

LUCU Members Update 7th August 2023

At a national level, last week was a bit of a rollercoaster. The good news is that pressure from the ground up has forced our General Secretary to respect democratic decisions. Finally, an official BDM has been organised, and an emergency meeting of HEC also. For context and information. The expiration date of our current mandate is the end of September 2023. If a rebalot is not organised extra ASAP, members will be left unprotected. MABbing members will have no mandate to refer to when refusing to mark student work. **The good news is that unlike strike action, notice for ballot is only 7 days. So, Jo Grady can get a rebalot organised very quickly.**

Locally, we continue to be enraged. Our VC is still ignoring us. While he finds time to respond to letters from local MPs and members, we are still waiting for him to answer the first MAB-related letter we sent on the 4th of May (the force wasn't on our side I am afraid!). In the meantime, we keep hearing about the horrible consequences the draconian deductions of 50% are having on LUCU members. This is not about being unable to afford going on holidays. We are well beyond that point now. What we hear now is that members' savings are depleted, that they face difficult choices at the supermarket, and that they have started to look for ways to make extra cash because a full time job with a half salary doesn't cover basic needs. **If Lancaster University wishes to start restoring trust with staff, the very least Andy Schofield can/should/needs to do is to stop the deductions after 30th of June now.**

- **MAB related grievances workshop**
- **Annual leave, MAB, deductions**
- **Hardship Fund Updated**
- **Lancaster UCU branch views on the UKK-USS consultation**
- **Solidary with Brighton University**
- **TUC summer news**

Sending you encouragement to stop working to eat your lunch and have your tea everyday. Remember you have the right to these breaks, please use them! ☆(☀_☀)☆

Solidarity to all,

Your LUCU Branch

MAB related grievances workshop

The latest information from national UCU to reps and members suggests that those who have had pay deducted for taking part in MAB should fill in a proforma form. However, this does not change the original advice about going through an internal grievance first because a successful local resolution is likely to be much quicker than a legal case. Note that some employers (e.g. UoManchester) have refused to hear any grievances on MAB deductions, leaving the legal route as the only possible remedy; while other employers (e.g. Chester) have heard grievances, reduced reductions accordingly and made balance payments to members.

In short, members should continue raising grievances at an institutional level. LUCU has organised a grievance workshop to support members in raising their grievances. This will take place Thursday 10th of August at 2pm on zoom.

Also, find attached the information which is being released from National, via Regional, to branches regarding MAB deductions/grievances; as well as our own LUCU's grievance template kindly crafted by Sunil Banga. Further templates from colleagues from other UCU branches can be found [here](#), and [here](#). Please note that the dedicated email address for members to return the questionnaire, when completed, is asos@UCU.ORG.UK. That inbox is only accessible by the legal team and the barrister working on the cases so members can be reassured of that.

Annual leave, MAB, deductions

Many of us have seen strike deductions on the July payslip. Sunil has kindly prepared an excel file to check if the deductions have been accurate (see attached). You just need to fill in the two highlighted yellow cells from their pay slip. This will give the number of days deducted in the last cell. **Check that the number of days of deducted is what you were expecting. There should be no deductions for annual/sick leave etc.** Remember that each day of deduction would account for 2 days of MAB (@50%) or 1 day of strike action. If there is an error, contact HR and payroll straightaway.

Hardship Fund Updated

MAB deductions have been going on for months now. Participating LUCU members have sacrificed thousands of pounds, while being supported by generous donations. Thank you all for your effort. We all do what we can: holding the line or donating. And together we have made a big impact. Remember that!

Our branch solidarity means that our hardship fund is healthy, which means we can allow to be more generous in how much we support MABbing members.

Lancaster UCU branch views on the [UUK-USS consultation](#)

USS has launched its employer consultation following the latest '[USS Technical Provisions \(TP\) for the 2023 valuation](#)'. The TP consultation figures show that against March 2023 assets of £73.1bn there is a **surplus of £7.4bn, an increase of over £20bn from a deficit of £14.1bn in 2020**. Costs for fully restored future pensions are given as **20.6%, down by nearly half from 37% in 2020**. A reminder for members that the 2020 valuation figures were used as a basis for employers to push through huge pension cuts (up to 35%) in April 2022, even though Lancaster UCU constantly reiterated that the methodology used to calculate the deficit at the time was flawed (and is still flawed) so any deficit is artificial. Our position still is that the methodology needs to change, it is too volatile.

Anyhow, the **future restoration** of our benefits (from April 2024) will be considered under this USS valuation, and employers are being asked for their views on this document. The current employers' consultation will then shape the structure of the member consultation that runs from 25 September to the end of November 2023. Members will be aware that in March 2023 [UCU and UUK agreed a joint statement on USS](#). Since then, the Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC) has also agreed to explore **augmentation (recovery)** of benefits following the two 'lost years' of lower benefits from April 2022- March 2024.

There are [twelve questions in the UUK-USS consultation documents](#). If you have any views on the consultation, or any substantive/technical questions please contact Sunil.

This is going to be a complex and wide-ranging consultation. The University stopped consulting with Lancaster UCU shortly after the current Vice-Chancellor took over. Despite the recent hard-line position taken by the Vice-Chancellor on MAB by imposing punitive deductions on our members, we

hope that the VC and his senior management team will see the wisdom of consulting with Lancaster UCU, as the recognised representative of LU staff for USS, when formulating the University's response to the USS consultation. Timely and meaningful consultation with Lancaster UCU will be a recognition by the University of the importance of providing a good pension scheme for the reward and retention of staff, and will help towards re-building fractured industrial relations.

Solidarity with Brighton University

[In May 2023 University of Brighton management announced plans to sack over a hundred members of staff.](#) Since then, many have left voluntarily, but 25 have been singled out for compulsory redundancy. Many of them are lecturers in art, media, and humanities. While the university claims it needs to make £17.9m in savings, over £50m have been spent on building projects in the last two years. And just a few months ago, senior management at the University of Brighton spent £17.9 million (the same amount they claim they need to save!) to reclaim the lease on the Virgin Active Gym at Falmer Campus. **Brighton UCU members have been on indefinite strike since July 3rd 2023. They need our support. [Donate if you can.](#) [Send messages of solidarity.](#) Boycott the institution.**

TUC Summer news

Next Wednesday, August 9, South Lakes & Lancaster CND will be holding its annual vigil on the Millennium Bridge to mark the Nagasaki bombing of WWII. The event will start at 7pm for readings and the scattering of flowers on the Lune.

Junior doctors are on dispute from August 11-15 and Aslef are on a work-to-rule next week to Saturday 12 August. RMT are also joining other campaigns against the closure of station ticket offices.