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## Funding England

### 24% cut to adult further education funding

On Thursday 26 February 2015, the government announced funding cuts in England for adult further education of 24% for 2015-16. UCU has attacked the cuts as "an act of wilful vandalism that will decimate further education".

The scale of these cuts, if implemented, will hit learners, colleges and UCU members alike. UCU believes the direct impact could be a loss of more than 400,000 learners across England, with a consequent knock on effect on jobs.

The Association of Colleges have condemned the cuts stating "This situation is now urgent. This could be the end of this essential education in every city, town and community in England and the consequences will be felt by individuals and the economy for years to come."

The National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) have said "These cuts mean people's ability to get on in life and work continue to be hampered despite the obvious return on investment to the tax-payer. It's not fair for people, it's not right for businesses and it doesn't support the inclusive growth that politicians say they are seeking."

In short these cuts must be stopped!

Mounting the biggest campaign possible against these cuts in the run up to the general election is now a major priority for UCU.

### What UCU has done so far?

On the day the cuts were announced UCU called upon all organisations involved in the sector to join a campaign to oppose them and co-sponsor an online petition calling on the government not to implement the cuts. The online petition went [LIVE](#) on Friday 27 February.

More than twenty organisations including the AoC, 157 Group, Gazell, NIACE, NUS, TUC, all sector unions and many more have signed up to support the petition and join a broad based campaign to oppose the cuts in the run up to the election.

UCU has written to all college principals in England asking them to work with UCU branch officers to arrange urgent briefings for local MPs and other main candidates on the implications of the cuts for their college. UCU branches have been asked to meet with their principal and to talk to local press about the impact of the cuts and types of learners affected.

A number of branches and regions are actively organising events, speakers and meetings with MPs and candidates.

London region have organised a lobby of Parliament for 1pm March 18 and a protest march from City Lit 6pm 25 March.

UCU is working with all interested sector and representative organisations to coordinate a joint campaign of opposition and will meet with representatives of these shortly to plan next steps.

### **You can help**

The petition can be found at:  
[www.ucu.org.uk/fefunding](http://www.ucu.org.uk/fefunding)

Every member and everyone who cares about FE in England must sign this petition now. At the time of writing over 7,000 people had signed.

Lobby your MP, a briefing note on the cuts can be found [HERE](#) and materials and guidance on how to lobby your MP can be found at:  
<http://ge2015.web.ucu.org.uk/>

Ask your branch officer what your branch is doing and how you can support the campaign. Keep an eye out for further updates on this campaign to save adult further education funding in England.

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### **Joint FE Trade Union Claim 2015/16**

UCU's February Further Education Committee (FEC) endorsed a full trade union side National Joint Forum (NJF) meeting decision to pursue a pay claim for 2015/16 of an increase of £1 per hour for all FE staff. The NJF trade union side and UCU FEC have also agreed that there be a workload code of practice element within the joint trade union claim which will be agreed between UCU and the joint trade unions and

submitted to the AoC by mid-March 2015.

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### **National bargaining in England FE 2015/16**

As previously reported, delegates at the 13 December 2014 Special FESC voted in favour of a new approach to develop effective bargaining in FE England. The outline of a targeted and strategic method had already been presented to the FEC and to branch officers at regional briefings held around the country.

The new approach for the 2015/16 pay round includes submission of a joint trade union national cost of living claim, £1 per hour increase for all FE staff, together with a claim that addresses workload matters. This claim will be submitted to the Association of Colleges (AoC) by the middle of March 2015.

Alongside the submission of a joint national claim, a UCU template of the national claim will be made available to agreed target branches via their regional office as part 1 of a parallel local submission. Target branches will involve their members in the selection of local issues which are important to them. As examples, a branch may choose to include issues such as lesson observations, zero-hours contracts or tackling the misuse of associate lecturers. This will form part 2 of the locally submitted claim.

To ensure that UCU can maintain a national overview of negotiations and settlements, following consultation with branches, February FEC agreed a procedure for the selection of target branches for the submission of local claims available which is available at:  
[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/k/0/FE\\_BO\\_UPDATE\\_16\\_040315.doc](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/k/0/FE_BO_UPDATE_16_040315.doc)

Target branches will be selected because there are good prospects for achieving a real improvement for members which could then be used as a positive example for other branches.

The procedure provides a process for branch engagement and national oversight of the outcomes of local negotiations in which "FEC officers will approve the outcome of any parallel local negotiations that provide overall financial benefit for members and/or gain an improvement on a matter submitted in a local claim."

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### **18 April 2015 Special FE Sector Conference**

At February's FEC a majority also voted in favour of a motion calling for a Special FE Sector Conference (FESC) be held in London on 18 April 2015. This

does not replace the annual sector conference in Glasgow on 23 May (and congress on 24 and 25 May).

The meeting on 18 April has been called to deal with:

- The AoC's initial response to this year's claim,
- Ideas for the implementation of the 'national plus' strategy,
- National oversight of local bargaining,
- Formulating a pay campaign strategy for 2015/16 as early as possible.

A calling notice for this Special FESC will be issued to branches.