

LOVE OUR COLLEGES

Wednesday 17 October 2018

Mass lobby of parliament for fair pay and funding in FE

A lobbying guide for UCU members

Why are we lobbying parliament?

Colleges matter – to their students, their staff and their local communities. But for too long the vital work they do has been overlooked and underfunded.

From 2009 to 2019, changes to college funding amount to overall cuts of around 30%. This drop in funding has led to:

- fewer hours of teaching and support for young people;
- a drastic reduction in the number of learning opportunities for adults;
- the value of staff pay falling by over 25% since 2009;
- college teachers earning £7,000 less on average than school teachers.

This situation is not sustainable and ultimately impacts on college students and staff, businesses, communities and the wider economy.

That's why UCU has teamed up with UNISON, Unite, NEU, GMB, the Association of Colleges, NUS TUC and ASCL to organise this lobby of parliament to make the case for additional investment in our colleges.

We'll be marching from Waterloo Place at 12.45pm to Parliament Square for a rally at 1.30pm, before lobbying MPs in the Palace of Westminster, taking our message right to the heart of government.

How do I get involved in the lobby of parliament?

If you would like to attend the lobby on 17 October, please:

- Tell your branch you wish to attend
- Tell us you're coming via our [Facebook event page](#)

Booking an appointment with your local MP in advance will help things run smoothly on the day. You can find out who your MP is and email them directly using at www.writetothem.com, just enter your postcode. A template letter text is included at the end of this document.

Please remember to state your full name and home address in your message, as MPs will generally only meet with their own constituents.

How will things run on the day?

The timetable for the day is as follows:

12.15pm

Form up for the march at Waterloo Place

12.45pm

March departs Waterloo Place for Parliament Square

1.30pm

Rally at Parliament Square begins

2.30pm

Lobbyists head to the Palace of Westminster and pass through security at the Cromwell Green entrance ([number 8 on this map](#))

3.00pm – 5.30pm

Lobbying MPs in the Palace of Westminster

How does the lobby work?

Please book an appointment with your MP in advance if possible.

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

- bring any written confirmation of your appointment with you to show to security at the entrance.
- Make sure you know which entrance to use - check with the MP's office. If possible, arrange an alternative location to the main visitor entrance as this is likely to be very busy on the day.
- If you haven't arranged somewhere else to meet your MP, head through the visitors' entrance to Central Lobby and, once through, ask the clerk to let your MP know you've arrived.
- Your MP can meet you in Central Lobby but if possible ask if they could take you to their office or an alternative location to ensure other lobbyists can enter.

If you **don't** have an appointment booked in advance:

- Speak to stewards located outside Parliament before entering the queue at the visitors' entrance.
- Note that security will be very busy on the day and it may take some time to pass through the entrance. There is limited space inside the Houses of Parliament so where possible we will try to call your MP's office before you go through security to see if they are available.
- If your MP says they can only meet later in the afternoon you may be asked to let other groups go ahead of you.
- If your MP is away or their office advises they will be unable to meet you, you may still enter parliament via security to 'green card' your MP (essentially this is where you leave them a note to say you've tried to visit them). However, this will require you to pass through security and may take some time, so you may prefer to contact your MP by email afterwards or follow up with a meeting in the constituency.

What about travel to London?

Several institutions are organising coach travel – please speak to your branch to see if they are aware of a coach being run locally. UCU has agreed to fund coaches where there is sufficient demand, but many colleges have also said they will fund travel.

What should I bring to the meeting with my MP?

We will shortly be circulating an updated briefing which you can take with you to the meeting with your MP. Stewards inside parliament will also have copies of these on the day. Any information about the impact of cuts to FE on your own institution and local area would be really helpful, as your MP will be most interested to learn about how changes are affecting their constituents.

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.

What security restrictions are in place?

The Houses of Parliament have airport-style security, and there may be a bit of a wait to get through security.

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 and will have to be removed or covered.

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 this 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.

Template text for letter/ email to MP

N.B. Text in italics needs to be personalised

[Insert name] MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear *[insert name]*,

Further education colleges make a vital contribution to our economy and society, but for too long the work they do has been overlooked and underfunded.

I am deeply concerned that since 2009, college funding has fallen by around 30% and that funding per student is now 8% lower than it was less than a decade ago.

Cuts to college funding have led to fewer learning opportunities for young people and adults, the loss of a million adult learners from our colleges and an exodus of over 23,000 staff from the sector.

I believe that more public investment, not less, is required to ensure that people from all walks of life can access and benefit from education opportunities which help them get on in life.

That is why I will be joining staff, students and college leaders on Wednesday 17 October to call on the government to #LoveOurColleges and invest more in further education.

As your constituent, I would like to make an appointment to discuss this issue further with you on the afternoon of 17 October. Please confirm what time will be most convenient to meet by contacting me on *[insert your contact details]*.

Yours faithfully,

[Your name and address]