

PLEDGE



A different further education is possible! We call on the Association of Colleges (AoC) and college leaders to work with us and sign our pledge for a new settlement in further education (FE) in England:

PAY RISE

The value of our pay has fallen by 35% in recent years yet the sector currently has the highest levels of income plus higher than average reserves and cash in the bank. Staff deserve a pay rise.

WORKLOADS

UCU research shows excessive and unmanageable workloads are all too prevalent in the sector. FE staff on average work two days for free each week. The impact on staff is significant, and we need action from employers and a national agreement to reset matters.

BINDING NATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

Unlike other parts of the UK where teachers' pay and FE pay is linked, in England the outcomes of national talks are not binding, and colleges have no requirement to implement any offer made. FE has been reclassified as part of the public sector. The current national bargaining agreement with non-binding outcomes is failing the sector. We need a new settlement in FE.

JUST TRANSITION COMMISSION FOR FE

The climate crisis is real and the need to transition to new skills and forms of work if we are to find a sustainable and long-term future for the sector. The sector needs a *Just Transition Commission* to start to address the climate crisis and reposition FE to meet the environmental, skills and employability challenges that need to be addressed.

Sign our pledge: <https://respectfe.org.uk>

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SUPPORT THE RESPECT FE PLEDGE

In recent years staff in FE England have seen our pay, working conditions and professionalism undermined. This year employers and unions must start to work together and effect the change that is desperately needed.

PAY

The value of our pay falls each year as staff experience a surge in living costs:

Year	AoC pay recommendation	Cost of living increase (as measured by RPI)
2018	1%	3.3%
2019	1%	2.6%
2020	1%	1.5%
2021	1%	4.1%
2022	2.5%	11.6%
2023	no recommendation	13.4%

Recent increases to central government funding for 16-19 education and capital investment have been accompanied by an undeniable improvement in the state of college finances. The sector has entered a period of financial stability and relative prosperity and the indicators suggest this will last for at least another three years.

Colleges need to put this money into pay rather than hoarding cash or prioritising capital spending.

WORKLOAD

In our 2021 workload survey of UCU members:

- 41% say their workload is mostly or entirely unmanageable
- 81% say the pace and intensity of work has increased significantly
- 47% of college staff working hours have increased significantly in the past year.

We seek meaningful negotiations on effective national agreements which would include:

- an agreed national policy on the delivery of guided learning hours
- the resourcing of more administration and support staff
- nationally-agreed class size recommendations
- wellbeing and workload protocols.

BINDING NATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

The outcomes of national negotiations are a source of frustration for the trade unions. The final offer made by the Association of Colleges is only a recommendation which colleges often ignore. Staff in FE have suffered some of the worst pay cuts when compared to the other educational workers.

The reclassification of FE into the public sector gives an opportunity to move to a more coherent basis for national level negotiations as happens in Wales and Scotland.

For too long FE staff have been ignored; now is the time to work together to establish a new settlement for further education.

JUST TRANSITION COMMISSION

A *just transition* means moving to a more sustainable economy that's fair to everyone. FE needs the funding to invest in workforce development to deliver green skills and jobs, and embed climate learning into the curriculum. Our proposal includes working towards:

- a representative commission that gives a voice to under-represented groups
- protected funding as colleges move towards decarbonising targets
- protection for jobs as we move from certain areas of study and towards new areas
- preparing the workforce for 'climate proofing'
- working with other local trade unions and networks to identify skills gaps and identifying opportunities for employment within FE
- identification of training and professional development needs
- utilising a green new deal to support more sustainable employment models
- identifying regional workforce needs and opportunities in order to sustain local economies and reduce travel impact
- time off for trade union environmental reps.