



School Teachers' Review Body 2025/26

UCU written evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body December 2024.

Executive summary

1. University and College Union (UCU) represents over 120,000 staff employed in the post-16 education sector, including teachers, lecturers and related staff in Further Education, Adult and Community Education and Higher Education.
2. UCU welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB). Our submission will directly address the request made by the STRB Secretariat regarding '*We are specifically interested in your views and evidence in relation to the impact of our pay recommendations on the further education teaching workforce in England.*'
3. The UCU submission is shaped by the union's campaign for a [New Deal for FE](#). The campaign is calling for a new national bargaining framework for Further Education (FE) in England, starting salaries for FE teachers to be on a par with teachers in schools and sixth form colleges, closing the gap with schoolteachers pay, fully funded pay increases for all FE staff, increased funding for Adult and Community Education (ACE) and national workload agreements.
4. The UCU evidence establishes the basis for urgent investment in FE in England. It sets out the case for correcting the absolute and relative decline in pay over the last decade and more, the need to close the gap with schools' pay over a three year pay cycle and for agreements to address increasingly unmanageable workloads.
5. According to DfE data on FE teaching vacancies in all subjects, 4.7 per 100 teaching positions were vacant at the end of the year 2022/23 rising to 5.1 per hundred in General FE colleges. Data from the DfE highlights that over the past 10 years the rate that FE teachers leave the profession is consistently higher than attrition rates in primary and secondary schools.
6. Our submission highlights the inadequacy of funding levels for 16-18 years and in adult and community education, and the need for significant additional investment to deal with the recruitment and retention crisis

driven by inferior FE and ACE terms and conditions relative to schools, sixth form colleges and industry.

7. The UCU submission supports the UK government's ambitions for the economy, for the development of skills and embedding growth. FE and ACE will be central to the delivery of those aims. However, without coherent skills, investment and workforce strategies, coupled with reform of the national bargaining framework in FE, colleges will continue to compete against each other, with schools and sixth form colleges as with industry for staff. FE staff will continue to leave teaching for better pay and terms and conditions.
8. The submission makes the case for significant and urgent strategic investment in adult and community education (ACE). The cuts to ACE have been the deepest and most sustained since the start of austerity. ACE has a vital role to play in the decade of renewal. ACE enables the delivery of new skills, functional skills, employment pathways for those that want to work but where English is not their first language and helps build communities and greater cohesion and understanding.
9. Our submission highlights that pay is closely followed by workload as the second biggest reason why teachers leave FE. The UCU workload survey data 2021/22 shows that on average staff work 49 FTE hours per week. The equivalent of working two days for free is based on a 37-hour week contract. Tutors have the highest workloads (51.3 hours FTE), closely followed by Managers (50.2 hours FTE), Lecturers (50.1 hours FTE) and Course Leaders (49.4 hours FTE). A further third said their workloads were unmanageable most of the time. Staff in ACE are working on average 52.7 FTE hours per week.
10. FE in England is now the outlier in further education within the UK. At a national level in England, the National Joint Forum (NJF) has failed on pay and the management of workloads. In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the respective pay review mechanisms and their outcomes means starting pay in FE in England for teachers is the lowest, and the gap between school teachers' pay and FE pay in England is the biggest.

1. UCU Recommendations:

1.2 In summary UCU is calling for:

- A multi-year investment and a workforce strategy in Further Education and Adult and Community Education
- A new national bargaining framework for Further Education.
- National pay outcomes to be fully funded and fully implemented by colleges.
- Starting pay parity between FE teachers and schoolteachers in England.

- An agreed three-year investment plan to close the pay gap with schoolteachers pay.
- Reform of the National Joint Forum in FE to include national workload agreements.
- As the devolution of funding to the combined authorities and mayors increases, UCU to be recognised as the voice of the profession in ACE and consulted on regional skills and education plans, teachers' pay and terms and conditions.

2. Further Education and Adult and Community Education – a UCU Introduction

2.1 Further Education (FE) in England changes lives. It should be a success story and should be celebrated. However, for too long FE staff and the invaluable contribution they make to students' lives, to employers' businesses and to enriching our communities and wider society has been undervalued and under-rewarded. FE must be understood as a long-term investment in our economy.

2.2 Adult and Community Education (ACE) has a vital role to play in post-16 education, however it has been systematically underinvested in since austerity to the detriment of the individuals willing to learn new skills and contribute to society. The devolved funding for ACE and skills creates a generational opportunity to reestablish the role of ACE as part of achieving the UK governments strategic ambitions.

2.3 Now more than ever, the students FE and ACE staff teach will be the workforce who will help the world respond to shared global crises. They will help find a way through the social justice and equality challenges we face. They will support the health and wellbeing of an aging population. They will develop our approach to living and working with Artificial Intelligence and our response to the increasing damage caused by climate change.

2.4 The new UK Government wants to invest in skills, grow the economy, and give a new deal for working people. A central part of achieving those ambitions rests on fundamental change in FE. Fundamental change means the creation of new national bargaining arrangements in FE England and an investment and workforce strategy in both FE and ACE.

2.5 The outcomes of national bargaining in FE need to be fully funded, so all colleges implement them, and all staff get the same rates of pay and enjoy the same terms and conditions negotiated by UCU. FE has been re-classified as part of the public sector and the time is now right for the sector to have a new negotiating framework that leads to outcomes that are implemented sector wide like schools or sixth form colleges.

2.6 Over 30 years ago FE colleges in England were separated from local authority control and became independent legal corporations. National bargaining on terms and conditions as set out in the 'Silver Book' ended. Since incorporation we have seen the sector fall behind schools and sixth form colleges regarding pay, working hours, terms and conditions, recruitment and retention, starting salaries and investment.

2.7 As a result of the recent pay settlement in further education in Northern Ireland, England FE teachers have the lowest starting salaries of all the devolved nations and administrations in the UK.

2.8 National FE bargaining in England does not function. It has failed to meet the aspirations and demands of members and needs fundamental change. The national FE bargaining framework and agreement, the National Joint Forum (NJF) is specifically set up to result in recommendations that have no binding outcomes on pay. There is no commitment from the UK government to any pay recommendation being fully funded. The NJF has no remit on workloads or other terms and conditions.

2.9 Since FE incorporation in the early 1990's, FE colleges and college groups have been autonomous legal entities covered by legislation and regulation with their own governance arrangements. Pay and related matters are devolved to each FE corporation.

2.10 FE funding is complex and distributed via mechanisms covering 16-18, Adult and Community Education, apprenticeships, private providers, higher education, BTEC and T-Level for example.

2.11 There are currently 221 incorporated English FECs of three main types: General FE Colleges (GFECs), Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs), and Specialist Colleges. Where UCU is recognised, we negotiate directly with employers on pay and other terms and conditions. There is no even playing field for the sector.

2.12 FE college employers ultimately have autonomy to do their own thing on matters such as pay. At sector level, the annual pay process has failed to deliver consistency and certainty on pay. It has created the context for a wide range of pay rates for the profession. Sector level pay talks do not result in meaningful and implementable outcomes; they are recommendations only and the majority of the sector employers ignore that recommendation.

3. Further Education Pay

3.1 In 2022/23, the median FTE average salary for members of the workforce on permanent or fixed term for teaching staff was:

- £34,600 in General Further Education Colleges including Tertiary (GFECs).
- £44,300 in sixth form colleges.
- £44,400 in school-based providers.

The 2022/23 data shows the FTE average pay gap around £9000 between FE and schools. This has been compounded by the recent 5.5% increase to schoolteachers pay.

[Further education workforce, Academic year 2022/23 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

3.2 Following the implementation of the School Teacher's Pay Review Body (STRB) 2023, the starting salary for a new schoolteacher in England was £30,000.

3.3 The recommended starting salary for an FE lecturer 2023/24 based on the Association of Colleges (AoC) pay scale was £27,786.

3.4 In 2010-11, the median salary (in today's prices) for a college teacher was £42,500 and for a schoolteacher, around £48,000. Based on 2022/23 data, the median pay for a college teacher is £34,600, whereas for a schoolteacher, it is around £44,400.

3.5 Despite increased government investment into 16-19 education for 2022/2023 and 2023/24 (£470 million) obstacles remain to the recruitment and retention of FE teachers:

- i) FE salaries continue to be lower than salaries of schoolteachers and sixth form colleges.
- ii) Workload is too high.
- iii) Casualised / precarious employment contracts are prevalent within the FE sector, with the DfE FE Workforce Data Collection suggesting that close to a quarter (23%) of the general FE workforce are on precarious employment contracts.

3.6 Last year FE received additional funding £470 million for 2022/23 and 2023/24. This comes against a backdrop in recent years of systemic underfunding by the UK government.

3.7 In 2024 the Secretary of State referred to their expectation that the additional funding will be used to address the recruitment and retention issues in FE. The additional funding enabled a majority of pay settlements around 6.5%, the same offer made by the STRB. For the first time in a long time, the UK government recognised a link between FE pay and pay in schools.

3.8 The new UK government recently announced an additional £300 million for 2025/26 however the distribution mechanism has not yet confirmed, and the funding will not be available until April 2025.

3.9 UCU’s position on the additional funding is clear; it must be used for staff pay and DfE guidance needs to be unambiguous on this matter.

3.10 The table below shows the ‘recommendations’ made by the AoC and the outcome of the School Teachers’ Review Board. Note: both are referred to as recommendations. The significant difference is the relative funding arrangements and the fact that colleges do not have to implement.

Year	Association of Colleges pay recommendation	School Teachers’ Review Body (STPRB) recommendations
2018	1%	3.5%
2019	1%	2.75%
2020	1%	5.5% on some grades and 2.75% on other grades
2021	1%	The Body’s remit for this year related to unqualified teachers only.
2022	2.5%	5% (with higher % increases for some grades)
2023	After initially being reluctant to make a recommendation, the AoC followed the STRB recommendation of 6.5%	6.5%
2024	2.5%	5.5%

3.11 Since incorporation in England, the FE sector has become the most underfunded of the education sectors and with the biggest disparities between colleges’ pay rates and conditions. In schools and sixth form in England, employers implement the national pay scales and pay uplift across the sector uniformly.

4. Why we need a new national pay bargaining framework in FE England

4.1 Most other parts of the UK public sector are covered by forms of functioning national negotiations or pay review bodies such as the STRB, but not FE in England. As a result, FE staff have some of the worse pay and conditions of all professional educators in the UK.

4.2 This is not the case when we look at the situation in Wales or Scotland or Northern Ireland, where FE is considered to have parity of esteem with

schoolteachers and has the investment, negotiating agreements and terms and conditions to go along with that commitment.

4.3 The respective devolved governments and the devolved administration also take a keen interest in progressing the post 16 skills and employment agendas, which means departmental officials and ministers meet with sector leaders and trade unions.

4.4 In England FE and ACE receive billions of pounds of investment via different funding streams in recognition of the crucial role both have in delivering the skills and talent that employers and our economy need to be successful. If the UK government is serious about Skills England, then the current national arrangements in FE must change.

4.5 An example of the difference that results from having functioning and non-functioning national pay mechanisms is, for 2023/24 the starting salary for schoolteachers in England was £30,000; the starting salary for sixth form lectures was £30,500; and the Association of Colleges (AoC) recommended starting salary for FE lectures was £27,786.

4.6 UCU negotiates on FE pay and conditions in Wales alongside the other trade unions with the Welsh FE employers' association Colegau Cymru. UCU has reached a national agreement in Wales that covers pay, workload and other terms and conditions. In 2023/24 the starting salary for teachers on the main grade is £30,700, mirroring schools in Wales.

4.7 Scotland has an effective national bargaining mechanism. UCU is not recognised for lecturers in FE, however, like Wales pay and other terms and conditions are negotiated and implemented nationwide. For 2023/24 the starting salary in Scotland for a teacher in FE is around £30,700.

4.8 The recent agreement reached between employers and the trade unions in FE Northern Ireland now reinforces the need for fundamental change in FE England and how far the gap is with FE in the rest of the UK.

- the minimum lecturers' pay point to be uplifted to £30,000, with 8.4% revalorisation plus £1,000 to be added to all other lecturers' pay points.
- commitment to teacher pay scale parity.
- an agreement for an independent examination of the pay, all terms (including addressing policy review) and conditions and workload of academic staff.
- develop an industrial relations model that will transform and modernise the existing pay, reward, and conditions of service for all academic staff within regional FE colleges.

4.9 National talks in FE England take place under the National Joint Forum (NJF). The NJF is an agreement between the FE unions (GMB, NEU, Unite, Unison and UCU) and the Association of Colleges. The primary purpose of the NJF is the annual pay talks that take place during the summer college term each year.

However, unlike the annual pay review process for schools or the national talks for sixth form colleges, the NJF pay outcomes do not have to be acted upon. The AoC only make recommendations and AoC members (FE college and college groups). It is for college leaders to decide if they will implement them or not. UCU research indicates that most colleges ignore the recommendation by paying less, and some make no pay award at all. This is not the case in school and sixth form colleges.

5. FE pay comparison with schools

5.1 The table below shows the comparative difference in the growth of the gap between FE and schoolteachers' pay over recent years.

Year	Association of Colleges recommended starting pay for qualified FE lecturers	School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) recommendations for schoolteachers' pay Basic pay, excluding London and excluding allowance for 'teaching and learning responsibility'
2019/20	£24,373	£24,952
2020/21	£25,202	£25,714
2021/22	£25,454	Recommendations related to unqualified teachers only
2022/23	£26,090	£28,000
2023/24	£27,786	£30,000

5.2 The big difference between the schoolteachers and sixth form pay review processes when compared to FE in England is that with schools and sixth form the outcomes and supporting funding mechanisms result in their consistent implementation across all schools and sixth form colleges. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the pay outcomes are not implemented.

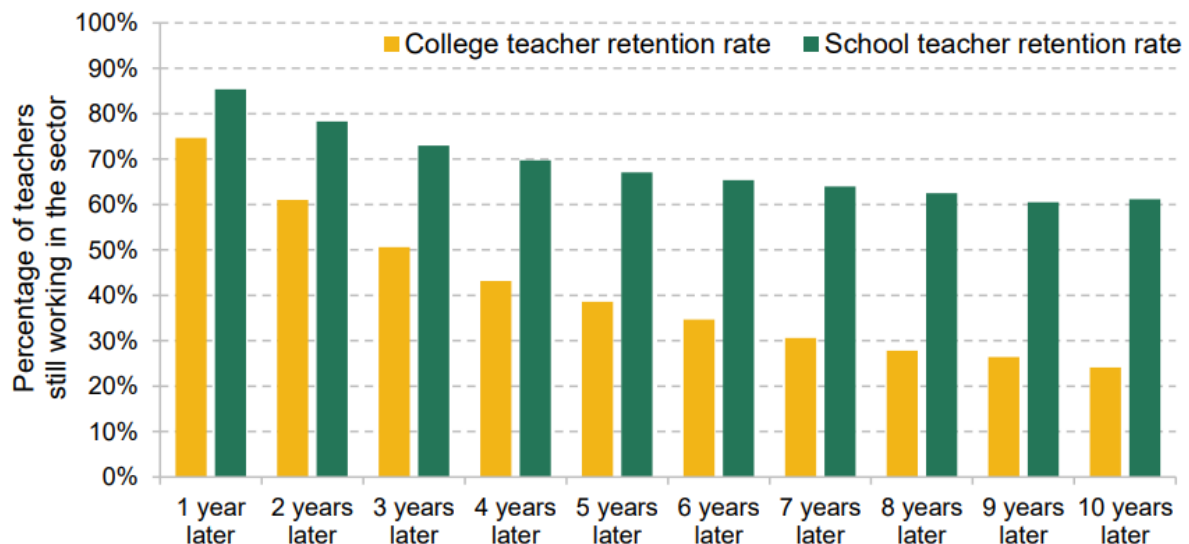
5.3 In FE in England the exception is that the AoC pay recommendation is implemented, the norm is that it is not.

5.4 The recent announcement by the new UK government that it would implement the public sector pay review bodies award in full means that schoolteachers in England will receive a 5.5% pay increase for 2024/25. The AoC recommendation on pay made at the NJF is 2.5%.

6. Recruitment and retention

6.1 Data from the DfE highlights that over the past 10 years the rate that teachers leave the profession is higher than for those who teach in primary and secondary schools: **primary and secondary school teachers**.

6.2 This is compounded by the loss of over half of teachers in FE leaving the profession within 5 years.



6.3 Poor levels of absolute and relative pay are contributing to high levels of persistent staff shortages, the loss of skilled educators to FE and ACE, and over reliance on a casualised workers. Association of College data shows that **the average college has 30 unfilled teaching vacancies**.

6.4 The recently published DfE workforce data [Further education workforce, Academic year 2021/22 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#) indicates that the levels of vacancies are greatest in the highest earning subject areas such as construction, engineering, manufacturing accountancy and finance. FE is competing directly with industry for these scarce skills and is failing to attract or retain staff given the levels of pay and other terms and conditions in FE: **pay gaps between FE teaching and industry occupations are largest in the construction, engineering and digital industries**.

6.5 FE incorporation means colleges compete against each other, against schools and sixth form colleges as well as industry for skilled staff. Unlike schools there are no national pay scales in place, so colleges are free to make offers that include attraction premiums such as market supplements. This skews local pay arrangements in the college and leads to discontent and compounds retention issues. Staff shortages in FE in the key subject areas are likely to have a direct impact on UK governments strategic ambitions regarding skills and growth.

6.6 Staff terms and conditions also vary (annual leave entitlement, the amount of consecutive leave members can take etc) resulting in the teachers moving from one college to another to teach the same subject in some instances but with sometimes significant pay and leave entitlement. High levels of attrition have a link with sickness absence and its monitoring. High levels of workloads are common as a result. This leads in some cases to the increased use of capability procedures, dismissal or resignation. In addition, classes are combined to deal with the shortages of staff, and this has a direct impact on the student experience, performance and achievement.

6.7 The recently published DfE workforce data [Further education workforce, Academic year 2021/22 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#) indicates that the levels of vacancies are greatest in the highest earning subject areas such as construction, engineering, manufacturing accountancy and finance. FE is competing directly with industry for these scarce skills and is failing to attract or retain staff given the levels of pay and other terms and conditions in FE: **pay gaps between FE teaching and industry occupations are largest in the construction, engineering and digital industries.**

7. Investment in Further Education

7.1 According to a [recent report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies](#), college income and expenditure has fallen by almost a third since 2010/11, driven by cuts to public funding which make up 83% of college income. The report sets out the consequences these funding cuts have had on staffing in FE. Between 2010/11 and 2022/23, total funding for all 16–19 education fell by almost a quarter, while funding for adult skills has been cut by over half.

7.2 As highlighted earlier in this submission, almost half of all college teachers leave the profession within three years of starting. The report concludes that this is in part due to the widening pay gap between college lecturers and schoolteachers highlighted earlier in this submission.

7.3 Between 2010–11 and 2019–20 financial years, spending per student aged 16–18 fell in real terms by 14% in colleges. For colleges, this left spending per student at around its level in 2004–05.

7.4 In the 2021 Spending Review, the government announced £1.6 billion in extra funding for colleges and sixth forms by 2024–25. Yet even with the

additional funding, college spending per student in 2024–25 will still be about 10% below 2010–11 levels.

7.5 There is a similar story for Learning Support staff in colleges. FE educates a significant number of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The [recent report from the National Audit Office](#) has highlighted the relative lack of funding for post-16 SEND students since 2019 for the age group 20–25.

7.6 Total spending on adult skills is set to increase by 14% in real terms between 2019–20 and 2024–25. However, this only reverses a fraction of past cuts: total adult skills spending in 2024–25 will still be 23% below 2009–10 levels. Spending on classroom-based adult education has fallen especially sharply, driven by falling learner numbers and real-terms cuts in funding rates, and will still be over 40% below 2009–10 levels in 2024–25 even with the additional funding.

7.7 Following on from big increases between 2010 and 2015, the total number of adult apprentices (aged 19 or over) has declined by 16% since 2016–17 and the introduction of the apprenticeship levy. However, the number of higher apprentices, including degree apprentices, has trebled in the same period.

7.8 The distribution of funding across areas is highly shaped by the share of students in (more highly funded) FE colleges, which leads to higher levels of spending per student in more disadvantaged areas and in Northern regions of England, with mostly lower spending levels in London. As a result, spending per student is about 9% higher in the most deprived areas than in the least in 2023–24, up from about 4–5% in 2013–14. This increase reflects the smaller cuts for FE colleges and greater funding for students in disadvantaged areas over time.

7.9 In the 2023–24 academic year, the IFS estimate that spending per student aged 16–18 in FE colleges will be £7,100, compared with £5,800 in school sixth forms and £5,400 in sixth-form colleges. Higher funding for FE colleges reflects extra funding for costly technical programmes and for students from more deprived areas.

7.10 The government announced extra funding in July and October 2023 to enable colleges to afford higher staff pay rises and to increase funding rates for GCSE retakes. However, none of this was new funding. It all came from existing plans.

7.11 The IFS report concludes that this recruitment and retention crisis is largely due to the widening pay gap between college and school staff, which our own surveys confirm, but we in UCU also know that stress due to workload is a huge issue.

7.12 The average class size in school sixth forms is just under 11. The average size of college classes is just under 19. Bear in mind that not only is schoolteachers' pay between is greater than that of college lecturers, but that full-time schoolteachers generally teach for 21–23 hours per week, whereas full-time FE lecturers are regularly asked to teach 28 hours or more a week. Added to that, colleges are currently over-recruiting, trying to get even more students

in to try to ease their financial woes (37% of colleges had in-year deficits in 2022/23).

7.13 This situation has led to a workload crisis that is only going to get worse. The population of 16- and 17-year-olds in England is projected to grow by an additional 110,000 (or 8%) between 2023 and 2028. If current funding levels continue, this can only lead to larger class sizes, even higher workloads and more staff leaving the profession.

7.14 The FE sector needs an immediate funding increase to alleviate the staffing crises detailed above. This could be funded by allowing colleges to claim VAT relief, just as school sixth forms are able to. That is a short-term measure that UCU and college leaders are calling for. To fix FE in the longer term, we need functioning national mechanisms to regulate pay and workload through national agreements and we need a fully funded plan to achieve pay parity with schoolteachers.

7.15 More teaching staff are set to retire from the sector than are entering the sector, which places remaining teachers and classroom sizes at risk of increased pressure. In turn, it places increased risks on skills training, in terms of quality due to large class sizes.

7.16 The DfE's 2022/23 FE Workforce Data Collection found the following in relation to teachers in general FE colleges:

- 1.7% are under 25 years of age.
- 7.3% are age 25 – 29 years of age.
- 21.5% are age 30-39 years of age.
- 24% are age 40-49 years of age.
- 28.5% are age 50-59 years of age.
- 16.5% are age 60+ years of age.

8. Adult and Community Education

8.1 Adult and Community Education (ACE) is vital to the vibrancy of any healthy region. The direction of travel in funding via the combined authorities and metro mayors is a central UK government commitment.

ACE is provided via several routes within communities. Its funding differs accordingly. A large volume of ACE is delivered by FE colleges. ACE can give adults with second - and indeed, third and subsequent chances in life to acquire education and skills otherwise missed at an earlier age, for varying reasons, which may have been beyond their control. ACE can provide life-transforming opportunities for adults to change the course of their and their families' lives and in turn, provide back to society in measurable and immeasurable ways. In summary, Adult and Community Education contributes to thriving adults, their families, society and the local economy.

8.2 There has been a demonstrable erosion of ACE investment over the last decade or so. The spending on adult education/apprenticeships fell by 38% between 2010/11 - 2020/21. The increased money for ACE and apprenticeships provided by the 2021 Spending Review merely brings the funding to the 2015 level, which remains about 25% lower than in 2010-11.¹ The 2022 Spending Review brought no funding increases to ACE. Unlike schools and belatedly FE in 2023, ACE missed out on any additional funding. There was no additional money in Budget 2024. Over the last 10 years or so the adult participation in Level 2 education fell by 50%, and in Level 3 by 33% between 2011-2021.²

8.3 The support for low skilled adults is too focused on very specific skills/programmes. The lower-level courses are skills-specific, with no options for academic study at GCSE and entry levels, level 1 and level 2 essential skills and functional skills such as ESOL, English, Maths and ICT. This limits social mobility. There are many challenges to access community education, and it is difficult to access information about the opportunities available. Further, some of the terminology, such as '*skills bootcamp*', gives an inappropriate image of what should be a welcoming education service.

8.4 The DfE has removed funding from non-qualification "leisure" provision.³ The importance of ACE provision is that it can reach those furthest away from education, and that the provision includes courses in mental health and access to those who have special education needs and disabilities (SEND). Leisure provision supports health and well-being and in turn, supports the NHS and Social Services aims.⁴ A strong ACE provision also supports economic growth.⁵

8.5 [Data from our own Freedom of Information request](#) carried out in 2022 indicated that 66% of ACE tutors were employed on zero hours contracts with the average hourly pay for tutors at just £20.83. Some rates of pay are as low as £11.68 an hour and paid time for preparation and student support as little as 9 minutes for every teaching hour (meaning the real hourly rates are even lower).

8.6 Adult and Community Education staff deserve parity of pay and conditions with their FE counterparts and dignity in accordance with the UCU Adult and Community Education manifesto:

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/12608/UCU-adult-and-community-education-manifesto>.

8.7 Research by the Centre for Social Justice (*'Playing the ACE – A plan to unleash the potential of adult community education and bolster economic growth'* (2022)), concludes that the focus on consumption rather than

¹ Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), '*Adult education: the past, present and future*': [Adult education: the past, present and future | Institute for Fiscal Studies \(ifs.org.uk\)](#), 13 June 2022

² Ibid no. 1

³ [Skills for jobs: implementing a new further education funding and accountability system consultation response \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) p. 23. The DfE intends to publish further details in due course in the Adult Skills Fund guidance.

⁴ See, for instance, the House of Commons Education Committee report, '*A plan for an adult skills and lifelong learning revolution*': [Adult skills and lifelong learning \(parliament.uk\)](#)

⁵ See, for instance, the Centre for Social Justice report, '*Playing the ACE*': [CSJJ9940-Playing-The-Ace-221125.pdf \(centreforsocialjustice.org.uk\)](#)

investment in capital and skills has left our productivity rate stagnant and that “without a stronger foundation of education for all... our economy will continue to be hostage to low growth rates... if we want to create a more resilient economy, we must examine our adult education system and focus on building a strong foundation of Adult Community Education.”

Despite this, the pay and terms and conditions of those working in adult education are some of the worst in tertiary education in the UK.

8.8 The FETL / Hoxley report '[Levelling up Adult Community Education](#)' published in 2021 found that 97% of the teaching staff in ACE providers hold a teaching qualification yet the terms and conditions under which teachers in adult educators work is a far cry from those found in schools in the same locality.

8.9 With the increasing devolution of skills and education to the combined authorities and metro mayors, the opportunity now exists to create the conditions for a renewed focus on the vital role ACE plays in delivering locally for businesses, staff and learners of all ages. UCU as the voice of the profession needs to be part of this direction of travel.

9. Workload in FE and ACE

9.1 UCU workload report published in 2023

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/14643/UCU-workload-survey-2021-FE-report/pdf/UCU_Workload_Survey_FE_May24.pdf draws on the findings of a larger survey of members conducted by the UCU in 2021/2022 to investigate issues surrounding workloads in further education, higher education, prison education and adult and community education. Overall, there were more than 13,000 respondents to the survey, but this report provides an overview of data provided by the 2,360 respondents who work in further education.

9.2 The report focuses on the following questions:

- To what extent have the size or intensity of workloads and working hours changed over the previous three years?
- How manageable are workloads?
- What are the main factors contributing to any changes in workloads and their intensity over the previous three years?
- What changes are likely to help reduce workloads?

9.3 The key findings are that staff are working multiple unpaid days every week. Part time staff and some casualised staff are particularly impacted and are working well beyond their contracted hours. Staff in FE colleges are working an average of 2 unpaid days (49 FTE hours) per week.

9.4 Workload remains unmanageable for the vast majority of staff. Around 1 in 10 staff reported that their workloads were entirely unmanageable. Staff in FE colleges are working on average 49.0 hours per week FTE. Tutors have the highest workloads (51.3 hours FTE), closely followed by Managers (50.2 hours FTE), Lecturers (50.1 hours FTE) and Course Leaders (49.4 hours FTE). A further third said their workloads were unmanageable most of the time.

9.5 Staff in ACE are working on average 52.7 FTE hours per week. This equates to more than 2 days unpaid per week. Managers in ACE report working more than twice as many hours as they are paid for.

9.6 More than 90% of respondents said the pace or intensity of their work had increased (either slightly or significantly).

9.7 Around 7 in 10 respondents said workload pace and intensity had increased significantly. Workloads are being impacted by an ever-increasing administrative burden, retention issues and the reduction in staff numbers, and unagreed changes to teaching and learning. This is at the cost of professional development.

9.8 Part-time staff are working far in excess of their contracted hours.

9.9 FE staff spent a third of their time (33.1%) teaching. This is a significant increase from 26.5% of time teaching in 2016. The amount of time spent on Admin (1.8 percentage point increase) and Meetings (1.7 percentage point increase) also increased compared with 2016. The largest decreases compared to 2016 were a reduction in time spent on Student Consultations (3.4 percentage point decrease), Research and Reading (1.5 percentage point decrease) and other activities (5.1 percentage point decrease).

9.10 Increased administrative work remains the biggest contribution to change in workload for staff in further education colleges. Widening of duties, increased student numbers and the reduction of staff also remain significant contributors to change in workload.

10 Conclusion

10.1 Further Education and Adult and Community Education in England has been neglected for far too long. The consequences and impact of which is set out in this submission. FE in England is now the poor relation in the UK. It's time for the strategic alignment of investment and a workforce strategy in both FE and ACE. The UK government must address the lack of functioning national pay bargaining in FE. This is fundamental to attracting and retaining FE and ACE staff and achieving the decade of renewal in skills and employment and the resultant positive impact on economic growth.

10.2 This submission has consistently demonstrated the issues within FE England and ACE that must be addressed. We need an action plan to close the pay gaps with schoolteachers pay, address workloads and stop staff leaving for better pay and terms and conditions.

10.3 Its time for a New Deal for FE. [UCU - A New Deal for FE](#)

10.4 In summary UCU is calling for:

- A multiyear investment and a workforce strategy in Further Education and Adult and Community Education
- A new national bargaining framework for Further Education.
- National pay outcomes to be fully funded and fully implemented by colleges.
- Starting pay parity between FE teachers and schoolteachers in England.
- An agreed three-year investment plan to close the pay gap with schoolteachers pay.
- Reform of the National Joint Forum in FE to include national workload agreements.
- As the devolution of funding to the combined authorities and mayors increases, UCU to be recognised as the voice of the profession in ACE and consulted on regional skills and education plans, teachers' pay and terms and conditions.