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By email only.

12th January 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

UCU Wales welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Public Services Staff Commission White Paper: Devolution, Democracy and Delivery and wish to endorse the response submitted by the Wales TUC. We would however like to take the opportunity to make the additional comments.

We welcome social partnership and share the vision of a world class public service, delivered by a skilled and supported workforce. However, once again we would like to voice our concern and frustration that Further Education Institutions are excluded from the proposals. Although we are aware of the reasons behind this exclusion; that is the ONS reclassification of Further Education Institutions, we remain unconvinced by the arguments used to support the decision to reclassify and the resulting legislation.

In our opinion, there is a growing need for the protection and support of Further Education and its workforce, as a public sector service. We are in agreement with the First Minister, in the belief that:

“Public services must remain public. Their value lies in their universal availability, and in the potential for public organisations, including the third sector, to work together to improve the wellbeing of citizens and communities. We cannot leave that to the market. If we turned public services into commodities, provided them competitively and allocated them according to ability to pay, we would destroy what we have sought to preserve.”¹

¹ <http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/pages/rop.aspx?meetingid=48&assembly=4&c=Record%20of%20Proceedings&startDt=30/04/2013&endDt=30/04/2013>

Post 16 education offers an invaluable service to the public of Wales and as such, should be regarded as, and remain as, a part of the Public Service Sector. We firmly believe that to enhance and maintain the quality of post 16 education, it should remain in public hands. If it's to best serve the interests of the people of Wales, we need to ensure that the breadth of educational opportunity and achievement needed to promote and embed creative thinking in Welsh culture, is not lost in the drive towards the employer led skills agenda.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

Lisa Edwards
Policy and Communications Officer
UCU Wales