



Briefing on UCU and NUT activity at local level on 16-19 provision

Introduction

- On April 1st 2010 the LSC was abolished and there are new arrangements for planning and commissioning 16-19 provision.
- This joint NUT/UCU briefing should be read in conjunction with the two unions' separate and more detailed briefings on the post-LSC changes for both 16-19 and adult/post 19 provision.
- Local authorities will commission and plan 16-19 provision locally. FE and sixth form colleges and schools will all be part of this process.
- It is important that unity is maintained between UCU and NUT at local level on the changes in 16-19 education.
- NUT and UCU have close relations including a joint membership and partnership agreement. The two unions have previously produced and published a joint 14-19 policy and held a joint national briefing and guidance on the changes that have taken place in 16-19 education and training following the abolition of the LSC.

The following points apply to joint working between UCU and NUT at local level, but should also apply to working with other staff union branches including UNISON, both in colleges and in the local authority. The latter may be the source of useful information and support on the local authority and its processes.

UCU and NUT - Working Together

- It is essential that these changes and future arrangements for post-16 provision are managed on the basis of meaningful consultation. Local authorities should ensure that all interested parties, including NUT and UCU are included in consultation when the changes are introduced and in future planning/commissioning work. Proposals need to be identified early and explained fully to consultees, who should have adequate time and information to respond.
- It must be remembered that although the local authority may well be making key decisions that will affect UCU members in FE colleges and NUT members in sixth form colleges, their employer will remain the college. This means that on matters affecting

college staff, UCU and NUT will be seeking consultations, not negotiations with the local authority.

- It is important to try to build and maintain unity and co-operation between all the unions at local level
- An area of potential tension is likely to be from where and with whom the local authority commissions 16-19. An obvious area of potential conflict may be A levels and who will be commissioned to deliver them. It would be possible for a local authority to commission only schools and sixth form colleges to deliver A levels, not realising the reasons why a FE college is also delivering A level programmes.
- These changes to 16-19 are being introduced at a time of extreme financial stringency and cuts as well curriculum change.
- UCU branches are organised around individual colleges. NUT associations are usually organised around the local authority area, although there may be strong NUT groups in sixth form colleges and particular secondary schools. If you have difficulty in contacting each other, contact your NUT or UCU regional office and/or UCU Head Office **dtaubman@ucu.org.uk** and NUT Head Office **s.thompson@nut.org.uk**
- Decide if you have capacity to be more active locally on 16-19. It is realised that UCU branches and NUT associations are facing an unprecedented array of serious issues and challenges. The capacity of UCU branches, NUT associations and members of both unions to deal with all of these is finite. What will be happening around 16-19 at local level is important to NUT and UCU members and their jobs.
- UCU branches and NUT associations could form informal groups of members working in 16-19 who might keep track of local developments, documents, plans and strategies. Such a group could advise and brief UCU and NUT local officers and committees.
- If you do this, decide how often a local UCU-NUT 16-19 group should meet, what it might do and how it might accomplish this. Decide priorities for any activity. Identify and organise meetings with key 16-19 local authority officers and politicians. A key official is likely to be the Director of Children's Services.
- The local authority's consultative forums where 16-19 issues will be dealt with will usually be the local JNC and/or JCC for discussions between the local authority and the education unions; and the local authority "schools forum" where 16-19 funding and commissioning will be discussed with schools' representatives. UCU will not be a member of these bodies. Ensure that both UCU and NUT are included in discussions affecting 16-19 provision and NUT and UCU members working in 16-19.
- Whether or not UCU is included in these local forums for consultation, UCU and NUT representatives should talk about issues you want to raise and information and publications you want to see and will want to comment on.
- Key dates and time periods when you will need to be consulted and when you may want to put in comments and views:
 - Local authorities will begin their planning and commissioning for 2011-12 in **May 2010** by collecting relevant data and producing their needs analysis.
 - In **September and October** 2010 the local authorities will be putting together their commissioning statements.

- **Towards the end of 2010**, these commissioning statements will be translated into planning and commissioning provision.
- **The start of 2011**, allocations will begin to be made to providers.
- It will also be possible to exert influence at sub regional and regional levels as the Commissioning Statements and Plans have to be signed off at these levels.
- FE will be a key part of the processes at the sub-regional grouping level when the several local authority plans will need to come together.
- UCU branches and NUT associations should consult with Regional Officials about making links between colleges falling within the same sub regional group, and work together at this level on the plans emerging at this level. Where UCU Area Liaison Committees still exist, they could well form the basis for such work.
- Consider also setting up consultation forums with the sub regional and regional local authority groups in order to find out about their thinking in advance and trying to influence it during each planning cycle.
- NUT associations and UCU branches should plan any actions taken around these changes with their Regional Officials, and keep their Regional Offices informed of any activities they undertake around the changes. UCU and NUT Head Offices will look at the process of establishing possible means to ensure input at local authority, sub regional and regional levels and will explore how this may be undertaken with regional offices.