**[Please insert your address as a constituent in order to ensure that your MP will read this letter]**

**Re. Adult and Community Education in England**

Dear [insert name of your MP]

I am writing from the Adult and Community Education (ACE) UCU branch, because of my concerns about the ACE sector in England. Over the last fourteen-years or so, the sector has been eroded, together with the pay and working conditions of those employed within the sector. This erosion has resulted in barriers to education and reduced accessibility to employment for many adults. Staff are suffering from low pay, not being paid for classroom preparation and marking, and other poor working conditions e.g. insecure employment contracts.

Today, ACE funding is about 25% lower than it was in 2010-11 (*source: Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)*). Also, according to the IFS, adult participation in Level 2 education and below fell by 50% between 2011 and 2021 and adult participation in Level 3 education fell by 33% between 2011 and 2021. Despite those levels of contraction in ACE, neither the 2022 nor the 2023 government Spending Reviews brought any increases in funding to the sector. The 2023 Spending Review merely introduced the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) adult education loans, which, based on a 2024 report by the Office for Students, heralds to be a failure as a policy to access adult education, for many adults.

UCU research amongst its ACE members has found that 76% of their tutor members are on some form of insecure employment contract (e.g. zero-hour contracts) and that many are effectively paid below the minimum wage as their pay does not extend to class preparation and marking. The sector relies on the good will of its tutors to work beyond the terms and conditions of their employment contracts, in the interests of their students.

The government has pledged to “level-up” the country by refocusing public spending on the most disadvantaged parts of the country. The Centre for Social Justice have said in one of their reports that “if we want to create a more resilient economy, we must examine our adult education system and focus on building a strong foundation of Adult Community Education”. Similarly, the IFS have said that “providing effective support and training for adult learners is a significant challenge that will be key to levelling-up poorer areas of the country”. However, under the current government’s Funding and Accountability reform, the Adult and Community Education policy is misguided and has the unintended consequences of creating greater barriers to adult education, further learning and employment.

I would be grateful if you, as my MP, could exercise your position in Parliament to call on the government to re-invest and re-think its Adult and Community Education policy, including staff pay and employment conditions. As things are, the government’s Funding and Accountability reform policies are having a damaging impact on the ACE sector.

If you are interested in meeting to discuss further, please let me know. Otherwise I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[Insert your name]