

Fight for Jobs

At it's February meeting the Further Education Committee of the union made the fight to protect jobs and courses in FE a top priority with an immediate and coordinated response.

In recent weeks massive funding cuts have been announced by government despite promises that education would not become a victim of the recession. Colleges have started to receive indications of their funding allocations and college managers are already making plans to axe jobs and courses.

What we know so far:

- At least £200 million wiped from budgets for 2010/11 adult learning in FE and with a further £300 announced cuts over the next 3 years.
- More than 1,400 jobs are already under threat in FE
- Association of Colleges say current cuts could place more than 7000 jobs at risk
- These job cuts would affect up to 160,000 adult learners
- This is on top of 1.4 million adult learning places lost since 2005

If these cuts are allowed to go ahead they could decimate further and adult education at a time when individuals and the nation's economy need them most.

- 1.6 million people are looking for work
- There are now 935,000 16-to 24-year-old NEETs in England
- Unemployment among over 50s has risen more sharply than any other part of the population

FEC Strategy to defend Jobs and Courses

Given the severity of the funding cuts and effects on Jobs and courses the Further Education Committee agreed UCU should take the following immediate and co-ordinated steps:

A letter has been sent from the national union to all FE principals in England asking them:

- Not to implement funding associated cuts
- To write to Lord Mandelson calling for urgent funds to be made available
- To join UCU in campaigning to save Further and Adult Education

Branch officers in all English branches have been asked to immediately approach their management to confirm the size and effects on jobs and courses of any cuts in their college.

Branches will then hold meetings in the next few weeks to report on the local situation and ask members to endorse the FEC recommendations That:

- A letter is sent out to their management seeking confirmation of no compulsory redundancies with a deadline for response of the end of March
- If there is no response or an unacceptable response a dispute will be declared with their college, with a view to inclusion in a nationally aggregated ballot for strike action alongside other similarly affected branches.
- Balloted branches still in dispute take part in nationally and regionally co-ordinated industrial action aimed to prevent compulsory job losses following a positive outcome of the ballot.

For more information and campaign resources visit www.ucu/org.uk/savefe

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