

Parliamentary Lobby

Making the case for adult learning

Tuesday 16 June 2015

Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London

Why are we lobbying parliament?

UCU and partner organisations have called this lobby to make the case for further education and adult learning at a time when funding is being cut drastically.

Earlier this year, cuts of up to 24% were announced to English college budgets for non-apprenticeship learning in 2015/16. Colleges in Wales are facing even bigger cuts of up to 50% in the coming year, and further education in Northern Ireland is also under severe financial strain.

These funding pressures will have a drastic effect on the opportunities available for people to improve their skills, making learning more expensive and less accessible.

Sally Hunt has described the 24% cut as a 'wilful act of vandalism' and the Association of Colleges has said that continued cuts at this rate would spell the end of adult education by 2020. A joint [petition](#) calling for proper investment in adult learning has reached over 40,000 signatures.

How do I get involved in the lobby of parliament?

If you would like to attend the lobby on 16 June, please [register](#) your interest and tell us which institution you're coming from.

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:

2.00pm

Congregate on Parliament Square

2.20pm

Photographs on Parliament Square

2.30pm

Walk from Parliament Square to Houses of Parliament and pass through security

3.00pm – 5.00pm

Lobby MPs

#loveFE meeting in Committee Room 9

If you can't meet us on Parliament Square before the lobby, go straight to the visitors' entrance ([number 7 on this map](#)).

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

- bring any written confirmation of your appointment with you to show to security at the visitors' entrance.
- Unless you have arranged somewhere else to meet your MP, ask the desk in Central Lobby to call your MP's office and let them know you've arrived.
- your MP can meet you in Central Lobby or bring you to a different location of their choice.

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

- explain to security at the visitors' entrance that you would like to lobby your MP.
- once inside, go to Central Lobby and tell the desk that you'd like to meet your MP. Fill in a 'green card' with your name and postcode, and the desk staff will then try to locate your MP.
- if the MP or one of their staff is available, they should come and meet with you. If not, the card you have filled in will be passed to them and they should respond to you directly.

#loveFE meeting

Between 3pm and 5pm there will also be a meeting in Committee Room 9, with speakers including Paul Blomfield MP, Catherine West MP and Caroline Lucas MP, as well as Liz Lawrence, Peter Pendle (ATL) and Joe Vinson (NUS). We will organise speakers in waves so that people with appointments at different times still get a chance to hear from some of the speakers.

Are travel expenses covered?

Yes. Several regions are organising coach travel- contact your regional officer to ask whether this is an option for you. Where coach travel is unavailable, UCU will reimburse standard class train travel to and from London; please [register](#) your attendance to ensure that your expenses claim will be handled swiftly.

What should I bring to the meeting with my MP?

We will provide an updated briefing which you can take with you to the meeting with your MP. 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

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

Dear [*insert name*],

I am deeply concerned about the significant cuts that are being made to budgets for adult learning in the UK. Further education is vital not only for a successful economy but also for a socially responsible, fair society.

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 with other lecturers and students to lobby parliament on the afternoon of Tuesday, 16 June.

As your constituent, I would like to make an appointment to discuss this issue further with you on the day. Please confirm whether you will be available to meet with me at some point between 3pm and 5pm on Tuesday, 16 June by contacting me on [*insert your contact details*].

Yours faithfully,

[*Your name and address*]