



## ***Members' Newsletter, November 2024***

**Welcome to this month's newsletter.**

The government announcement that tuition fees are to go up to £9,535 for UK undergraduate students from next year won't solve the problems of higher education. Whilst it will generate a small amount of money for universities, it will load more debt onto students who will, in all likelihood, be significantly worse off throughout the first half of their working lives.

Any additional income to this university is likely to be wiped out by the increase in national insurance contributions and the massive rise in the contribution rate payable on the teachers' pension scheme.

Whilst many of us have pointed out that the failure of the fee to increase with inflation for nearly a decade, has contributed to a funding crisis at many universities, we never called for the fee to rise. What we want is for universities to be properly funded, as all public services should be, through general taxation.

The fee rise comes with conditions, which is largely just a rehash of what the government (and the previous one) want

universities to achieve, but what stands out is the obsession with efficiency and value for money - code for trying to do things with less money by perpetuating the idea that public services are always wasting your money (as if "investment" in aircraft carriers and tax breaks for the rich is good value.)

What stands out is the idea of saving money by sharing services i.e. outsourcing services to arms length companies or dedicated organisations specialising in providing terrible services by employing non-union staff on minimum wage, with little training or expertise. This would be a disaster and something that all decent union branches will resist.

We've been promised a proper review of higher education funding at some point in the future, and we'll do everything we can to lobby the government to find the resources to allow universities to contribute to society, with properly rewarded staff and students who don't need to rely on food banks.



**Join the union!**

Scan here:

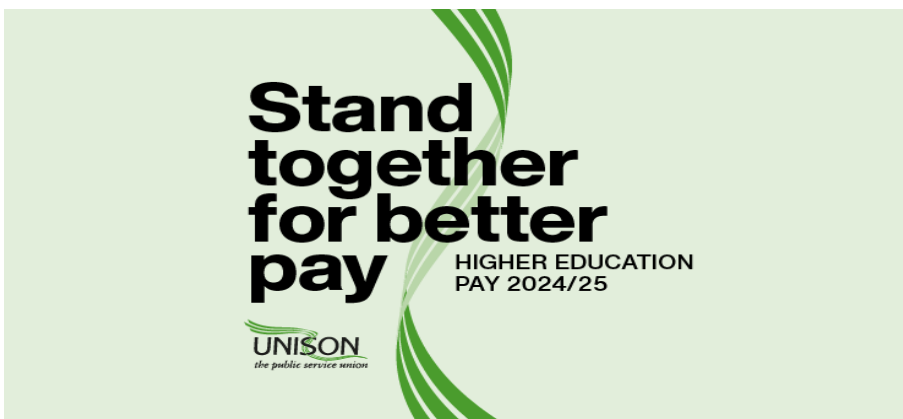




## **2024-25 Pay**

Many university branches of UNISON are due to be balloted, over strike action from January. As you may know, our branch will not be included in this ballot, since we agreed to exclude ourselves in exchange for the grade boundary changes which were introduced at the start of this month.

As a result, some members will see a change in pay as grade boundaries for grades 1, 2 and 3 are shifted.



Even though we're not balloting, we do of course suppose those which are, since the pay rise for 2024-25 does not come close to our joint union claim, and does not make up for the years of real-terms pay cuts that our members have had to put up with.

Obviously this is all linked to funding, and our national pay campaign is designed to demand proper pay for staff across all universities that are adequately funded from general taxation. It sounds like a utopian dream, but the money is there for wars and lenient taxes for the super-rich. We demand that more of it comes the way of working people, many of whom will be struggling to heat their homes this winter.

**UNISON's charity, There for You, has a Winter Essentials Grant, for those who may be struggling.**

**There are strict criteria, but please apply if you think you might qualify.**

**Details on UNISON's website, here:**



[Winter Essentials Grant |](#)

[There for You \(UNISON Welfare\) | UNISON National](#)