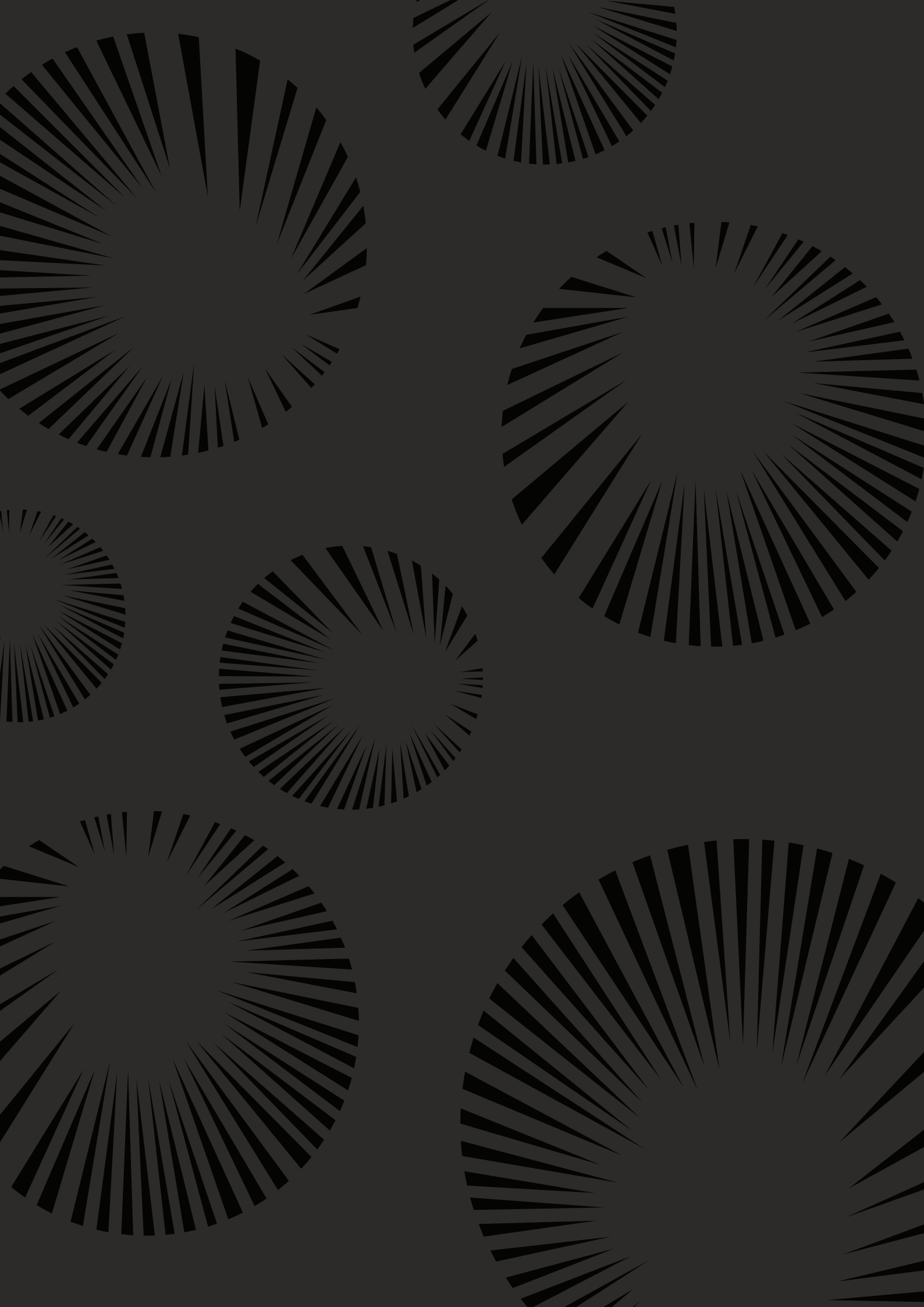
Further Education. It's ours

Building *Education. It's ours* campaign.

UCU
University and College Union

ucu.campaigns ucunion ucu ucu.org.uk educationitsours.org.uk



Education belongs to us.

Education belongs to the students who learn in our classrooms, the educators who teach and support them, and to everyone in our society who benefits from the development of knowledge.

But after decades of underfunding and marketisation, further education is being pushed to breaking point.

Jobs are being cut on an unprecedented scale. Courses are disappearing and campuses are under threat. Pay and pensions are being attacked. Workloads are spiraling. And students are left with ever greater levels of debt.

> ***The system is in a crisis. But the government is refusing to act. It falls to us – education workers – to do something about it.***

Education. It's ours is our campaign to fight for a different future.

We are demanding immediate, sustainable investment in higher education, protection for jobs, pay and pensions, a transformation of the long-term funding model, a fairer approach for staff and students, and stronger governance of our universities.

All of these things are achievable, but they will only happen if UCU members force the government to act.

Every UCU member has a role to play in making this campaign a success. You know better than anyone what is happening in your workplace. You know exactly what cuts mean for your students and colleagues. And you are the people best placed to build a campaign that wins.

J Grady

Dr Jo Grady
UCU General Secretary

Why education is ours to protect

After decades of funding cuts and marketisation, post-16 education is broken. Courses are being cut, colleges and universities are under threat, jobs are disappearing, and those left are facing worsening pay and conditions.

The loss of experienced educators is damaging educational quality, disadvantaging students and halting progress. Meanwhile, educators are struggling with the rising cost of living and tuition fees are putting students into endless debt.

Nations that educate their people protect their own future, and successive governments have failed to fix the broken system. This crisis is eroding education, limiting young people's opportunities and weakening the communities and economy that depend on it. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Education. It's ours is a new campaign targeting the government to finally address the broken further and higher education systems. We're demanding a funded, accessible and secure post-16 education system that will give young people and adults fulfilling futures and help Britain meet the challenges that lie ahead.

We're calling on the government to work with our members, staff and students to build a system that works for everyone. Because education is ours – it belongs to us all, and we must fight to protect it.

Our vision

A broken education system is costing us our future, closing opportunities for young people and weakening the communities and economies that depend on it.
But it doesn't have to be this way.

Imagine a country where post-16 education is properly funded and protected, where staff can pass on much-needed skills and help discover answers to the greatest challenges facing our society. Our failure to act will echo for generations, so join our campaign.

About the campaign

We're aiming for:

- Immediate increased and sustainable funding for higher education.
- Protection for university jobs, pay and pensions.
- A commitment to transform the long-term funding model.
- Fairer approach to international students.
- Stronger governance of the sector.

LEWISHAM COLLEGE
OFFICIAL PICKET
SUPPORT THE STRIKE
FAIR PAY IN FURTHER EDUCATION
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
2.5%
Honk your support!

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

How do we win?

To secure a higher education system that works for the many, and which is not held hostage to market whims or dodgy business decisions by senior managers, we need to make the current broken funding model politically untenable.

This will only be achieved through collective power building together with our colleagues, students, research partners, professional bodies, family, friends, communities, and local businesses.

The Education. *It's ours* campaign needs to be underpinned by strong branches holding employers accountable for their anti-democratic efforts to dismantle higher education institutions.

We also must build politically, and our strategy is set out in four pillars:

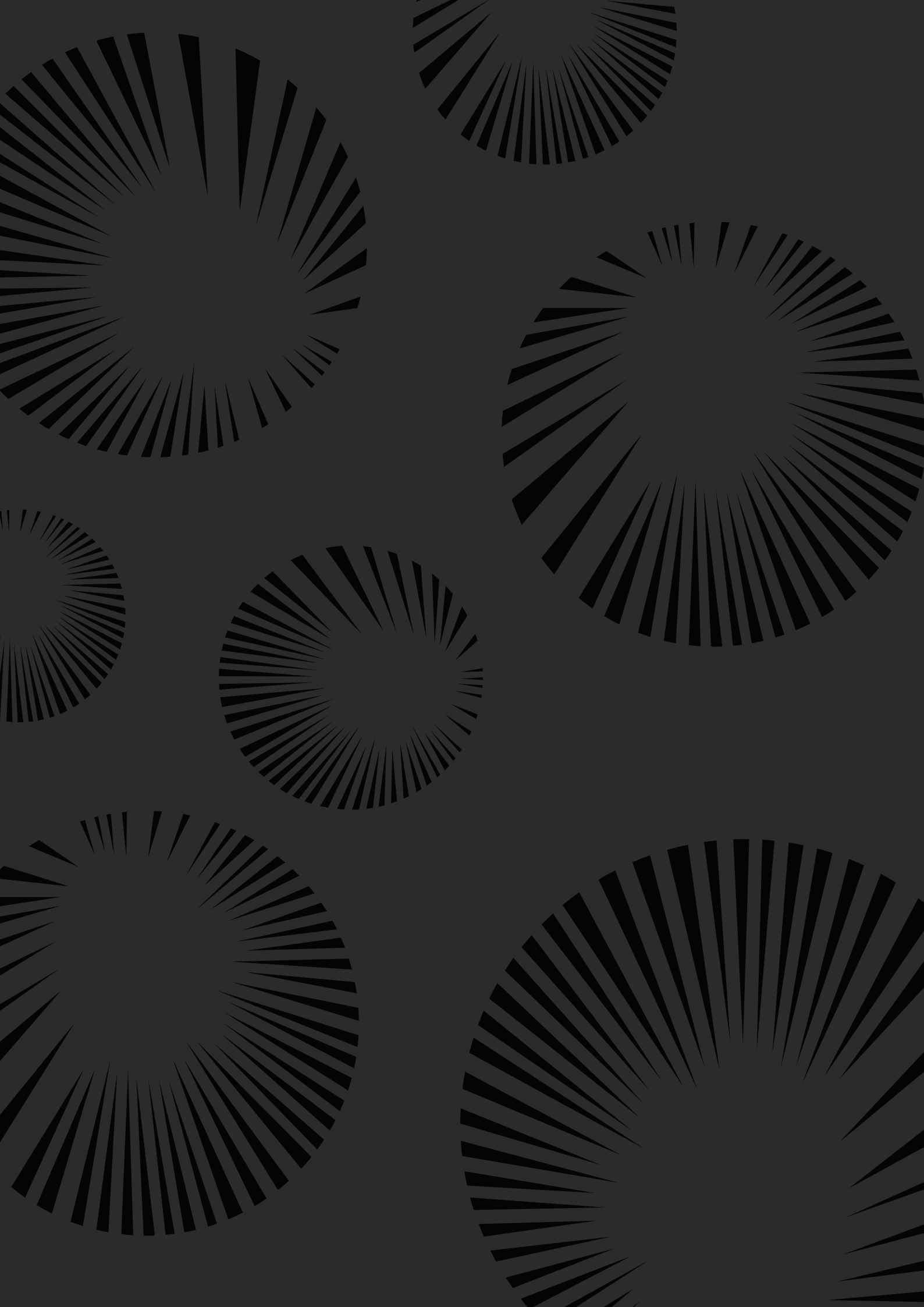
- **Strengthen branch and regional power** through coordinated support, resources, and local campaigning.
- **Build political and sectoral influence** through lobbying, alliances, and direct engagement with the government.
- **Shift the narrative** around the value of higher education and the impact of cuts on staff, communities, and the economy.
- **Mobilise members** through digital organising, campaigning, and increased participation.

Through this coalition, we will demonstrate to MPs, MSPs, MSs, and MLAs that they need to join their constituents in the campaign.

With this power, we will leave the government with no alternative but to bring about a funding model that truly reflects the value and contribution of universities to society.

You won't be fighting this alone. National campaigns will provide resources, national media work, evidence-based research, and campaigning packs to support local organising. We'll also run workshops towards the end of 2026 to capacity build and support with local campaigning to ensure our efforts are aligned with the wider goals. This will focus our actions towards coordinated national actions in 2027.

You can access other resources related to these aims on the *Education. It's ours* website: educationitsours.org.uk



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