer on the table of joint work to address some other points in the claim, as follows:

- a joint working group on career development and training, but it would remain a matter for individual HEIs to determine their own policies on progression between grades.
- a time-limited task and finish group to examine data on intersectionality, invite HEIs to submit or publish their own data voluntarily, identify and promote good practice and the principles underpinning it, make recommendations to HEIs to adopt similar practices where they are able, identify exemplar organisations to volunteer to act as pilots to others and emphasise the importance of intersectionality when determining approaches to tackling pay gaps.
- a recommendation to HEIs to engage with their local TU reps to develop an approach to stress at work, put in place systems to enable individuals to be able to raise their concerns about workload and have them fairly examined, develop procedures through which they can assure themselves workload is appropriate and take local action to reduce the incidence of work-related ill-health. UCEA would recommend to HEIs that they adopt the HSE Stress Management Standards and remind them of their legal obligations.
- An offer to do research on the degree of variation in the length of the working week and work with the joint TUs to develop case studies of a successful

transition from a longer working week to a 35-hour week. UCEA stated the 35-hour week was not a New JNCHES matter.

- No offer on Scottish New JNCHES. Their view was that, in the present circumstances, there was nothing within the remit of New JNCHES which required discussion at devolved administration level.
- An offer to advise HEIs that use of hourly paid contracts should be minimised, transferred to fractional contracts where possible, a mechanism provided for staff to raise issues which they believe to be unfair, provide clarity to doctoral students about the terms work is offered on, what work is required and the rate of pay, and make arrangements to transfer staff on fixed term contracts for more than 4 years to ongoing employment.
- Discussions with the joint TUs to identify examples of best practice around redundancies and improved visibility of opportunities at different institutions.
- A New JNCHES working group on the pay spine issues, with any reform of the pay spine to be agreed by 2024.

Alongside the pay negotiating process the SGE and officers worked hard to put arrangements in place to be able to consult members on the final offer quickly and escalate the pay campaign as fast as possible, with a clear plan, in conjunction with our sister trades unions, as per point 9 in motion 4. In line with conference motion 7 the SGE reviewed their balloting strategy and established a plan going forward at SGE meetings held on 9 March and 12 May 2022. This plan was communicated to branches through branch circulars from 5 May onwards.

This offer was put to affected UNISON members in a consultation running from 11 to 27 May. The turnout was 36.2%, and 83% voted to reject the offer. The SGE met on 30 May and agreed that they would move to a formal dispute with UCEA and, if an acceptable offer was not forthcoming during the dispute process, they would launch disaggregate industrial action ballots in affected HEIs across the UK, with the exception of Wales, where there would be an aggregate ballot. This was agreed on the request of the Cymru Wales Higher Education Committee. Branches were given the opportunity to opt out of any disaggregate ballot. UNISON lodged our dispute letter with UCEA on 30 May and template letters were provided to branches in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland to lodge locally with their employers.

Two dispute meetings took place on 6 and 14 July. At the first of these the joint trade unions asked UCEA to consult with their members on a better offer, and they undertook to do so. At the second meeting they reported back that they had consulted their members and had nothing more to offer. The final offer, therefore, remained the

final offer and no change was made to it during the dispute process. UNISON sent out a joint statement from the trade unions after this meeting on 22 July.

UCEA wrote to us on 14 July to state that the pay negotiation process was at an end and to reiterate the final offer made previously. They also wrote to their members and instructed them to impose the pay award that had not been agreed by the trade unions. The vast majority did this with effect from 1 August, although the University of Wolverhampton chose to delay payment for 11 months, as allowed under the New JNCHES Framework Agreement.

In accordance with motion 7, the SGE fully re-considered the pros and cons of aggregate and disaggregate balloting and reached a decision on 12 May to hold disaggregated ballots across the whole of the UK, with the exception of Wales, where an aggregate ballot was agreed, in response to a specific request from the Cymru Wales Regional HE Committee. In addition, aggregate standalone ballots were agreed for the HEIs where branches had requested a ballot that also included members working for a wholly-owned subsidiary or private company where they had managed to negotiate for staff to be on university pay scales. The SGE agreed a separate timetable for Scotland to take account, as far as was possible, of the different term dates there.

In accordance with motion 7, the resources needed to train activists in recruitment, campaigning and leadership over pay were considered, and a number of webinars were held to help branches help members to engage in issues around pay. The first webinar was held on 7 July to provide guidance on getting the vote out, emphasising recruiting and organising in an inclusive way, and this was exemplified through a branch case study presented by University of Leeds Branch Secretary Angela Blackburn. Disaggregate and aggregate balloting were explained in the webinar and on the HE pay web page.

This was followed by another webinar on use of 'MCT Lite' phone banking, before ballots opened, which also emphasised recruiting and organising.

Finally, UNISON had a strike ballot online rally for branches, with Christina McAnea, General Secretary, and Jon Richards, Assistant General Secretary, both speaking. A number of UNISON members working in HE also spoke at this rally, presenting a range of diverse voices. This online rally was recorded and put up on the web page for branches and members to access or circulate at any point, and it was also posted on social media.

The SGE pay campaign group met regularly between May and November to oversee the production of written materials in the form of leaflets, posters, placards, emails, text messages and social media posts. Two pay calculators were created and made available on the HE pay web page to show how members' pay has decreased in real

terms over the last decade, as required by motion 8, and what pay rise members would have received if UCEA had agreed to meet our claim in full. A series of leaflets were produced to raise awareness of how much had been lost at different points on the pay spine, so that branches could use the version which was most relevant to particular groups of members at their institution.

We balloted for strike action in 92 higher education institutions between 22 July and 19 August in Scotland and 26 August in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This included four standalone ballots for a single HEI aggregated with their wholly owned subsidiary or private contractors on university pay scales. We achieved a 50% turnout and a mandate for action in 22 HEIs overall, four in Scotland, 19 in England and one in Northern Ireland (50% turnout not required in Northern Ireland).

Alongside the strike ballots and preparation for strike action UNISON took legal advice about the possibility of launching a standalone dispute with UCEA over a decade of poor pay offers, and unfortunately were advised that any dispute needed to be against individual employers. The pay negotiating team have since started discussions with our sister trades unions about the nature and content of the 2023-4 pay claim, a possible multi-year deal and the impact of a decade of poor pay offers, in accordance with motion 8.

Dates for discontinuous strike action were approved for 19 UNISON branches and that action started on 20 September. We settled the dispute at St Mary's University College, Belfast through an offer to resolve grading issues at the bottom end of the scale by deleting a grade, equivalent to a pay rise of 11.3% for those at the bottom of the scale. At Liverpool John Moores University the dispute was settled through an offer of a non-consolidated one-off payment which meant that staff at the bottom of the scale were getting a pay rise of just under a 15%, and 6.8% at the top of grade 6. In both cases the offer was put to the members, the members voted to accept, and, on that basis, the branch decided to accept the offer and settle the dispute locally.

Subsequently, a deal was accepted by University of Glasgow branch after members voted in favour of a settlement which involved moving all staff up an incremental point and keeping staff on the national pay scales. This delivered a consolidated increase for those at the bottom of the scale of 12.9% and 6.1% for most of the pay points above the taper at the lower end. Talks at the University of Glasgow are ongoing in relation to addressing compression at the bottom end of the pay spine. This settlement was a breakthrough in that it was consolidated and directly against UCEA's advice to their members and so has clearly put pressure on the employers' side. Talks have been ongoing with a number of other employers during the rest of the year, and the University of Southampton has recently put forward a similar offer.

Of the five trades unions which are part of New JNCHES (New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff), UCU achieved a mandate for industrial action

in an aggregate ballot of all members on national pay, and EIS, Unite and GMB also achieved a mandate in one or more HEIs where their membership was strong enough to do so (EIS in 3 HEIs, GMB at the University of Glasgow only). UNISON members took co-ordinated joint strike action with the other four unions, with most UNISON branches taking action on at least one of 24, 25 and 30 November, along with a few branches taking action on other days and the University of Leeds out for seven days in a row.

All branches were encouraged to organise groups of members to attend the TUC Lobby of Parliament on 2 November, and a direct email invitation was sent from the service group to all HE members encouraging them to sign up and attend, particularly from those areas where UNISON members had been out on strike, in order to raise the issues around inadequate funding of HE and raise the profile of low pay in higher education, as per Conference motion 8.

2023-4

An Autumn New JNCHES meeting with UCEA took place on 30 November, and the pressure of the local deals and the other unions joining our strike action led to UCEA coming to us with a proposal to open pay talks for 2023-4 early to enable them to be able to offer an interim payment to staff in early 2023 as well as an annual increase in August 2023. This was discussed on 30 November, and the joint trade unions made clear that the 2022-3 pay round was not closed, and we are still in dispute and have a mandate for strike action which we will use. UCEA insisted that the 2022-3 pay round was closed and could not be re-opened.

UCU organised a rally on 30 November outside Kings Cross station which a number of UNISON members attended and Christina McAnea spoke at the rally alongside Jo Grady from UCU and a number of other General Secretaries. The meeting with UCEA took place after the rally which then marched along Euston Road so that it could be heard by the negotiators in the meeting.

Following the meeting UCEA published the following as a “jointly agreed statement” on process even though the joint trade unions had not formally agreed it with them:

Process for the New JNCHES pay negotiating round for 2023-24

The parties agree to amend the Agreement as follows:

To follow the New JNCHES Agreement in terms of the number of meetings, and the purpose of the negotiations, but over an accelerated and early timescale. Specifically, there would be up to three negotiating meetings in December and January. If these meetings do not reach an agreement, the parties will follow the New JNCHES

Agreement Dispute Resolution process exhaustively, outlined in the Appendix to the New JNCHES Agreement, to conclude the pay round by the end of January 2023.

Both sides agree to de-escalate the dispute during the above-described intense period of negotiations, including the impact of and employer responses to ASOS.

Whilst employers view the 2022-23 round as closed, employers also recognise that the unions do not regard the 2022-23 round as concluded and would want any settlement of 2023-24 to take account of this. The employers agreed to consider this as part of the 2023-24 pay round.

In these meetings all parties will strive to achieve a conclusion to the 23-24 pay round and commit to a number of meetings for further negotiation, in relation to the other aspects of the unions' claim.

The joint trade unions met with UCEA again on 13 December, with the expectation that that meeting would be the first of three in the 2023-4 pay round, with the first meeting specifically focussing on what UCEA could offer to settle 2022-3 pay. However, the employers wasted the whole meeting discussing this statement, which related to the mechanism and process of the negotiations, insisting that the trade unions confirm that we would cease all industrial action during the negotiating process. When the joint trade unions did not agree to this, UCEA refused to move into negotiations without going back to consult their board about the amended process and mechanism that we told them we could sign up to.

A further joint statement was agreed between the joint trade unions and sent out to all UNISON branches on 14 December.

UNISON re-balloted members in 36 HEIs from 30 November to 21 December 2022, and another 9 HEIs from 12 December 2022 to 11 January 2023, with 4 HEIs being balloted separately alongside their private contractors or wholly owned subsidiaries, closing on 18 January 2022. These ballots were designed to deliver a mandate for action alongside UCU and the other TUs in early February 2023. We supported the re-ballots with UNISON's new 'Movement' phone banking campaigning system.

At the time of going to press a further meeting of New JNCHES regarding the 2023-4 pay negotiations was scheduled to take place on 9 January 2023, which will be a re-convened first meeting of the pay negotiating round for 2023/4.

In accordance with motion 7 the 2022 pay campaign, including the approach to industrial action, was the focus of a keynote presentation at the HE Seminar on 9 November 2022, and was reviewed at a series of workshops with the Chair of the SGE at the seminar on 9 and 10 November. The feedback from these workshops has been

collated and will be considered at the SGE meeting on 1 February 2023 to inform planning for pay campaigns going forward.

A minority of universities negotiate pay locally and these are covered in the relevant regional reports.

2.1. JNCHES Working Groups

Due to the ongoing dispute in relation to the final pay offer for 2022/23 no New JNCHES working groups were set up in 2022.

3. Health and Safety in Higher Education

The SGE has continued to campaign on health and safety issues throughout the year and to support branches on health and safety issues. In compliance with motion 16 and 17 branches have been sent information on the HESH New JNCHES agreement on covid-19, UNISON resources on covid-19, employer's legal responsibilities, the 'Be on the Safe Side' campaign, UNISON's position on long covid, the national agreement for staff to have paid time off for covid vaccinations, and the nationally agreed health and safety escalation template.

Branches have been asked to request data from their employers and identify local actions which can be taken around these issues, including action on the underlying equality issues lying behind the adverse impact of covid-19 on low paid, Black and disabled workers. Branches have also been encouraged to take up seats on health and safety committees (and or lobby for their creation) and ensure that they analyse sickness absence data.

3.1. HESH and HSE

Through joint working with the Higher Education Safety and Health committee (HESH) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) we have sought to learn lessons from actions taken by universities through carrying out a best practice review, considering what worked, what did not, what could be done differently in future and the likely effectiveness of universities to respond to another pandemic or outbreak. UNISON has consistently raised concern about current covid-19 levels to ensure they are given adequate focus.

The SGE have pushed for action on the underlying equality issues lying behind the adverse impact of covid-19 on low paid, Black and disabled workers, as well as supporting branches to do the same in respect of individual employers. We have sought to review the amount of overtime worked, including, if possible, the hidden hours done by staff not taking lunch breaks, continuing to answer emails into the evening, or on days off, and (in line with conference motion 14) sought sector-wide standards for flexible and hybrid working that include a focus on health & safety, provision of necessary work equipment and for these standards to be extended to

outsourced workers. We have raised concerns about the inconsistent approach to offering home/hybrid working across the sector.

On staff mental health, UNISON representatives at HESH meetings have stressed the importance of how managers can recognise and prevent mental health crises, specifically by utilising the HSE Management Standards. UNISON has also highlighted the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on staff mental health.

4. FE and 6th Form Colleges

In England, a pay claim was submitted to the Association of Colleges (AoC) in March calling for a 10% pay increase, colleges to become Foundation Living Wage (FLW) employers and colleges to sign up to a charter to reduce workload. In June the AoC made a final recommendation for a 2.5% increase in pay with a further unconsolidated payment of £750 for those earning below £25,000 and an unconsolidated payment of £500 according to local affordability.

A large number of colleges have ignored the recommendation and are bargaining locally. UCU embarked upon a significant programme of industrial action with 10 days of strike action across 33 colleges. UNISON adopted a similar local strategy and considered a statutory ballot in six colleges following high turnout numbers in the member consultations. In one of those colleges a ballot was held and the turnout threshold met, but action could not go forward due to UCU accepting the employer's offer. Another offer was accepted by UCU at another of the six, and the other four are still pending.

An AoC working group of lay members and officers has been set up and is looking at workload issues with a view to reporting back on progress in April 2023. There was some movement with the Foundation Living Wage: the AoC has now stated that they expect colleges to become accredited FLW employers or publish a plan on their website to do so.

In Scotland, a very wide-ranging pay claim was submitted in September calling for a flat rate cost-of-living increase of £5000, early payment and sector harmonisation of the FLW, Living Hours accreditation, a reduction of the working week to 30 hours, a phased retirement plan, senior managers to be brought into pay bargaining arrangements, 49 days of annual leave for all, a catering subsidy for staff, a national career break policy, a National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) compliance group, increased mileage allowances, two flexible mental health days, an increase in rates and allowances, extra paid leave for various life changes and a payment of homeworking/hybrid expenses. In talks in December Colleges Scotland made an offer of a 2% increase that was immediately rejected by the joint trade unions. They have been lobbying for more money towards pay.

In Wales, a pay claim was submitted in June for a 12% pay increase. Formal negotiations were not due to begin until January. However, in the meantime, the joint trade unions requested an advance on pay for 2022/23 and agreed to accept the employers' proposal which meant that staff currently subject to the (FLW) would receive payment of the uprated value of £10.90 an hour (ie a 10.1% increase) before the end of December 2022, back-dated to 1 August 2022. This backdating of the FLW (to before the announcement of the uprated FLW) was offered as a one-off response to an exceptional set of circumstances and not a commitment to do the same in future years. The Welsh Government was due to release funding for a 5% cost-of-living 'supplement' before the end of December 2022, backdated to 1 August 2022 and continuing to 31 July 2023 if necessary (for those not paid FLW). The supplement would be paid on a no prejudice basis, ie, it would have no bearing on the conduct of the pay negotiations, which would continue through the agreed, and separate, process. However, the cost of the supplement to employers would be offset against the level of the pay settlement, once agreed.

In Northern Ireland, college staff receive National Joint Council (NJC) pay awards. The joint trade unions wrote to the employer to ask that the 2022 settlement was paid immediately and asking them to confirm when members would receive it in their pay. The employer advised that the pay remit has been submitted to Department for the Economy (DfE) for approval. Colleges will seek to implement the award as soon as approval is received from DfE.

Plans are in place to run a 'Champion in our Colleges' event on 10 February 2023 following a successful trial in Northern region in 2022. Branches are being encouraged to take up term time only (TTO) cases with colleges in their area. This is a significant organising opportunity since many of our classroom-based staff on TTO contracts have been targeted by teaching unions in recent years. Work has begun actioning the motion that was carried at the Local Government Service Group Conference concerning supporting staff mental health in the FE sector.

A special event was run for branches to allow them to learn more about how they can support their college members – the event received much positive praise from participants.

The annual FE seminar was reduced from two days to one due to low numbers registering. It was run in-person for the first time since 2019 on 25 November 2022 and was very well received.

5. Pensions

We have commissioned an FOI to go out to all universities in early 2023 which will ask questions about pension provision for staff, and results will be available and shared with branches during 2023 to fulfil the requirements of motion 21 from 2022 conference.. Reports have been given at SGE meetings on any significant issues

around pension scheme provision in HEIs; We have received legal advice on local ballots around threats to pension schemes including those where outsourcing is threatened in order to change pension provision, with guidance from the Industrial Action Committee, and shared that with branches where such issues have arisen. We continue to support branches facing scheme closures on detrimental changes with legal and actuarial support as necessary. The UNISON HE Branch Seminar included a presentation on an introduction to pensions with guidance on an organising response to such detrimental changes. A document outlining that organising strategy and guidance is currently being drafted and will be shared with branches during 2023, with guidance on a communication framework between branches and regions and relevant fact-sheets. UNISON is working with Labour Link to campaign for manifesto commitment to Defined Benefit Schemes in HEIs.

5.1. Pension news

The UK government's 'mini-budget' in October caused a major liquidity crisis for many pension schemes invested in Government gilts and using Liability Driven Investment. The market appears to have now stabilised. Pension Funds may gain in the short term from increased interest rates

There are concerns around inflation which may lead to staff opting out of pension schemes due to affordability concerns.

State pensions, state benefits and LGPS pensions in payment are due to be increased in April 2023 in line with the consumer price index as at September 2022, so the increase for those receiving benefits from those will be 10.1%.

Most of the Self Administered Trust (SAT) schemes, the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and the Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL) have a cap on pension increases of around 5% so pensioners in those schemes will not receive full pension protection against inflation during 2023.

5.2. LGPS

The minimum retirement age in the LGPS is due to increase from 55 to 57 from 2028. This will mean that scheme members would not get immediate unreduced pension if made they were made redundant under the age of 57 from 2028

Only 0.1% of LGPS members have opted to reduce their contributions and future benefits under the 50:50 option, and those were mostly the higher paid. The option will be to make members struggling to afford remaining in the scheme awareness of the low-cost option.

5.3. USS

While other changes were pushed through by the employers in the USS, increases in pensions in payment remain limited to match inflation only up to a maximum of 5%, as

the proposal to reduce this to 2.5% was withdrawn. Negotiations are ongoing in relation to whether any of the detrimental changes will be reversed in the light of an improvement in the financial health of the scheme.

5.4. Local schemes

5.4.1. University of Southampton

As a result of negotiations with UNISON, the University of Southampton is no longer going to increase member contribution rates for its PASNAS pensions scheme.

5.4.2. University of Dundee

At the University of Dundee closure of their locally-run defined benefit pension scheme to future accrual was announced in March 2021. UNISON balloted for industrial action and as a result the branch won an extension to the consultation period and formal negotiations over closure of the scheme. UNISON organised a second industrial action ballot when their mandate ran out and won agreement to retain the defined benefit pension scheme, but for it to only stay open to existing members and then only on the basis of raising the retirement age from 65 to 68, cutting the accrual rate from 1/80th to 1/100th and increasing member contributions to 8.75% of salary, which is an increase of 1%. Strike action continued with intermittent action and selective action. UNISON re-balloted members over the summer and then took further strike action alongside Unite members in the ongoing dispute. We understand that this dispute has now been settled in exchange for additional non-consolidated cost-of-living payments, FLW accreditation backdated to 1 October each year and a process for submission of HERA regrading appeals, with a commitment to an 'open book' review of the scheme after the next evaluation.

6. Devolved nations and regions

6.1. Eastern

The regional HE committee continues to work well and provides an essential forum for activists to share and discuss developments within our HEI's. Meetings have continued to be held online and attendance in December's meeting was the highest for several years, which bodes well for 2023. Opting in or opting out of the pay campaign has been a topic of much angst and there are differing views across Eastern HEI branches. UEA and University of Beds branches narrowly missed out on meeting the 50% threshold in their pay strike ballots and at the time of writing are putting their heart and soul into the re-ballots underway.

The Committee has identified the campaign for a 35-hour week and annual leave allowances equivalent to the academic grades as their region-wide focus for the year ahead. Whilst we have lost some key activists through retirements and job changes

there is much to be positive about in 2023 and recruitment has notably increased for branches campaigning on pay.

The University of Essex has confirmed that it will pay the Foundation Living Wage (FLW) with effect from 1st January annually and will become accredited with the Living Wage Foundation. This is a great success and is the result of pressure from UNISON. However, there is a question mark over payment of the FLW to outsourced staff at Derwent, an accommodation facilities management company on campus, which UNISON will be following up. UNISON has also provided input into a review of grading (pay scales) at the university and assistance to staff around the cost-of-living crisis. A workload task group has been restarted following UCU's dispute resolution with the University. The New Year will bring a consultation on re-organisation of facilities services, with the likelihood of large-scale transfers to the University's wholly owned subsidiary, UECS, where there are inferior terms and conditions. This will be campaigned against and vigorously opposed. David English, the longstanding Branch Chair, has left the University. We would like to thank David for his years of activism. However, this will leave the branch with no committee other than a Branch Treasurer. Regional staff will be seeking new activists throughout 2023.

Cranfield University members belong to Herts County branch who have been negotiating a recognition agreement alongside the other trade unions at Cranfield. The agreement is expected to be signed in 2023.

Anglia Ruskin University branch has been busy with notable successes in personal cases and collective issues. A recent negotiating success was saving nine schools' outreach worker jobs from being axed in February 2023. These roles will now continue into the summer, with the opportunity for redeployment over the coming months. It was UNISON's action which secured the additional funding to allow time for redeployment to take place. The branch has bid farewell to its longstanding Secretary Margaret Meredith-Warley who has retired. Margaret will be much missed and has played a significant role within the region and the Service Group Executive over many years, thank you Margaret.

At the University of Suffolk the lead representative on campus left the University during the last 12 months. Members at the university belong to Suffolk County UNISON branch who have invested significant support and resources into organising. The Branch has worked closely with the remaining representative (who has taken a lead role) to develop a new team. This has included recruitment of a new health and safety representative and two equality representatives on a job share basis, both of whom are also under 27. Overall, recruitment at the University has been exceptional, with a 65% increase in membership in 2022. UNISON has requested an increase in facilities

time to mirror that of UCU. This has been denied, but evidence is continually collected to resubmit this request in 2023.

A campaign to bring cleaning and security staff in-house has been the major focus at the University of Suffolk this year. The University has historically always outsourced these services, and the campaign initially focused on pressuring the employer to deliver these services in-house as the contracts were due for renewal during the summer. Engagement of staff in these groups has been through workplace meetings, and recruitment stands, with wider University engagement of staff and students also at recruitment stands and presence at the Freshers Week. A petition was developed which attracted over 200 signatures in support of the campaign. Campaign material was produced in Portuguese, as English is not the first language of the majority of cleaning staff.

Unfortunately, the University is insistent that the services can only be effectively provided through outsourcing, claiming a lack of infrastructure to provide in-house, and efficiencies through outsourcing to specialist companies. The campaign has been refocused on achieving parity of terms and conditions through the tendering process. Branch activists and regional organising staff, alongside local representatives, have been communicating regularly with the Director of Estates, and continue to push for this. The tendering process has been delayed in order to consider UNISON's proposals.

The University of East Anglia branch has had its investment in health and safety formally recognised at the region's annual awards ceremony for being the most outstanding branch in health and safety. This was because the branch decided to "double up" its workplace reps to be trained as health and safety reps and rejuvenated the Health and Safety Committee at the university and have achieved notable successes for our members within cleaning services. The branch has also negotiated facility time for its Black Members Officer and has a very vibrant and dynamic Branch Committee engaging and participating fully within our democratic processes.

Our members at Norwich University Arts belong to Norfolk County UNISON branch. The branch has built on 2021's efforts to re-establish a UNISON presence and from having no stewards for many years now has two. This success cannot be underestimated and there are plans to work more closely with the UEA branch which is also based in Norwich.

The University of Bedfordshire branch balloted members over pay in the summer and had the best turnout they have had in a pay ballot in recent years. Unfortunately, they just missed out on reaching the 50% threshold, but the committee took the decision to

re-ballot members over pay. The Branch continues to seek to review and update the recognition agreement with the employer in tandem with UCU.

The University of Hertfordshire branch committee is growing in numbers and in strength. The committee took the decision not to ballot members over pay in the first round in the summer, however more recently it voted to ballot members this time round and the branch has been busy getting out and talking to members about the issue ahead of the ballot going live on 12 December. The branch has won an increased staff bonus, from £100 to £350 and has had success pursuing health and safety issues, with windows that were not opening being repaired/replaced, CO2 monitors for teaching rooms and offices and new fire openings on magnetic systems in corridors to allow ventilation in busy areas.

6.2. East Midlands

Pay

University branches in the East Midlands, like everywhere else this year, have been battling regarding pay. We have engaged with members over the national pay dispute.

We have also had local pay talks in Nottingham Trent University, Derby University and with LSP at Loughborough University.

Casework

Cases have been progressed from university branches through our new casework unit to Thompsons.

Recruitment

We have had good activity across all the universities on recruitment. We have been improving our visibility after the covid lockdown. We have recruited a new Branch Secretary at Derby University.

Negotiations

We have been involved in negotiations over a proposal to move campus in Lincoln University. We have been in talks re pay scales at Loughborough University. We have registered a dispute at De Montfort University about overtime rates.

SGE Representation

We now have 2 representatives on the SGE - Irvin Hendrickson and Vicki Morris.

HE Forum

The HE Forum meets regularly with staff and lead activists working well together.

6.3. Greater London

As the cost-of-living crisis has worsened pay has moved up the agenda and, like elsewhere in the country, has been a key focus for members, activists and organisers in HE in London during 2022.

Recruitment & Organisation

In terms of Recruitment for 2022 - Higher Education in Greater London has seen a very small net gain of members (+2 in the year to date), a reflection of restructures, redundancies, and the cost-of-living crisis. Overall, in London we currently have nearly 5400 members in HE, across 21 stand-alone branches, 9 of which have net growth of membership in the year to date.

Pay

In December 2021 SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) branch took three days of industrial action over the 2020 pay freeze alongside UCU who were taking action on the same days. As we moved into 2022, following the ballot results for the 2021-22 pay round, four London branches (Birkbeck College, City University, King's

College and SOAS) took up to seven days action in this dispute which was well supported.

Branches that balloted members undertook initiatives such as phone banking and holding members meetings to encourage members to use their vote but unfortunately this did not necessarily translate into an increase in the number of members voting in all branches. Discussions have taken place about sharing best practice of what worked well, what could have been improved and what other support would be useful in preparation for future ballots, so that we can increase the number of branches securing a mandate for action.

For the pay round 2022-23 five branches met the required 50% turnout threshold and therefore have a mandate for action – Birkbeck College, City University, King's College, London South Bank University and SOAS. To date they have taken a number of days' industrial action which has been well supported by members and students alike and caused disruption to the Universities to put pressure on them to resolve the dispute.

Imperial College is not part of national pay bargaining, and the college imposed a full and final offer of 3.3% (minimum £1500, maximum £3300) on 1 August 2022. Members overwhelmingly rejected this offer and following a consultative ballot and were balloted for industrial action, as were members at Unite and UCU. The ballot closed on 30 November and unfortunately the 50% threshold was narrowly missed. Whilst there is no mandate for action the branch will continue to work with the other trade unions to put pressure on the employer for an improved offer.

Members employed at KUSKO, a subsidiary at Kingston University, have won a pay increase of 6% for most grades, and 3% for the highest paid. Agreement has also been secured that, for those on the London Living Wage, the new rate will be implemented sooner as well as a 6% increase back paid from August meaning members will earn £11.71 an hour from August and £11.95 from January instead of having to wait until April 23.

Queen Mary, University of London (QMUL) Branch were successful in securing the payment of historic underpayments for low paid QMUL members. The branch identified that the employer had incorrectly applied previous national pay awards (going back to 2014), with the effect that some staff (particularly those on lower grades) had suffered from historic underpayment. Staff received back-payment in their most recent pay, on 25 November. The branch remains in dispute with the employer about the effects of earlier pay awards (since 2006) effectively entailing that lower

graded staff attracted lower levels of London Weighting and is actively campaigning on the issue.

London Weighting/Cost of Living Payments

In July the SOAS branch negotiated for local London Weighting rates to be uplifted by 8% with effect from 1 August 2022, increasing the full-time annual rates from £3,616.50 to £3,905.82 (for grades 6 and above) and from £3,875 to £4,185 (grades 3 to 5); a one-off non-consolidated payment of £1,000 per person pro rata, payable on 30 September 2022; and an additional one-off non-consolidated payment of £250 (pro rata for part-time staff) for those individual members of cleaning, security and reader services staff who were required to attend on-campus when the School was closed to staff and students.

A number of branches have secured one-off, non-consolidated cost of living payments for members including £1000 for all staff at Kingston University and London School of Economics and an allowance at the University of Westminster.

King's College branch have also been campaigning for an unsociable working hours payment for cleaners and security staff. This campaign is ongoing.

In light of the increased cost of living in London, and other rising living costs, other branches are pursuing London Weighting claims and to support this the region has been compiling information on London Weighting allowances across London.

Restructures and Redundancies

Restructures continue across the region.

Earlier in 2022 Goldsmiths College consulted on proposals that could have led to more than 30 compulsory redundancies within professional services. When negotiations failed the branch balloted for industrial action and took three days of action, alongside UCU. Following the action, the employer agreed to talks at ACAS and after intensive negotiations a commitment was secured that there would be no compulsory redundancies for the remainder of the college's reorganisation plan, in effect the next two years.

A number of Goldsmiths staff did leave under voluntary severance and the branch will be surveying members early into 2023 to get a clearer picture on the impact that has had on workload for remaining staff.

Birkbeck College has announced plans that could see up to 140 jobs cut, as part of a bid to save money. The cuts – which would see roles such as lecturers and administrators reduced – are down to the fall in student numbers, the university claims. The plans are strongly opposed by the branch who have passed a motion of no

confidence in senior management team and held a well-supported public rally. The campaign to challenge the job cuts is ongoing.

Outsourced Workers

Over recent years in Higher Education across London we have continued to see a number of successful campaigns to bring services back in house, with HEI's recognising that ending unfair outsourcing arrangements is the right thing to do and bucking the national trend of continued outsourcing.

In August outsourced workers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) were brought back in house following the UNISON campaign and negotiations. These staff will now benefit from the same terms and conditions as directly employed staff which includes additional annual leave and access to a hugely improved pension scheme.

City University branch have, for a number of years, been campaigning to bring outsourced workers (cleaners and caterers employed by Julius Rutherford & Co and Sodexo respectively). As part of the campaign the branch have organised a petition, signed by nearly 2000 people to date, and a number of high-profile events and rallies. The campaign has resulted in successful negotiations of outsourced staff receiving parity on terms and conditions with directly employed staff including sick leave of up to six months, maternity and paternity leave, improved annual leave and much improved pension provision. The campaign will next focus on pay and securing a recognition agreement.

Members employed by Bouygues at King's College have taken two days' industrial action in their dispute over improving contractual terms and conditions. In 2019 the branch successfully campaigned to bring cleaners working for Servest and Security staff working for CIS back in house but King's College did not agree to bring members of staff working for Bouygues in house at that time. Bouygues has a 25-year contract with King's College London (KCL) which comes to an end in August 2024. These members have worse terms and conditions than those working directly for KCL so a claim to improve their terms and condition was submitted pre-pandemic and

resubmitted in January 2022. The employer made it clear they will not improve their terms and conditions.

Running alongside the dispute the branch has submitted a claim to King's College to bring these members in house at the end of the contract; to date King's has not made a decision and disputes are ongoing.

The London of the Arts Branch have submitted a joint claim with GMB for parity of terms and conditions for members employed by OCS. The employer has not yet responded.

Finally, members employed by Bidvest Noonan at University College London launched a petition in June, which went public on social media, and focused on dignity and respect for all staff working at UCL under this outsourced contractor. This garnered support for several collective grievances: supervisor pay, Timegate software, pensions, bullying and harassment and Christmas travel.

The first three grievances were also published on social media (GDPR compliant) with links/screenshots to the current financial statement which highlighted the millions in profit Bidvest Noonan had made. Our campaign led to a senior director getting in contact and meetings were arranged to get ongoing issues resolved, including trade union victimisation against some of our local reps. Fast forward to today, all outstanding issues have been resolved, we negotiated special facility time arrangements for all reps, and structured meetings going forward. Reps are very happy with support from the region and have direct access to HR/management to resolve issues in future.

6.4. Northern

2022 has been another busy year with a lot of changes in how we organise due to ongoing agile working in a lot of areas in HE. The pay campaign has taken up a good chunk of the year with all branches improving on turnouts of previous years and on their consultative ballot results. Sharing good practice and concerns amongst branches through the Regional Higher Education Service Group has been very valuable to branches, helping them to hold employers to account and improving working life for our members.

Recruitment has been a challenge with very limited access to sites and most employers reducing or delaying recruitment into vacant posts. Despite these challenges, we have engaged with a lot of members on various issues and recruited a range of new activists in a variety of roles, as well as ongoing mentoring work with

current activists to develop skills and areas of interest. Recruitment figures have benefitted from some excellent work by branches towards the end of the year.

The pay campaign was a great opportunity to engage our members and all branches worked hard to encourage their participation. Calling members individually in the consultation brought a significant increase in participation and calls to new joiners are gaining positive feedback as members are 'welcomed' into the union.

Durham University branch have had a very busy year with case work. The branch are deeply involved in the workload steering group, developing our health and safety profile and supporting members through restructures and contract changes. The branch is currently facing an attack on facility time. While the strike ballot outcome was disappointing, we have linked in with the other trade unions to work together on future campaigns.

Newcastle University branch have developed a number of new reps and had excellent engagement in our summer strike ballot campaign. The current strike ballot campaign is going well but the short ballot window and postal delays are a cause for concern. The branch are in discussions with the employer about a longer term solution to low pay and concerns about differentials, advocating for moving grades up the pay spine as the FLW has eroded the lower pay points. The second half of the year saw a significant improvement in recruitment and we're hopeful that we will end the year in positive territory.

Northumbria University has had great success recruiting new reps in our equalities posts, welcoming a young members officer, job shared LGBT+ officer, disabled members officer and Black members officer, bringing the branch to a full complement of self-organised group officers. The pay campaign industrial action ballot was incredibly hard fought with an impressive 91% of members voting for action with a 47.9% turnout. However, the members voted not to be re-balloted when improved terms and conditions were offered in the autumn. The branch successfully negotiated some improvements to terms and conditions including significant increase to maternity, paternity and neonatal care leave in February, increasing the annual leave entitlement to 35 days and the introduction of the FLW rates in November. The campaign for accreditation continues but the employer has agreed to consider it. Recruitment has gone well in the second half of the year with the branch being in positive territory for the year.

Sunderland University have had some challenges with the loss of some reps to roles elsewhere meaning the branch is seeking more activists to support their activity. However, an excellent campaign led to the introduction of the FLW and accreditation

which has had a real impact on our lowest paid members. Recruitment has gone well with the branch in overall positive territory for the year.

Teesside University recruitment and retention work has also kept the branch in positive territory for the year. The pay campaign was very strong throughout the year with a lot of focussed activity for both ballots. The branch have done a lot of work to recruit and find new activists who work in cleaning. There was a TUPE transfer of a small number of student union staff into the university and work on workload issues in mental health counselling and student and library services. The branch continues to make progress in ongoing negotiations on reducing the number of staff on temporary and zero-hour contracts and improving terms and conditions, as well as ongoing work on improving a range of policies and working on the university signing up to the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA).

6.5. Northern Ireland

2022 saw a major success for the two university branches in UNISON Northern Ireland. The majority of our membership at Ulster University (UU) are employed by private contractors in cleaning, portering, security and catering. Our ongoing work has always focused on improving all members' pay, terms and conditions through negotiations with Bidvest Noonan and Compass and the UU management for the directly employed members. In summer 2022 we secured the introduction of the FLW of £9.90 per hour, meaning that most members' pay rose from £9.50 to £9.90; a small rise of 40 pence per hour, which was welcomed by the members on the four campuses.

In the autumn the Living Wage Foundation announced the increase to £10.90 per hour, payable by May 2023. The UNISON negotiators went back to UU management who had previously agreed to adhere to the FLW, and who had to pay the money to the two contractors to implement it.

As a result, UNISON privatised members received another pay rise to £10.90 per hour with differentials paid to supervisors etc. Members received this uplift in November, so in a period of three months our outsourced members received a 14% pay rise achieved

by UNISON. More information on this campaign is included in the UNISON Bargaining for the Living Wage Negotiator's Guide as a case study.

The new Belfast campus of the Ulster University is now fully open after many delays due to the pandemic and the global supply chain. Our work continues with St Mary's University College in protecting jobs.

UNISON NI's next campaign in 2023 will be to bring our privatised members back in house when the contract ends. It will be a difficult campaign, but we will put all our efforts into it.

6.6. North West

It has been another challenging year for all our Higher Education branches in the North West. At the start of the year, branches were still faced with the impact of covid and the changes in government guidance, creating confusion for our members and posing challenges with regard to employers' interpretations of the government advice in addition to policies around sickness absence, trigger points and long covid.

Clearly, the majority of the year has been focused on pay in terms of campaigning, running consultations and industrial action ballots. It is clear that hybrid working arrangements are adding new dimensions and challenges to traditional organising methods. However, our branches are overcoming these issues and for the first time in a number of years, we had a number of branches crossing the ballot threshold and running well supported strike action at Liverpool Hope university, Manchester Metropolitan university and the Royal Northern College of Music.

One institution chose to question our data to block our ballot, and this demonstrates the need to ensure membership data is as accurate and up to date as possible. Our members are angry about this tactic and the re-ballot is under way.

Some interesting 'one off' payments were made under various guises. However, these payments were made to undermine the ballot and, in one case, to undermine the effectiveness of strike action. One institution went on record stating that they could afford more but basically wouldn't pay anything. This has only angered members further and strike action continues.

Along with all of this, our branches face continued pressures from restructuring, threats of outsourcing, continuous changes to policies, the effects of hybrid working, either impacting to front-facing services or members who cannot afford to work from home in this cost-of-living crisis. The savings made by institutions are not being passed on

in terms of payments to recognise the costs incurred to UNISON members by using their home for work. Basically, our members are subsidising the employer.

Recruitment this year has gone really well and continues to increase. It is clear that all the activity around pay and the cost of living has resonated with staff in HE and they see the value of UNISON in the workplace. We intend to build on this in the coming year, with a commitment in the region to have a recruitment fortnight targeted at education, thereby giving Higher Education a targeted focus alongside Further Education, 6th Form Colleges and Schools.

The committee has met regularly throughout the year, both formally and informally. Online meetings have continued to increase attendance and participation. The committee has received presentations from the Regional Education Committee, the Regional Black Members self-organised group and the Regional Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+ self-organised group; the work they are doing has assisted the committee in forming an effective organising workplan for 2023, and additionally the committee will be looking at putting in a bid for Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) resources to assist in increasing organising capacity for the year ahead.

We would like to thank all our branch activists who have worked so hard this year to meet all of the conflicting demands and, at the same time, do their best to keep the region updated and fighting hard for our members!

6.7. Scotland

The main focus of UNISON Scotland's campaigning in higher education in 2022 has been pay, and with an immense effort from activists and organising staff, encouraging progress has been made in a very challenging bargaining context.

This year, we have won strike mandates and met the 50% turnout threshold at Edinburgh Napier University (ENU), the University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and Robert Gordon University (RGU). At the time of writing, we were balloting or re-balloting members at the University of Edinburgh, Heriot Watt University, University of the West of Scotland, Queen Margaret University and Glasgow School of Art.

Where we have taken strike action, pickets have been vibrant and resolute, and this action (combined with diligent cross-union bargaining work) delivered a significant breakthrough at the University of Glasgow this autumn. Facing an unprecedented four union strike covering all occupational groups and grades, this cash-rich University agreed an improved consolidated pay award, bringing the pay range from 7.2%-3% to

12.9%-6%. This was a win for our members at Glasgow, particularly the lowest paid, but was also a new source of pressure on UCEA and its national negotiators.

At ENU, GCU and RGU, effective UNISON strike action also forced varying action from local management. At RGU, multiple non-consolidated pay rises have been announced in an attempt to head off strike action. At GCU, a £1000 non-consolidated payment, grading changes for cleaners and holiday parity with academics came after the strike mandate was won. At Napier, now after seventeen days of industrial action in this calendar year, the employer has made two local offers, rejected by our negotiators and members. We will continue the fight for pay justice in 2023 at all of these universities. All the while, in line with agreed UNISON policy, our representatives have continued to make the case for Scottish pay bargaining in this sector.

At the University of Dundee, multiple periods of sustained industrial action and intensive political campaigning did not lead to a decisive victory for our members over pensions. The local support staff pension scheme has been saved, and useful agreements have been won around how the next valuation will be handled, but a series of obnoxious terms have been imposed by the university and its governing body. On contribution rates, on scheme access for new staff, on retirement age and on accrual rates, UNISON will fight again in the future for real pension justice at Dundee.

Throughout 2022, the Scottish HE Committee has continued to meet regularly to inform the union's work on Scottish government covid policy, on the reform agenda following the Scottish Funding Council's 'coherent provision' review, and to continue the important work of comparing and informing local struggles for improved working conditions and workplace safety. That work will continue in 2023, and we hope to successfully build on our campaigning, organising and bargaining work in a very eventful 2022.

6.8. South East

The region's HE Committee has continued to meet regularly throughout the year, combining formal committee meetings with informal online networking meetings which allow a larger number of reps to take part and share information. These meetings have helped with building engagement from branches that have otherwise tended not to be involved in the wider union.

Two universities within the region, the University of Brighton and the University of Winchester, have been taking strike action during the year over the 2022-23 pay offer. This action has not only been well supported by members with large numbers on picket lines but has also had a significant impact on both institutions. At the time of writing, a

further five universities in the South East - Chichester, Bucks New, OU, Solent and Sussex - were re-balloting to see if they could enter the dispute in the New Year.

A number of universities have also made non-consolidated payments of varying amounts to staff on top of the 3% pay award, seen by some as a weakening of the UCEA position. Linked to this, the region's HE reps have taken part in a workshop on understanding HE finances and, in particular, knowing what questions to ask.

During the year, many members have returned to campus, after nearly two years of working from home. However, employers in some institutions appear to be less flexible around working arrangements than they were before the pandemic. Workloads also remain a key concern for members, exacerbated by a number of redundancies that have taken place in a handful of institutions.

A number of the region's branches have seen HE activists leave, and committees have spent the year rebuilding their officer core. Despite these challenges the branches continue to deal with a range of issues from opposing outsourcing and handling restructures to advising members on long covid sickness absence and negotiating local pensions.

Recruitment remains a key concern, and there continues to be a need for branches to be visible throughout the physical and virtual campus. The recent rounds of strike action and the re-balloting that have taken place gave an excellent opportunity to build that profile.

6.9 South West

2022 has been a busy year for all branches with the cost of living and pay ballots both stretching and building capacity across the region. More branches than ever before managed to reach the ballot threshold for strike action, with strikes taking place at University of Bristol, Bath Spa University, University of the West of England and University of Gloucestershire.

Even branches which did not reach the threshold have substantially increased vote share and benefitted from an increase in membership due to pay balloting and cost-of-living concerns. Multiple universities in the region paid one-off cost-of-living payments this year and several have entered into local negotiations about the positioning of grades on the spine point.

There have been challenges making contact with members due to new hybrid working methods, but branches have been creative and determined about making contact with

their memberships. This has paid dividends in ballot turnouts and member engagement.

The regional Higher Education Committee has met regularly. Sharing of best practice and strategy has been widespread, both in and out of meetings, and has provided an energising focus to branches. As we enter 2023, we expect the cost of living to continue to be high on the agenda. However, as a region we are in good shape to take this on.

6.9. Cymru /Wales

Overnight Organising and Training Forum

The committee held the first in person overnight forum for several years and travelled to Aberystwyth for this in late April. There was good attendance from branches officers who participated in a range of activities. We were pleased to welcome Ruth Smith, Senior National Officer for Higher Education who had recently been appointed. Ruth gave an overview of current UK wide issues followed by a discussion.

Through the Wales Union Learning Fund an interactive session was delivered on Resilience and Secondary trauma. The focus was on our stewards developing their knowledge and skills to ensure their own wellbeing, along with the wellbeing of the members they support. In addition, the group did action planning for their work through the committee and branches in line with UNISON's objectives, including reviewing the benefits of membership and how they can be promoted for recruitment and retention.

Mental Health in Higher Education in Wales

The Children, Young People and Education Senedd Committee are undertaking an inquiry into Mental Health Support in Higher Education, and UNISON Cymru Wales was invited to give evidence. On reviewing the documents, it became clear that the intended focus was on students with little reference to staff. In order to address this a survey was emailed to all HE members in Wales and promoted by branches and through social media.

The results of the survey showed that our members have experienced negative effects on their mental health over the last few years; they have had to deal with traumatic

situations with students and they want to be trained to have better skills and knowledge to provide support.

The key findings were:

- Asked to rate their current mental health on a scale of 1-10, 10 being perfect and 1 that you are experiencing real difficulties; 30.9% had a score of 4 or below. A further 12.7% had a score of 5.
- 68.5% said their mental health has got worse or much worse in the last three years (49.7% worse, 18.8% much worse). Of those, 46.9% had not spoken to anyone about their worsening mental health.
- 84.2% said pressure at work has negatively affected their quality of life (40.6% said yes, a lot, 43.6% said yes, a little).
- 62.4% agreed that below inflation pay awards over the last few years have negatively impacted their mental health (24.2% strongly agree, 38.2% agree).
- 73.4% agreed that understaffing in their department has negatively impacted their mental health (37% strongly agree, 36.4% agree).
- 77.6% agreed the cost-of-living crisis has negatively impacted their mental health (35.8% strongly agree, 41.8% agree).
- 16.4% said they were actively looking for a different job because of the impact on their mental health; a further 32.1% said they were considering leaving HE for the same reason.
- 45.5% have experienced or witnessed incidents which have been the result of a student/s with poor mental health.
- 53.3% said they did not feel equipped with the necessary training in Mental Health Awareness to provide support/signposting for students they come into contact with.

The full results of the survey were included in the submission to the Committee and Lynne Hackett, Cymru Wales Lead for Higher Education, attended the committee to present our submission and answer questions. This is a link to the full [survey summary findings](#) in chart and graph form. Personal testimonies have been omitted. [A press release](#) was released to promote the results and it generated much media interest and was featured in daily and weekly Welsh newspapers.

On 30th November UNISON Cymru/Wales was the lead story on the S4C news programme Newyddion with a heart-breaking feature about the increasing numbers of university students in Wales experiencing mental health issues and a lack of training for staff who support them. Katie Hall, Cardiff University Branch Secretary and Cymru Wales SGE member, was interviewed by the journalist outside our UNISON Cardiff Office, and she highlighted the importance of a focus on staff as well as students.

Industrial Action Ballot

The Cymru Wales Higher Education committee agreed to ballot members for industrial action on an aggregate basis across all branches, and this was agreed by the SGE.

Unfortunately, the threshold wasn't reached in Wales, despite the work of branches, social media promotion and a newsletter posted to all HE members in Wales. The committee considered carefully whether to re-ballot on an aggregated or disaggregated basis, and unanimously decided not to re-ballot for 2022. They agreed that their focus would be on organising for the next round of pay talks, recruiting and engaging with members to improve participation in 2023.

SGE Vacancy

There is currently a vacancy for the Cymru Wales General seat on the HESGE which we hope will be filled as soon as possible. The committee want to express their thanks to Dan Beard for his hard work and dedication to this role over a number of years before he recently stood down. The expertise and knowledge of Higher Education in Wales he brought to a national level will be sorely missed by the region, but we look forward to his continuing involvement in his branch and the region.

6.10. West Midlands

2022 has been dominated by the cost-of-living crisis, which has impacted on our members hugely, and continues to pose enormous problems into 2023.

UNISON branches have campaigned for a fair pay deal, whether through taking part in national campaigns and ballots at various universities, or through local pay bargaining mechanisms. Branches have also had success in areas such as improving annual leave and other terms and conditions at many of our universities across the region and continue to fight for a better deal on pensions. We have also negotiated pay rises for members in two of our universities which undertake local pay bargaining – the University of Birmingham (between 5% and 9%) and Keele University (4.2%).

Our branches and activists have succeeded in improving health and safety in workplaces and met the challenge of returning to campus in as safe a way as possible, whilst also dealing with budget cuts and, of course, poor management in many cases. Branches have also had successes in increasing facility time, as well as protecting jobs and services, and improving our methods of communication with members.

One area where we have seen a very mixed picture in the past twelve months has been students' unions, with some moving towards a much healthier relationship with UNISON, whilst others have decided to mirror the worst practices of the voluntary

sector, and we are all having to work even harder for our members within those organisations. It's hard to believe they call themselves "unions" sometimes!

The Regional Higher Education Committee has continued to meet regularly and has been well-attended by branches. It has also overseen training opportunities in areas such as challenging racism.

We look forward to a positive 2023, confident of tackling the issues facing the sector, stronger in UNISON.

6.11. Yorkshire and Humberside

Objective 1: Recruitment and Organising

The priority issues around which we are recruiting and organising remain those areas affected by covid; that is, work areas which are public or student-facing, such as libraries, facilities management, catering and cleaning, security and reception areas etc. Most other workers in UNISON's sphere of influence are now working hybrid with working patterns varying across our HE institutions.

We have continued to arrange workplace and site visits to support branches in recruitment and organising and to retain a UNISON presence. We have been holding recruitment stalls and events and attending inductions across the region to organise and recruit in the sector. A partnership approach to support student nurse and HE specific recruitment on site supported closer working across employers and building rapport with members in the sector and across the region. We have made a concerted effort to recruit new members, stewards and health and safety representatives with success across most branches in the region and continue to build membership in the sector.

Health and safety remains high on the agenda, even with the restrictions loosening. Locally we have supported our team of health and safety officers to conduct workplace inspections and to call out practices that are potentially putting our members at risk. The knowledge, expertise and diligence of UNISON health and safety officers has been key in universities being able to allow campuses across the region to be re-populated in a controlled and reasonably safe manner.

We have identified widespread miscalculations of term-time only workers' holiday pay which will shortly form the basis of a wide recruitment and strategic growth campaign across several campuses. Considering the new ruling on this in the Brazel case, we are refocusing our efforts to support workers with miscalculations and continuing to challenge employers.

The service group committee has met regularly throughout the year via online meetings and also a hybrid model, we have seen an increase of participation and engagement during this period. There is a growing sense that some form of face-to-

face meeting at least once a year, alongside the virtual meetings, would be beneficial, when it can be achieved safely.

We concluded this year with a development training day and the final regional service group meeting held in person on 12 December covering various elements to support strategic work in the region. We reflected as a service group on the work across the region and the growth in support and development of our branches.

In addition to regional and national training for activists and branches, we have tailored training sessions to respond to local issues affecting HE branches and activists across the region. The topics covered to date have been university finances, recruitment and organising.

The HE Seminar this year was held in Leicester 9-10 November with participation and attendance from across our region. Our region led a workshop on university finances for activists over the two days. Angela Blackburn, Branch Secretary at the University of Leeds also gave a presentation on turning out the vote and beating the ballot threshold and the success of the strike in recruiting and organising.

Objective 2: Negotiating and Bargaining

UNISON members in our region at University of Leeds took industrial action on 28, 29, 30 September, 3, 4 and 8 October 2022, having reached the ballot threshold with a turnout of 63.68%. Leeds Beckett University took industrial action on 3, 4 and 6 October on this year's pay offer having achieved a 51.05% turnout.

A second round of industrial action took place on 24-30 November at Leeds University and on 24, 25 and 30 November at Leeds Beckett University. This action was coordinated across the region and also with UCU union locally and nationally.

Four Universities opted to re-ballot in our region. We are supporting branches with GOTV.

Recruitment at the University of Leeds during the time around the notification of action has been much stronger than usual. The branch has recruited over 363 new members since 1 January 2022. The University of Leeds is the highest recruiting HE branch regionally and nationally.

We are continuing to support branches where we have identified that Universities are not paying holiday pay correctly for their term-time only staff. This is due to them using a full-time comparison calculation to calculate pro rata but assuming that a full-time

worker works 365 days per year. This skews the calculations such that term-time only workers can be hundreds of pounds out of pocket each year.

We continue to actively promote our anti-discrimination work across all under-represented groups, with branches looking to promote the work they are actively doing on equalities in the region and developing these into initiatives and campaigns to enhance collective work across the sector.

Objective 3: Campaigning and Promoting UNISON

It was challenging to do much campaigning work outside that detailed above, largely due to the new ways of working and the fact that most campuses have been mainly closed, except to essential services, since March 2020. This is now slowly changing with returns to campuses allowing increasing access to members.

We began the process of researching and identifying HE employers across the region who hold the Foundation Living Wage accreditation and those who don't, to start the conversation with the employers. We continue to share best practice across the sector to initiate a wider strategic growth campaign. We were pleased to announce that York St John's University has become the most recent in our region to become an accredited FLW employer. This is something that the local UNISON branch, working with sister union UCU, have pressed the university to do for many years and we are pleased to see it finally happen. It will benefit over 200 staff at the University and mean a rise of over £1,500 a year for full-time staff on the lowest pay point. We are continuing to raise this with other universities in the region.

We continue to work collaboratively with other unions where their objectives and methods are aligned with ours. Leeds Beckett University branch have recently signed a recognition agreement with the students' union in order to strengthen bargaining position with the employer and continue to support members individually and now collectively and been successful in creating policies to support members.

This year the first edition of the Regional Higher Education Newsletter was distributed by the Regional HE Service Group to members across the sector. The newsletter showcased positive collaborative work across the region, highlighting some of the great work they do to keep universities running, illustrating the benefits of collective working, and sharing ideas in the drive towards attaining our longer-term strategic plan in line with our objectives. We thanked branches for their contributions and are seeking feedback from members prior to the next edition.

Objective 4: Building an Efficient and Effective Union

Facility time is very limited in the HE Sector hence there is a reliance on support from regional colleagues. Our regional colleagues have ensured that branches are provided with the support they need promptly whilst dealing with limited resources. Our HE branches have also worked very hard throughout the course of the year to support the

union and we thank them for their continued work across the sector and in the region. We are continuing to work collectively to challenge employers posing any attacks to facility time and we aim to retain and/or increase current arrangements reflective of the increased workloads following the pandemic. Massive congratulations to the HE branches in our region who have worked tirelessly to support and win for members.

7. Equalities

7.1 Domestic violence and abuse

In accordance with motion 3 carried at Higher Education Conference 2022, all UNISON HE branches have been sent UNISON's model domestic violence policy. Branches have been encouraged to write to their employers to ask them to join the free Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) and to negotiate a local domestic violence policy. Branches have been given examples of inclusive good practice in the workplace, around both domestic violence as a health and safety issue and domestic abuse, including special leave, identification of trained people to offer support, and time off. Branches have also been sent details of organisations that provide support to reps supporting members who are victims of domestic violence.

The Chair of the Higher Education Service Group Executive has written to all HEIs to ask what steps they have taken to meet the recommendations from the Workplace Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse report. Her letter called on HEIs to adopt UNISON's model domestic violence policy where one is not already in place and to join the EIDA. UNISON has also written to UCEA to request that they encourage their members to engage with UNISON in agreeing domestic violence policies and join the EIDA.

7.2 Trans rights

In accordance with motions 6 and 18, branches have been provided with the UNISON trans equality guide and model policy, the LGBT+ bargaining factsheets, the guide to non-binary inclusion, the guide to being to be a good trans ally and information about the new LGBT+ ally training programme.

Branches have been encouraged to review employer policies and agreements with employers and students' unions where appropriate, with a view to implementing best practice and encouraging the negotiation of inclusive language in higher education agreements and policies, and inclusive practices and procedures. Where employers have no trans equality policy branches have been asked to negotiate the adoption of UNISON's model policy.

UNISON has promoted the call from the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into Transgender Equality for all higher education institutions to

take proactive steps to promote trans equality, including providing all staff with gender identity training and a trans champions' scheme.

Branches have been asked to send in good practice examples of inclusive employer policies and practices, including in record-keeping, language, any dress codes and the provision of safe and accessible gender-neutral facilities.

Branches have been asked to work with students' unions where possible and to urge employers to join the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme if they are not already members, as well as to resist attempts by anti-trans groups to push for institutions to pull out of the Stonewall programme.

The Co-chair of UNISON's Trans Rights Caucus, Jenny Black, gave a keynote speech at the 2022 UNISON Higher Education Branch Seminar.

SGE members have met with members of UNISON's National LGBT+ Committee to seek out further actions that can be taken to support members and branches in their ongoing work to keep HEI's trans-inclusive and safe environments for trans members.

7.3 Year of Disabled Workers

HE Branches have been provided with all the resources, training, and campaigning materials related to UNISON's Year of Disabled Workers twice during the year. Branches have been asked to submit examples of disability leave policies so that they can be shared with all HE branches.

7.4 Anti-racism and Black Lives Matter

In line with conference motion 5, all HE SGE members have been asked to undertake anti-racism training and a session of anti-racism, diversity and equality training for activists took place at the HE seminar.

All UNISON HE branches have been encouraged to continue to engage with their HEI management about practical measures to create genuine equality of opportunity, especially around new appointments, and to encourage them to collect submit data to HESA, calculate and publish their ethnicity pay gaps. Branches have been provided with Universities UK's guidance on tackling racial harassment and resources relating to Challenging Racism in the Workplace training, to train branch officers and reps. Branches have been encouraged and supported to work with universities to address the issue of racial harassment and discrimination and promote the inclusion of Black working class history in the HE curriculum. Branches have been encouraged to totally oppose organisations that incite racism and racial harassment speaking on higher education campuses, and to support Stand Up to Racism, Show Racism the Red Card and Black Lives Matter events whenever they can. Branches have been encouraged

to support, and empower, Black university workers to organise within UNISON and its self-organised groups structures.

8. Devolution

The SGE held a committee discussion on the devolution protocol and committed to following it, as required under conference motions 1 and 2 passed at UNISON Higher Education Conference 2022. Time has been set aside at every SGE meeting for reports from the devolved nations. The New JNCHES pay negotiating team strongly supported arguments for a Scottish sub-committee of New JNCHES throughout negotiations in 2022. The SGE Chair is in communication with the Chairs of the Scotland, Cymru/ Wales and Northern Ireland Higher Education Committees to ensure that the pay negotiating team is aware of issues that members in the devolved nations want raised there. The SGE agreed to expand the pool of reserves for the pay negotiating team to ensure that one can be from one of the devolved nations, if the democratically elected Chair, Vice Chair or third pay team member is not from a devolved nation.

9. Wholly owned subsidiaries

In accordance with motion 19, the SGE convened a sub-group to focus on wholly owned subsidiaries, through which work has been started on this topic. Dedicated training was delivered at the HE seminar, covering legal rights, how to mount a challenge, transfers of staff, collective bargaining and pensions. Two branch representatives spoke at the seminar about their experiences of local bargaining around wholly owned subsidiaries. The results of the 2022 freedom of information request have been circulated to branches, showing the extent of outsourcing and wholly owned subsidiaries across the Higher Education sector. A comprehensive guidance document is in draft form at the time of going to press and will be published and circulated to branches as soon as it is finalised.

10. Flexible and hybrid working

In accordance with conference motion 14, UNISON has continued to campaign on the right to disconnect from work and to have a genuine balance between work and personal/private lives. The SGE asked branches about their experience of flexible and hybrid working policies. The responses showed that most branches had either negotiated or been consulted on the policies that were in place, but most branches did have to support members to get arrangements in place and, in many cases, these were refused. Most branches found that the introduction of these policies hadn't detrimentally affected other workplace policies but did raise concerns about a lack of social contact and a lack of consistency in how the policies are applied across institutions. The bargaining guides on the covid-19 pandemic bargaining over working from home with a model policy and bargaining on working hours have been recirculated to branches, and we have collected examples of best practice of flexible

working generally, and hybrid working specifically, and these have subsequently been shared with all branches.

11. Organising in students' unions

In accordance with conference motion 11, UNISON membership and FLW accreditation in students' unions, associations and guilds has been mapped out across the UK. Branches have been asked to provide information with regard to local recognition of UNISON at their students' union and pay scales for staff. Branches have been encouraged to lobby their students' unions, associations and guilds to become accredited FLW employers and pay staff on national pay spines. Regions have been asked to support this work where needed. Branches have also been encouraged to lobby their Higher Education Institutions to fund their students' unions, associations or guilds sufficiently.

12. Job Evaluation Training

Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) training has been scheduled for 25 and 26 January 2023. All HE branches have been invited to send members who are interested. The training will take place at the UNISON West Midlands Regional Office. The training will be delivered by the Educational Competencies Consortium Ltd.

13. Brazel case

UNISON has issued guidance for university branches following the decision taken by the Supreme Court in *Brazel vs Harper Trust*.

The background to the *Brazel* case is as follows. Mrs Brazel was a music teacher at a school, run by the Harpur Trust (HT). She worked a variable number of hours during the week and was paid only for the hours that she taught during term time. HT accepted Mrs Brazel was a worker and entitled to statutory holidays of 5.6 weeks per year in accordance with the Working Time Regulations. The difficulty was how her holiday pay should be calculated. Originally, HT calculated her holiday pay by calculating her average week's pay over 12 weeks then multiplying it by 5.6 weeks (the "Calendar Week Method"). However, in 2011, HT adopted the ACAS guidance (which has now been amended) by calculating the hours she worked at the end of each term, took 12.07% of the figure and then multiplied it by her hourly rate (the "Percentage Method"). The 12.07% method is the proportion that 5.6 weeks of annual leave amounts to if working 46.4 weeks per 52-week year (ie 52 weeks less 5.6 weeks).

However, as a term time only worker, this was incorrect. It meant that HT disregarded Mrs Brazel's actual weeks worked and instead relied on how the calculation works for a full year worker. She therefore received less holiday pay than she was entitled to. Mrs Brazel brought a claim for unlawful deductions due to the underpayment of holiday pay. The Tribunal dismissed her claim. She appealed and the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) upheld her claim saying that the Calendar Week Method was correct.

HT appealed and this was when UNISON intervened, and Mrs Brazel was once again successful, this time in the Court of Appeal. HT appealed to the Supreme Court and Mrs Brazel and UNISON were successful again. There are no further appeal processes possible and this is now settled law.

Section C

UNISON Objective 3 – Campaigning and Influencing

We aim to:

- *Campaign against climate change and work with other relevant organisations to achieve a net-zero carbon economy in the UK at the earliest opportunity and recognise that the climate emergency is a trade union issue and commit to sharing our values in order to protect our planet.*
- *Develop our campaigns in support of quality publicly owned public services and in defence of the NHS, education, local government, social care, police, probation, Energy, WET and all public services including private and community sector.*
- *Build our political influence, forging alliances with other unions and appropriate campaigning and community groups to challenge the austerity programme, including attacks on the welfare state.*
- *Campaign for the election of UK governments and councils that value public services and working people, rejecting the arguments of the Tory government and far right parties.*
- *Promote the new political fund arrangements to increase participation and opt-in.*
- *Promote the union's international work.*

14. Higher education funding and policy

Motion 15 to UNISON HE Conference 2022 outlined the need for a higher education funding campaign. It noted that prior to the pandemic, many universities in the UK were already facing serious financial difficulties with 47 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) having posted a deficit in July 2019 and 63 HEIs in July 2020.

The SGE has made plans to continue to promote the 'don't fail our future' campaign for a better system of higher education funding. Academic research has been commissioned exploring different funding models, including those currently in use in all four devolved nations, and assessing their relative benefits. UNISON has continued to lobby and campaign for higher education to be well funded from general taxation, promoting the case for free tuition for all, with maintenance grants and measures to support participation for all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. UNISON has worked with Labour Link to lay the building blocks for this

campaign and plans to launch it on social media and encourage branch engagement and support from across service groups during 2023 when the research is published.

In line with the requirement under motion 15, UNISON scrutinised the government's response to the Augar report when it was published and shared these arguments with branches.

15. TUC We Demand Better

UNISON mobilised HE activists to attend campaign events organised by the TUC for the We Demand Better campaign. UNISON HE activists attended the national demonstration in July, and the TUC Parliamentary Lobby in November.

Section D

UNISON Objective 4 – Building an Efficient and Effective Union

We aim to:

- *Ensure that the union's structures including organisational, lay member, ICT infrastructure, digital and internal management systems and the distribution of our resources are accessible, efficient and effective to meet the changing needs of all sections of the union and its members especially in relation to global sustainability and to include the ability to take effective industrial action when required.*
- *Undertake a root and branch review of the union's structure and operations taking account of climate change including travel, waste and efficiency*
- *Ensure that branches are provided with the support they need, promptly, when they need it*

16. Higher Education Conference

Following the updated covid-19 restrictions and the uncertainty attached to the spread of the omicron variant, the decision was taken to transfer UNISON's HE Conference 2022 to a virtual platform. The decision was taken to support branches, give them certainty in these times and to protect our activist's health, safety, and wellbeing.

Therefore, the SGE agreed to hold a virtual Higher Education Service Group Conference on Tuesday 22 February 2022.

UNISON HE Conference 2023 is taking place in person.

17. Higher Education Branch Seminar

The annual Higher Education branch seminar took place in person in Leicester in November 2022. The programme was as follows:

Time	Duration	Session	Presenter
09.00	60 min	Registration /Tea / Coffee	
10.00	10 min 20 min	Opening session Welcome to Seminar	Mobina Begum, HESGE Chair Rachel Hodson, Regional Manager, UNISON East Midlands Region
10.40	20 min	Recorded keynote message	Christina McAnea, UNISON General Secretary
11.00	15 min	Refreshments	
11.15	60 min	Overview of HE Pay Ballot – Next Steps Ruth Smith - UNISON Senior National Officer - Education & Children's Services <u>Presentations from branches:</u> University of Winchester, Scotland (via Teams), University of Leeds	
12.15	30 min	Keynote Speaker Glyn Jenkins - action planning around challenges to pensions	
12.45	75 min	Lunch & Networking	
14.00	30 min	Keynote Speaker Jenny Black – Chair of UNISON Trans Rights Caucus – Trans rights	
14:30	30 min	Refreshments	
14.45	90 min	Afternoon Learning Session	
		A) Tackling hybrid working/agile working - Donna Rowe-Merriman	
		B) Understanding HEI finances - Neelam Bhambra / Lorraine Fitzsimons	
		C) Reviewing the pay campaign, making plans for the future - Mobina Begum / Ruth Smith	
		D) Tackling racism and promoting equality – Josephine Grahl	
16.15	15 min	Refreshments	
16.30	15 min 15 min	Campaigning for Local Pay – University of Birmingham University of Birmingham branch Branch showcase on campaigns relating to wholly owned subsidiaries: Staffordshire University, Northumbria University	
17.00	10 min	Term time only holiday pay – the Brazel case Ben Thomas (via Teams)	

18.30		Evening meal in the main room (All delegates) Bridget Phillipson MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education Quiz
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SEMINAR PROGRAMME DAY 2

Time	Duration	Session	Presenter
09.00	60 min	Tea / Coffee	
10.00	10 min	Opening of day 2 UNISON's Campaign Fund	Mobina Begum Davena Rankin
10.10	105 mins	Morning Learning Session (including 15 min refreshment break)	
		E) Dealing with work-related stress and improving mental health - Mike Hines	
		F) Tackling racism and promoting equality – Josephine Grahl	
		G) Understanding HEI finances - Lorraine Fitzsimons / Chris Roche	
		H) Challenging wholly owned subsidiaries - Paul Bell	
11.55	50 min	Climate change action session - Richard Dyer, Friends of the Earth	
12.45	75min	Lunch & Networking	
14.00	35 min	Panel Keynote Speakers: The experience of HE support staff during the covid pandemic - Ana De Sousa e Faro, Women's HE Network "sharing the caring" (via teams)	
14.35	15.00	Refreshments	
		Afternoon Learning Session	
14.50	90 min	I) How to check on employer risk assessments and carry out workplace inspections - Mike Hines	
		J) Challenging wholly owned subsidiaries - Paul Bell	
		K) Reviewing the pay campaign, making plans for the future -Mobina Begum / Ruth Smith	
		L) Tackling hybrid working/agile working - Donna Rowe-Merriman	
16.20	16.30	Review and close of seminar - Mobina Begum, Chair of HESGE	

Section E – Appendices

18. The Higher Education Service Group Executive

Each region has one female seat and one general seat on the HE SGE. The eight largest regions also have a third seat which is reserved for a low paid woman member.

Those eight regions are Greater London, Northern, North West, Scotland, South East, Cymru/Wales, West Midlands and Yorkshire & Humberside.

18.1. 2020-22

Region/ Nation	General Seat	Female Seat	Reserved (low pay) seat
Eastern	Margaret Meredith-Warley	Gwenda Palmer	N/A
East Midlands	Vacant	Vacant	N/A
Greater London	Daniel Shannon-Hughes (until 4 May 2022)	Nicole Garnier	Vacant
Northern	Denise Ward	Lorraine Brown	Vacant
Northwest	Andrew Beech	Linda Holden	Vacant
Scotland	Vacant	Davena Rankin	Vacant
Southeast	Ivan Bonsell	Sarah Pickett	Vacant
Southwest	Vacant	Vacant	N/A
West Midlands	Michael Moore	Amelia Rout	Vacant
Wales	Dan Beard	Katie Hall	Vacant
Yorkshire & Humberside	Mark Adcock	Mobina Begum	Vacant
Northern Ireland	Vacant	Vacant	N/A
NEC	Sandy Nicoll	Kath Owen	N/A
FE observer (non-voting)	Fran Murray	Vacant	N/A

18.2. 2022-24

Region/ Nation	General Seat	Female Seat	Reserved (low pay) seat
Eastern	Martin Thurlow	Gwenda Palmer (until 31 July 2022)	N/A
East Midlands	Irvin Hendrickson	Vicki Morris	N/A
Greater London	Vacant	Laura Dickens	Vacant
Northern	Denise Ward	Lorraine Brown	Vacant
Northwest	Andrew Beech	Linda Holden	Vacant
Scotland	June Maguire	Davena Rankin	Fiona McDonald
Southeast	Ivan Bonsell	Sarah Pickett	Vacant
Southwest	Joe Sucksmith	Vacant	N/A
West Midlands	Michael Moore	Amelia Rout	Vacant

Wales	Dan Beard (until 31 October 2022)	Katie Hall	Wendy Williams
Yorkshire & Humberside	Mark Adcock	Mobina Begum	Vacant
Northern Ireland	Thomas Strawhorne	Vacant	N/A
NEC	Sandy Nicoll	Kath Owen	N/A
FE observer (non-voting)	Fran Murray	Vacant (sub)	N/A

19. Higher Education Recruitment Report 2022

		YTD 2020	YTD 2021	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	YTD 2022
Eastern	Joiners	264	214	21	17	19	28	24	21	25	51	33	31	44	314
	Leavers	-227	-234	-27	-19	-22	-21	-35	-28	-16	-28	-23	-21	-32	-272
	Change	37	-20	-6	-2	-3	7	-11	-7	9	23	10	10	12	42
East Midlands	Joiners	320	214	16	35	34	24	24	13	23	39	28	32	38	306
	Leavers	-229	-363	-19	-33	-39	-33	-34	-39	-35	-40	-25	-28	-27	-352
	Change	91	-149	-3	2	-5	-9	-10	-26	-12	-1	3	4	11	-46
Greater London	Joiners	1,078	730	56	95	91	41	54	82	90	93	127	82	120	931
	Leavers	-822	-819	-76	-65	-112	-61	-82	-108	-90	-78	-74	-91	-92	-929
	Change	256	-89	-20	30	-21	-20	-28	-26	0	15	53	-9	28	2
Northern	Joiners	208	150	13	12	22	7	25	24	34	43	29	19	29	257
	Leavers	-183	-235	-20	-14	-31	-31	-37	-46	-28	-16	-5	-16	-11	-255
	Change	25	-85	-7	-2	-9	-24	-12	-22	6	27	24	3	18	2
Northern Ireland	Joiners	31	23	2	0	1	4	1	4	2	2	10	0	6	32
	Leavers	-31	-28	0	-11	0	-8	-11	-1	-1	-2	-2	0	-3	-39
	Change	0	-5	2	-11	1	-4	-10	3	1	0	8	0	3	-7
North West	Joiners	619	460	19	27	56	19	51	60	174	129	273	111	144	1,063
	Leavers	-560	-569	-36	-53	-40	-33	-74	-110	-50	-50	-62	-32	-49	-589
	Change	59	-109	-17	-26	16	-14	-23	-50	124	79	211	79	95	474
Scotland	Joiners	427	319	18	45	49	42	28	34	47	92	199	60	167	781
	Leavers	-351	-351	-30	-30	-26	-33	-48	-61	-50	-44	-33	-19	-42	-416
	Change	76	-32	-12	15	23	9	-20	-27	-3	48	166	41	125	365
South East	Joiners	587	320	30	39	33	30	29	46	45	70	59	64	59	504
	Leavers	-413	-426	-42	-48	-41	-42	-39	-80	-70	-36	-42	-48	-37	-525
	Change	174	-106	-12	-9	-8	-12	-10	-34	-25	34	17	16	22	-21
South West	Joiners	403	247	24	27	31	19	30	39	63	72	127	55	115	602
	Leavers	-291	-299	-23	-26	-43	-28	-33	-82	-29	-36	-29	-28	-43	-400
	Change	112	-52	1	1	-12	-9	-3	-43	34	36	98	27	72	202
Cymru/Wales	Joiners	266	141	6	8	25	6	18	17	17	22	17	18	26	180
	Leavers	-198	-249	-14	-13	-18	-24	-36	-27	-18	-15	-23	-17	-12	-217
	Change	68	-108	-8	-5	7	-18	-18	-10	-1	7	-6	1	14	-37
West Midlands	Joiners	397	261	21	25	19	25	47	25	41	32	33	46	34	348
	Leavers	-270	-481	-25	-20	-57	-35	-26	-42	-50	-18	-34	-23	-94	-424
	Change	127	-220	-4	5	-38	-10	21	-17	-9	14	-1	23	-60	-76
Yorkshire and Humberside	Joiners	582	381	20	80	68	30	46	86	67	87	117	52	134	787
	Leavers	-440	-456	-39	-50	-36	-31	-39	-77	-59	-37	-22	-52	-46	-488
	Change	142	-75	-19	30	32	-1	7	9	8	50	95	0	88	299
UNISON	Joiners	5,182	3,460	246	410	448	275	377	451	628	732	1,052	570	916	6,105
	Leavers	-4,015	-4,510	-351	-382	-465	-380	-494	-701	-496	-400	-374	-375	-488	-4,906
	Change	1,167	-1,050	-105	28	-17	-105	-117	-250	132	332	678	195	428	1,199

20. Pay offer from 1 August 2022

SINGLE PAY SPINE FOR HE ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF 2022/23

Increase of 3.0% with bottom weighting to points 3 to 21 (See notes below)

Based on full and final offer made on 9 May 2022.

Spine point	Salary from 1 August 2021 (£)	Salary from 1 August 2022 (£)
2	n/a	n/a
3	17,338	18,898
4	17,596	19,092
5	17,901	19,333
6	18,212	19,578
7	18,529	19,863
8	18,852	20,134
9	19,209	20,400
10	19,623	20,761
11	20,092	21,197
12	20,600	21,630
13	21,135	22,149
14	21,686	22,662
15	22,254	23,144
16	22,847	23,715
17	23,487	24,285
18	24,174	24,948
19	24,871	25,642
20	25,627	26,396
21	26,341	27,131
22	27,116	27,929
23	27,924	28,762
24	28,756	29,619
25	29,614	30,502
26	30,497	31,411
27	31,406	32,348
28	32,344	33,314
29	33,309	34,308
30	34,304	35,333
31	35,326	36,386
32	36,382	37,474
33	37,467	38,592
34	38,587	39,745
35	39,739	40,931
36	40,927	42,155
37	42,149	43,414
38	43,434	44,737
39	44,706	46,047
40	46,042	47,423

41	47,419	48,841
42	48,835	50,300
43	50,296	51,805
44	51,799	53,353
45	53,348	54,949
46	54,943	56,592
47	56,587	58,284
48	58,279	60,027
49	60,022	61,823
50	61,818	63,673
51	63,668	65,578

Notes:

Spine point values have been rounded. Where a percentage increase is applied they are calculated on an unrounded basis from year-to-year to reduce rounding error.