

In this issue

Strike Ballot to Open

Government Targets a year early thanks to FE

UCU/NUT joint campaign statement

Informal Adult Learning Consultation

Community Cohesion Consultation

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## Strike Ballot to Open

UCU's FE pay campaign now moves to a ballot for industrial action which opens on 14 March. Momentum is building for a strong YES vote in the strike ballot to send a sharp message to government and FE employers. UCU intends to coordinate the start of industrial action with the National Union of Teachers, currently balloting for a national strike over pay set for 24 April.

### NUT & UCU issue joint campaign statement

Under the banner of "Our Schools, Our Colleges, our Communities" The General Secretaries of the NUT and UCU have issued a joint campaign statement. The statement declares both unions' support for publicly funded, properly resourced education as vital to local communities. The statement goes on to say:

*"Those working in our universities, colleges and schools are underpaid and their professional autonomy is eroded, while the market approach to education introduces competition and the encroachment of the private sector damages the public service ethos and equality."*

See overleaf for full text of statement.

### Employers refuse to meet before May!

FE trade unions submitted a pay claim for 08/09 to the Association of Colleges at the end of January. The claim includes:

- 6% pay increase or £1500, whichever is the greater
- A minimum hourly rate of £7.38
- Meaningful negotiations on common conditions of service in all colleges

FE unions demanded that any settlement on this claim will need to take into account the shortfall suffered in the imposed pay offer from the 07/08 pay round which fell well below inflation. The AoC have now advised FE trade unions that they will not meet to respond to the union's claims till sometime in May at the earliest! This comes despite UCU's warning that if no acceptable response to the unions' claim is made it plans to take industrial action on 24 April.

The AoC's refusal to meet before 24 April, three months after they received the unions' claims is a slap in the face to FE lecturers who are working harder than ever and still falling behind cost of living increases.

**Strike ballot opens 14 March and closes 14 April**

Any member who has not received a ballot paper by 26 March please contact Rana Brentjes on 020 7520 3238 or at [feadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:feadmin@ucu.org.uk)

## Government targets met a year early thanks to FE – but where are the thanks?

In a recent press release the government were happy to celebrate delivering one year early on the promise to increase numbers of 19 year olds achieving level 2 by 5% between 2004 and 2008. Included in the release was news that the proportion of 16 to 19 year-olds achieving level 2 in FE institutions, work-based learning institutions and sixth form colleges has risen from 12.1% to 16.5% between 2004 and 2007.

So while FE lecturers as professionals continue to deliver high quality education and success for their communities and the government, how are they thanked? The reward for delivering is the FE sector being undermined by increased marketisation and more volatile funding models. Latest figures show that the average hourly rate of pay for FE lecturers is 15.5% less than that for school teachers and average weekly earnings are 6% less. These figures reveal the inequality experienced across the FE sector with many colleges not paying the nationally recommended pay scales and part-time lecturers often stuck on spot salaries with no progression.

Now is the time to send government and employers a strong message. It's time to vote YES, to stand strong and together with our school colleagues to defend properly funded, high quality public education.

**Vote YES for our students, for our communities and for a fair deal!**

## UCU/NUT joint campaign statement

**As trade unions representing 420,000 teachers and professional educators we assert that publicly funded, properly resourced schools and colleges are central to the needs of local communities.**

Yet the provision of public education is under attack locally and nationally. Those working in our universities, colleges and schools are underpaid and their professional autonomy is eroded, while the market approach to education introduces competition and the encroachment of the private sector damages the public service ethos and equality.

**This is damaging to the education of our pupils, students and learners, and detrimental to the conditions of employment for the staff that support them. This causes real damage too to the cohesion of our communities.**

**UCU and NUT will work together under the banner of 'our schools, our colleges, our communities' to promote a vision for education which argues for the right for all to learn from the cradle to the grave and for all school, college and university staff to receive the proper pay, conditions and job security necessary to achieve that vision.**

Sally Hunt, UCU general secretary

Steve Sinnott, NUT general secretary



## Informal Adult Learning Consultation

(Government consultation on informal learning was launched on Tuesday 15 January 2008 by the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, John Denham MP. The consultation document "Empowering learners in the modern age" claims that there has been a 'quiet revolution' in Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL). Many adults taking part in PCDL are now doing so outside the traditional classroom setting, it asserts. For example, that learners are turning to the internet, television and the voluntary sector. The document calls for investigation into these new formats for learning to explore how they could be woven in to the future of adult education. One suggestion mooted is that a system of 'virtual vouchers' could be introduced that would give adult learners more control to organise and pay for their own learning.

While UCU welcomes this focus on adult education we have some grave concerns about the issues raised in the consultation and how they may impact on some groups of adult learners. The deadline for responses to the consultation is 15 May 2008. Help us produce a response. Send your views and examples of what's happening in your patch to Dan Taubman at [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk)  
The document can be downloaded at [www.adultlearningconsultation.org.uk/](http://www.adultlearningconsultation.org.uk/)

## Community Cohesion Consultation

On 11 February the government published its guidelines for promoting community cohesion and tackling any potential violent extremism in further education colleges. There now begins a period of consultation on the proposals until 6 May. The consultation paper is called 'The Role of Further Education Providers in Promoting Community Cohesion, Fostering Shared Values and Preventing Violent Extremism' and is available on <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/>

The guidelines are similar to those produced recently for the higher education sector, but this time guidelines come in the form of a formal consultation in which UCU will participate.

The guidance contains ample recognition of the important role which colleges can and already do play in building community cohesion through promoting an inclusive environment that attracts and serves students from all religions and communities. It is true that if some young, disaffected people from any community may be being drawn towards anti-social activity and even to ideas of violence, it is colleges which can play a key counter-influence by providing an alternative of hope, recognition of and respect for qualities and skills, and greater employment opportunities. If you have views on this new consultation contact Dan Taubman [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk)

# Adult and Continuing Education Conference

**29 April 2008**

The morning will be open to UCU ACE branches only with each ACE branch entitled to send 2 delegates and 2 motions for debate. Expenses will be paid to delegates.  
Full details will be sent to all ACE branches shortly.

From lunch onwards we will be discussing the consultation document and how we should respond. This session will be open to all FE and HE branches that have members delivering informal adult learning who can send a representative whose travel expenses will be paid.