



Since the previous Annual General meeting (AGM) in 2021, the members of United Voices of the World (UVW) self-organised in their hundreds to fight for decent pay and working conditions, the right to a voice at work and for equality with their directly employed colleagues.

Dozens of workplaces prepared to take strike action. The following UVW members in at least twelve workplaces covering facilities, charity, and care sectors overcame fear, endured loss of pay and jumped through draconian hurdles to bravely vote to take strike action. For the first time, two of our strikes took place outside London!



Security guards

Great Ormond Street Hospital, central London

"We are fighting to have the same terms and conditions, the same benefits, the same rights, as the other staff that work with us. We were here for so many days, with the rain, with the cold, and they still ignored us. Even after everything we did to try to reach them, they still ignored us. They prefer to spend money to go to the High Court to stop us instead of negotiating with us." **Striking GOSH security guard Erica.**

The heroic Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) security guards took over 50 days of strike action starting in December 2021 in their fight to end racist outsourcing at the hospital, amid vicious union-busting backlash and racist hate against them. Their epic six-week walkout included several huge rallies and the peaceful occupation of an administrative building. In response, the hospital took out a High Court injunction against its own workers, which was the most draconian the union movement has ever seen and went as far as to ban UVW and its supporters from dancing and waving flags or picketing within 200 metres of GOSH. UVW fought back in the high court and removed some of the most egregious elements of the injunction

The striking guards and UVW received support from across the union movement as well as plenty of coverage in the media, and the strikers took their message to the national Cost of Living national rally in Parliament Square, International Women's Day protests, a session in the House of Commons and and even travelled to Liverpool for a meeting with activists.



The hospital was told to 'review its practices' and 'promote trust' following a data complaint from the union. UVW has since established a series of workplace reps for all shifts where there are members of the union, including cleaners and security guards. The fight against racist outsourcing continues!



Care workers, domestics and maintenance workers Sage Nursing Home, north London

"Our job is physical, psychological, and social, and we bring a unique service, so we demand that they respect us and value us as we deserve; better wages, better working conditions and environment, and a halt to what feels like an arbitrary use of power. We are not a black bin bag that they discard after use." **Bile Jean**, senior care worker for Sage Nursing home



UVW care, domestic and maintenance workers at Sage Nursing home in North London declared a huge victory in December 2021 after a protracted dispute and several rounds of strike action over poverty wages and lack of PPE that inspired care and other key workers up and down the country. The brave pandemic heroes and strikers are now the best paid care workers in the country. They are preparing to fight again for what is right and will be balloting soon for strike. They are back and demanding £14 per hour, a sick pay

scheme in line with NHS rates, amongst other improved conditions which have not been addressed. Watch this space!



Cleaners, caterers and porters St Mary's Hospital, west London

"We thought, "why shouldn't we be paid like all other NHS workers?" and we kept on fighting for full equality. Now I won't have to choose between paying my rent and protecting my health. Striking was not an easy thing to do, but we've proven that by sticking together, and by having the support of the amazing union UVW, that workers can win for themselves and patients up and down the country." **Loretta, St Mary's hospital**



Hundreds of workers at St. Mary's Hospital learnt that their move in-house would become permanent in April 2021 and full Agenda for Change provisions would be granted. The outsourced cleaners, caterers and porters at St Mary's Hospital in London, led by courageous women, were brought in-house as NHS employees after months of strike action, sit-ins and occupations in 2020. The strike action brought an end to decades of outsourcing

to Sodexo employment agency at St Mary's hospital, and Charing Cross, Hammersmith, Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea, and Western Eye hospitals.



Cleaners and concierges, West End Quays, Residential apartment block, London

In June 2021 outsourced workers at the luxury apartment block gave notice of intention to ballot to strike over sick pay, bullying and the slashing of their Christmas bonus. Negotiations in July 2021, resulted in sick pay win for the lower grade workers and a one off bonus.



Playground attendants and cleaners Royal Parks, London

Outsourced workers, UVW and PCS members, took month-long strike action in October 2021 to fight for equality with their directly employed colleagues and the right

to negotiate with their bosses. In November 2021 the workers accepted an offer that includes an agreement to regularise hours of work, back pay holiday pay, union recognition and a maximum of 3 months contractual sick pay, an increase from 6 days. This is the first dispute where two unions have run a joint strike with two groups of workers.



Restaurant workers Harrods, central London

“After weeks of organising with our union UVW, we are delighted that our bosses engaged with us and recognised our hard work. We will be getting the pay rise we have fought for and that we deserve – good news for us and workers beyond.” **Restaurant worker Mihaly**

Restaurant workers at Harrods, London’s emblematic luxury department store, won a huge pay rise of almost 25% for hundreds of waiting and kitchen staff in December 2021 after balloting to strike. The win was one of the most significant in the history of hospitality in the UK and established a new benchmark for pay in the sector. The Harrods restaurant workers organised and threatened to walk out over the Christmas shopping period. Their demands were met and they cancelled the planned strike before it went ahead, proving that collective action works! This is UVW’s second win at Harrods, the first saw an end to *tip pinching*, resulting in an average of £5K per worker per year.



Cleaners

Great Ormond Street Hospital, central London

“We’ve been fighting with the help of the UVW to be treated equally in the NHS. We won the fight because we voted yes to go on strike and GOSH gave in to us. The UVW has done a great job for us to have full equality. All workers in the UK can do the same as us by joining the UVW to get better terms and conditions.” **Gora Diop, a cleaner at GOSH since 2017 and the first UVW member on-site.**

After threatening strike action for equal rights with NHS employed staff UVW cleaners at GOSH won in-housing in August 2021. To speed up the harmonisation process, in early March 2022, they balloted to go on strike alongside the GOSH security guards. In March 2023 they will continue their fight for redress at the Employment Tribunal where they will argue that their lesser pay and conditions in previous years were an indirect form of racial discrimination by GOSH. In other words institutional racism.



Bar staff

Saint James Tavern, Brighton

“We are striking for the basic right to respect in the workplace, for an end to exploitative zero-hour contracts, and against the refusal to provide our basic statutory rights. We as workers at St James’ Tavern have felt consistently undermined, the physical and emotional welfare of the staff as a whole feels entirely neglected, But the fact we have unanimously voted to strike shows how strong we are. Together we can overcome any adversity!” **Jake Marvin, one of the bar managers at SJT**



Workers at a pub in Brighton, East Sussex, voted unanimously to go on strike and sue their employer in May 2022, in one of the rarest displays of workers’ power in the under-unionised hospitality sector. Staff at the Saint James Tavern (SJT) were demanding an end to zero-hours contracts, a minimum pay rise for all bar staff to £11.50 per hour, a full sick pay scheme,

a security response team on site and voluntary union recognition. The workers experienced vicious union-busting, physical assaults and suspensions from the pub management, but were supported by hundreds of Brighton locals and the wider union movement.



Cleaners
Riverside Quarter
South west London

“It is truly proven that when a group is united and all are in the same mindset, victory will be achieved in the end. This is the case with us, we never gave up even though we had our concerns of being victimised for being trade unionists at the beginning. Thanks to our union UVW, they never abandoned us but rather gave us strength with their words to continue in this struggle. To all the comrades who are fighting at this moment for a better salary, don’t lose heart, be united, victory will come in the end, you just have to be determined.” **Ernesto, a cleaner at Riverside Quarter**

Latin American cleaners from Ecuador and Bolivia who work at Riverside Quarter, a large luxury residence in Wandsworth, London, won union recognition in June 2022. The workers then unanimously declared a strike over their bosses’ failure to provide them with decent terms and conditions. The strike was averted as the cleaners won a huge 16% pay rise and 6 weeks half pay sick pay, a significant improvement on the statutory sick pay they were getting.



Cleaners
Latchmere Leisure Centre
South west London

“A proper living wage is a right for all, whether you’re a migrant worker or not. If you don’t have a living wage it is your duty to fight for it. The bosses will try to deny you your rights and try to bring you down, but you have to keep going. Unity is strength and anything can be achieved if we are united as workers” **Juan, cleaner at Latchmere Leisure Centre.**

Bolivian migrant cleaners at the Latchmere Leisure Centre in Battersea, south west London demanded and won statutory union recognition in July 2022. Months later the cleaners won a massive 16% pay rise, well above the then rate of inflation. Their victory followed a ballot for industrial action which saw every UVW member vote for action and was the culmination of a campaign launched by the cleaners for dignity, respect and a voice at work.



Architectural workers
Atomik Architecture, east London

“We are disappointed that Atomik has continuously dismissed and ignored our individual and collective concerns. We were expecting to collaborate to improve conditions at the practice but instead, we have had months of empty promises and zero progress. We have all worked at Atomik for a number of years, but that loyalty has not been reciprocated in meaningful improved pay or working conditions. We have been forced into this position, striking is our last resort.” **From an open statement by Atomik workers**

Workers at London-based architectural practice Atomik Architecture (Atomik) were balloted for strike action, in what could have been the first ever strike by private-sector architectural workers in the UK. The workers were threatened with redundancies after they told their employer that they were in dispute and experienced union-busting in response.



Charity workers
ASIRT, Birmingham

“We’ve been on the #SaveASIRT picket to fight for our own jobs but, more importantly, to fight for our service users. When migrant families have nowhere else to turn, ASIRT can be a lifeline. We must defend free immigration advice.” **Pouneh, ASIRT worker**



In November 2022 workers at a charity who provide free legal advice to asylum seekers and people subject to immigration control in Birmingham and the West Midlands discovered it was closing down, after trustees rejected a request for union recognition. The workers went on strike in December to try and stop the closure. In a beautiful display of solidarity they were joined on the picket line by service users and their families, trade unionists and members

of the public.



Cleaners

Mercedes-Benz showroom, Dartford

“We are not asking for anything extraordinary, we are asking for a very reasonable increase, affordable and fair. We are not just fighting for us but for all cleaners out there and all other workers who are in a similar situation to ours.” José, cleaner and UVW member.

Migrant cleaners working at the Mercedes-Benz showrooms in Dartford and Collingdale have had enough of earning poverty wages. They will be balloted for strike action soon if current talks fail with a view to strike for a 30% pay rise. The luxury car giant reported a whopping net profit of €23.4 billion for 2021 while their cleaning contractors pay migrant workers pitiful wages - £10 an hour, a meagre 50p above the minimum wage, and 90p below the recommended UK Living Wage of £10.90 per hour. Having endured a four-year pay freeze, their situation has become unsustainable with inflation skyrocketing.

Commitments to strike from other UVW members include cleaners at LSE Halls of residence, school cleaners at a private school in South London and Amazon cleaners.