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UCU's Further Education Committee (FEC) met on Friday 17 October and reaffirmed UCU's intention to fight for fair pay for Further Education (FE) in England by voting to declare a dispute with colleges on the 2014/15 pay round and conduct a new ballot for national and targeted strike action.

UCU members in England were prevented from taking strike action on Tuesday 14 October due to a High Court injunction being granted in favour of Westminster Kingsway College, who were supported in taking the court action by the Association of Colleges (AoC). The AoC and the college challenged UCU's ability to rely on the mandate of its November 2013 ballot, in pursuit of the 2013/14 pay claim, for taking strike action on 14 October 2014, also in pursuit of that 2013/14 pay claim which UCU has made clear to the AoC remained live. The court accepted the employers' argument that the strike ballot conducted in November 2013 could

not be relied upon because there had been a ten month break during which no industrial action relying on the ballot had taken place (suggesting that the industrial action had been effectively discontinued) and that a further round of pay negotiations had also been conducted.

It is disappointing that the AoC and Westminster Kingsway College are prepared to waste their time and energy stopping UCU members from demonstrating through strike action their unhappiness with below inflation pay offers. The legal action does nothing to improve the situation for FE staff in England who are suffering a cost of living crises.

UCU will this week write to all colleges in England and ask that they confirm they will meet UCU's 2014/15 claim for a 3% increase on all pay points. All colleges that refuse to meet UCU's pay demand by increasing pay by 3% will be in dispute over the 2014/15 pay round.

FEC voted in favour of:

- Declaring a dispute over the 2014/15 pay round
- a further national strike with mass lobby of parliament to defend pay and education in early 2015
- a fresh ballot on 2014/5 pay dispute
- a national strike to launch the campaign with a lobby of the Association of Colleges
- followed by targeted action in at least two colleges per region focusing on colleges with the highest paid principals

Branches will shortly be contacted by UCU’s membership department and should immediately start preparations to bring their membership lists and locations up to date.

Developing Meaningful Bargaining in Further Education

In May this year, sector conference approved a report and recommendations about the development of an approach for meaningful collective bargaining in the FE, Adult and Prison sectors.

Conference agreed that a further report should be made to branches in the autumn. Regional briefings for branches have now been arranged as follows:

Date	Times	Location
Fri 21 November	11am – 4pm	Darlington
Thu 27 November	11am – 4pm	Birmingham
Fri 28 November	2.30pm – 4.30pm	Manchester
Thu 4 December	11am – 4pm	London

The Chair of the Further Education Committee, Rob Goodfellow, and the National Head of Bargaining and Negotiations, Michael MacNeil will be present at all the meetings to introduce the report and receive feedback from branches.

The briefings on the bargaining strategy will last about 2 hours and, in most of these locations, will be followed by briefings by the Education and Training Foundation on the new Professional Standards for FE and it is intended that Ofsted will also provide a briefing on developments in their inspection framework and a question and answer session. It is important that each branch send an officer to these important briefings. Lunch will be provided and travel expenses will be met nationally.

To register please follow the following links: <https://ucu.wufoo.com/forms/fe-briefings-developing-meaningful-in-fe-england/>