

Q&A



WHY WE ARE STRIKING

Won't strike action disrupt student learning?

Real disruption is already happening

- Students' learning is already disrupted because staff are off sick with stress from unsafe workloads. Teachers are leaving for better-paid jobs with manageable conditions. Striking isn't the problem – it's a symptom of a broken system.

Teachers are always busy, that's just the way it is

Unsafe workloads harm students

- Overworked teachers can't give the time, feedback, and support students deserve.
- Most teaching staff work over 48 hours a week. Exhaustion and stress lead to rushed lessons, delayed marking, and less one-to-one help.
- Safe workloads mean better teaching, better feedback, and better results for students.

FE teachers are well paid compared to other industries

- FE pay has fallen behind schools and inflation for over 10 years. The pay gap grows every year.
- Talented teachers are forced to leave, creating a recruitment and retention crisis – 50% leave FE within the first three years.
- Students need experienced teachers but face a revolving door of new teachers – no stability, no continuity.

Why are you taking strike action?

We've tried everything else

- UCU has repeatedly raised concerns over workload. Colleges have failed to act. Striking is a last resort, not a first choice. We've exhausted every option – now we need to make our voices heard.

We're fighting for the future of FE

- We want fair pay, safe workloads, functioning national bargaining and proper investment. Strike action is about protecting education for future learners.
- A strong, supported workforce means a stronger learning environment.

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Students deserve better than a failing system

- Further education has been underfunded for over a decade.
- Students are being taught in overcrowded classes, with fewer support staff and outdated resources.
- When teachers fight for better funding and fair pay, we're fighting for a system that values learners too.

It's about fairness and respect

- FE staff are some of the most dedicated educators, yet paid thousands less than their school counterparts.
- Striking is about fighting for pay parity, dignity, and being valued for our contribution, manageable workloads and fully funded national bargaining.

We're fighting so future staff don't have to

- Many FE professionals are at breaking point - juggling impossible workloads and low pay.
- Without change, new educators won't join or stay in the sector. We're taking action now to protect the future of teaching and learning in FE.

Management have the power to end this

- Management teams could end disruption immediately by addressing our demands on pay, workload and national bargaining.
- Instead, they've chosen to ignore warnings about unsafe workloads, pay gaps and low morale.
- The solution is in their hands – listen, negotiate, and act.