

## **UCU/UNISON**

### **Further Education and Skills Charter**

The Mayor of Greater Manchester will hold significant powers and influence over post-16 further education (FE) and skills in the city-region. This Charter sets out five key principles that we believe should shape training and skills provision in Greater Manchester :

1. High-quality education should be **available and affordable to all** people within the areas of Greater Manchester throughout their lives.

The changing world of work is such that lifelong learning is increasingly important. We all need opportunities to train and re-train in order to have the skills to fully participate in our economy and society.

2. Further education should be **accessible** to the people of Greater Manchester in every community.

Each locality in Greater Manchester needs to have a high-quality, well-funded further education college to ensure that educational opportunities are accessible to all. For qualifications up to level 2 it is essential that a wide range of courses are accessible in each locality. Where students are required to travel out of their locality to undertake more specialist courses, it is crucial that there are good, affordable public transport links available. For students with additional needs there should be no barriers to access suitable courses. Further Education Colleges need to be in a strong position to support new plans for technical education, equipped with all necessary support and funding.

3. Wherever they live, the people of Greater Manchester should be able to choose from a **wide-ranging** curriculum.

For some, the priority might be to gain the skills needed to get a job in their local community – such that employer involvement in curriculum design might be appropriate. But everybody in Greater Manchester should have the opportunity to pursue their individual talents and interests. Informal learning opportunities are also an important gateway to more formal learning. A wide-ranging curriculum should be available in every part of Greater Manchester to allow people to pursue the career path and interests of their choosing – regardless of where they live.

4. Further education provision in Greater Manchester should be **co-ordinated** to link with other city-region objectives

Greater Manchester should have a training and skills *system* – meeting everybody’s needs - rather than a set of *ad hoc* projects. Skills and training are key to a number of city-region objectives: economic growth, employment, productivity, development of green skills, health and well-being, the teaching of English as a second language (ESOL) and creating opportunities for residents who are currently not employed. Investment in Further Education can reduce costs and increase income.

5. Providers of skills training (including apprenticeships) in Greater Manchester, should be **accountable** to the public

FE Colleges are key ‘anchor’ institutions in their localities. They should be good employers and should be accountable and responsive to their communities. It is welcome that more apprenticeships are available and it is important that apprentices receive high-quality training in safe working environments. Employers and training providers need to be accountable for the apprenticeships they offer. There needs to be quality assurance and unions can play a key role in helping to ensure that apprenticeships are not exploitative. All providers of training in Greater Manchester who receive public funds should themselves be good employers – paying at least the real living wage.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_