

## Mass Lobby of Parliament: Q&A for members

### Making the case for investment in post-16 education

**Wednesday 2 April 2014**

**2–4 pm**

**Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London**

#### Why are we holding a mass lobby?

We are holding a mass lobby to make the case for greater public investment in post-16 education. There are many reasons why more investment is necessary, but we've called the lobby because:

- UK spending on education as a whole is below the OECD average- in 2009, we spent 6.0% of GDP, but the average spend was 6.3% of GDP. This equates to around £4.9 billion in 2009 prices.

#### **We need to close the funding gap**

- further education funding is being cut: the adult skills budget in England will reduce by 19% (£463 million) between now and 2016, and funding for 18 year olds is to be cut by 17.5%, disproportionately affecting colleges. In Wales, the budget for adult and community learning has been slashed by 37.5%. Although the effects of these measures have been mitigated for 2014, with a 2% cap on funding cuts to colleges and some extra funding for ACL in Wales between April and August, these cuts will have serious long term effects on provision.

#### **We need to invest in further education and adult learning**

- higher education funding is being squeezed: the recurrent teaching grant is set to reduce by 42% (£1.2 billion) by 2016, and it now has to do more to fulfil access requirements as other funding pots are cut.

#### **We need to invest in higher education.**

Our colleges and universities are key drivers of a successful economy, since they are the main sources of the skilled workers and professionals on which growth depends. We also know that those who hold qualifications and who participate in education and training go on to be healthier, wealthier and more active citizens.

Furthermore, the OECD '**Education at a Glance**' survey in 2009 estimated that the average net public value of tertiary education across the OECD is £40,000 per person.

The lobby aims to reinforce these messages and remind politicians from all parties about the importance of investing public resource into further, higher and adult education. **We can't keep doing more with less.**

### **How can I prepare for the mass lobby?**

If you would like to join the lobby on 2 April, please tell us you are coming by emailing [jsherrard@ucu.org.uk](mailto:jsherrard@ucu.org.uk) or calling 020 7756 2596. We need to know accurate numbers in advance so we can notify security.

### **What should I bring to the meeting with my MP?**

Please download and print this briefing document which contains key messages for your MP:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/?mediaid=6248>

Collect information about how funding cuts are affecting your institution and local area; you might want to speak to members in your branch and ask whether they have any questions about local issues arising from the cuts. College principals have been notified about the lobby via the Association of Colleges, so members in FE institutions may wish to approach their principal to ask for information about the local situation.

Be careful not to take too much info though- you won't have a long time with your MP and you want to make sure the key points stand out. Don't assume that your MP is not on your side- they may not agree with their party's policies so make your case and listen to what they have to say.

### **Is support available for travel expenses?**

If you would like to attend but need support for your travel expenses, please contact your branch.

### **Where should lobbyists meet on the day?**

Paul Blomfield MP has kindly agreed to provide us with a meeting room on the day. We will be able to use Room C, located in 1 Parliament Street (**number 3 on the map**) between 2pm and 4pm.

There will be a number of speeches at this venue at 2.30pm, and you'll also be able to pick up literature and meet with fellow lobbyists here on the day. **If you have not booked an appointment with your MP for Wednesday, or if your appointment is after 3pm, please come to this venue at 2pm.** This will allow us to form groups of members to go across to Central Lobby together.

If you have secured an appointment with your MP between 2pm and 3pm, please go straight to the visitors' entrance on the day, meet with your MP and then come over to 1 Parliament Street afterwards.

### **How will the lobby work on the day?**

Unless you have arranged with your MP to meet elsewhere, to enter Central Lobby you should go to the Cromwell Green visitor's entrance (**number 7 on the map**) to enter the Houses of Parliament. **It is likely that there will be a queue of at least 30 minutes**, so please allow for this when making your travel arrangements.

If you **have** booked an appointment with your MP:

- bring any written confirmation of your appointment with you to show to security at the Cromwell Green entrance. You may be allowed to skip ahead if there is a long queue, but there is no guarantee of this so please allow plenty of time.
- once through security, you'll move through to Central Lobby (unless you've arranged a different meeting place with your MP directly). You should then ask the desk to call your MP's office to let them know you've arrived.

Your MP can meet you in Central Lobby or bring you to a different location of their choice.

If you **have NOT** booked an appointment with your MP:

- explain to security at the Cromwell Green entrance that you would like to lobby your MP. You will have to wait in the queue with tourist visitors. Please note that only 100 people are allowed into Central Lobby at any one time, so there may be a bit of a wait to get in.
- once through security, go to Central Lobby and ask the desk for a 'green card'. This is a request for your MP to come and meet you. Fill it in, with as much detail as possible, and return it to the desk as directed. The desk staff will then try to locate your MP and let them know that you are waiting to meet with them.
- if the MP or one of their staff is available, they should come and meet with you. If not, the card you have filled in will be passed to them and they should respond to you directly. You should wait around for a while, but don't forget that other lobbyists may have firm appointments with your MP so they should be given priority.

Once inside, there will be clearly marked UCU stewards in case you have any questions.

### **Will banners, placards or other campaigning materials be allowed?**

Banners and placards are not allowed within the parliamentary estate, and will be removed by security on entrance to the Houses of Parliament/1 Parliament Street. Please note that slogan t-shirts are also not permitted within the estate.

## What's the best way to get to Westminster?

**By tube:** the closest stop is Westminster- this is on the Jubilee, Circle and District lines and is fully wheelchair accessible.

**By bus:** the following buses stop in the general area of the Commons: 12, 148, 24, 88, 155, 3, 53, 211, 11, 453 and 87. All London buses are wheelchair accessible.

**By rail:** Victoria, Charing Cross and Waterloo are all within a 20 minute walk to the Houses of Parliament. Several of the above buses and tube lines will also link those stations to Westminster.

**By bicycle:** Visitors are not permitted to bring bicycles into the parliamentary estate; there are public bicycle racks a short distance away outside 7 Millbank.

## Is there disabled access for lobbyists?

Yes. If you require disabled access, please call the Sergeant-at-Arms' office on 020 7219 3040, who will advise you of procedures for entering the building. Wheelchair access is via the Carriage Gates entrance (**number 5 on the map**). Some disabled parking is available but this needs to be organised in advance, and you will also need to make sure that your MP knows you require disabled access as all visitors need to be accompanied once inside the building so they will need to meet you at the entrance. Please let us know if you require any assistance on the day.

## Information for members in Scotland and Wales

We are encouraging members from all parts of the UK to come and speak with their MPs at the lobby of parliament in Westminster on 2 April. However, members in devolved nations can get involved in the lobby within their own administrations too.

UCU Scotland is calling on the Scottish Government and all Scotland's politicians to ensure that funding for higher education in Scotland is prioritised. For more information about our lobbying work in Scotland, please contact Murdo Mathison, policy and communications officer, on [mmathison@ucu.org.uk](mailto:mmathison@ucu.org.uk) or 0131 226 6694.

In Wales, the post-16 education sector is faced with a budget reduction of £42m in 2014-15, with a 37.5% reduction in funding for adult community learning, despite higher levels of youth unemployment and lower levels of adult qualifications than England and Scotland. Although some additional funding for ACL has been awarded for April-August 2014, the overall cuts are deeply damaging to post-16 education in Wales. Members are encouraged to write to their assembly members as well as their MPs to highlight the funding crisis which is facing post-16 education, and you can find details of who to write to by entering your postcode on [www.writetothem.co.uk](http://www.writetothem.co.uk).

### **Where can I find out more?**

More information, including a full briefing to prepare you for a conversation with your MP, will be sent out in the coming weeks, but if you have an urgent query in relation to the lobby please email [jsherrard@ucu.org.uk](mailto:jsherrard@ucu.org.uk) or call 020 7756 2596.