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| https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/mi/797/530d5b17/ |
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**Defend the right to strike for international staff**

UCU general secretary Sally Hunt and shadow chancellor John McDonnell MP [have written an article in today’s Independent](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/48727/151504/6151/1/) calling on the government to guarantee that taking strike action will not put migrant workers immigration status at risk.

The recent strike over pensions received overwhelming support but for many international staff, taking part meant the threat of deportation. Current visa rules oblige employers to report migrant workers taking more than 20 days’ unpaid absence and post-Brexit this could mean 2.4 million EU citizens working in the UK risk their right to remain should they take part in strike action.

We believe the right to strike is fundamental and should apply to all workers. More on how you can help us persuade the Home Office of this next week.

**FE fights back as employers refuse to talk pay**

We were shocked to receive confirmation this week that the Association of Colleges (AoC) are now refusing to negotiate with us on pay while local disputes, aimed at improving pay and conditions continue.

Last year the AoC apologised for not being able to offer more than a 1% increase and agreed that pay in FE is too low. How can they now think it’s OK to refuse to talk to us about FE pay?

We’ll now submit a claim for 5% or £1500 (whichever is greater) to every college in dispute in England. Where there’s no positive response we’ll start balloting in June for strike action.

We’ll only be able to take action if at least 50% of members vote so if you support our [FE fights back campaign](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/48727/151504/6101/2/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMTEgTWF5IDIwMTg%3d&x=61ffe3e1) we’ll need your help to spread the word when the ballot opens.

[See here for the full update including:](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/48727/151504/6152/3/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMTEgTWF5IDIwMTg%3d&x=9deeed18)

* In the news
* Standing up for fair pay in higher education
* USS pensions: apply to be a JEP panellist
* TUC march tomorrow
* Demonstration and rally in support of Hull College UCU
* TEF survey: have your say
* Call for help for refugees in France and Belgium

Best wishes

Justine Stephens
UCU head of campaigns