

ACE update

The Newsletter for **Adult and Community Education**

News updates and opinion for UCU members in Adult and Community Education



Successful Lobby of Parliament

Hundreds of staff and students attended a lobby of Parliament on 16 June as part of a joint campaign, #loveFE, against proposed 24% cuts to adult skills funding in England. See the supporters' wall and send in your photos and comments:

<http://fefunding.org.uk/love-fe-day/>

A packed committee room in the House of Commons heard from a number of speakers outlining the importance of FE and how the cuts will have a devastating impact. In England alone, reductions in funding have already led to the loss of one million learners since 2010 and will see another 400,000 gone by next year. Vulnerable learners will be hit the hardest, including those who missed out on qualifications at school or need retraining. Meanwhile Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland all face very difficult funding settlements.

Petition handed in at Downing Street

Over 42,500 people from across adult, further and higher education signed the petition calling on government to halt the cuts and invest in lifelong learning. It was handed in recently at Downing Street by UCU general secretary Sally Hunt and campaign partners.

How are the cuts affecting you?

UCU are gathering as much information as possible on how the cuts are affecting individual branches. Has your employer told you what will be happening to your adult education provision? Do you know how much funding your service will lose? Have there been any discussions on how your service will cope with the cuts?

Please get in touch with us and let us know what is happening in your branch rkershaw@ucu.org.uk

ACE branch successes

UCU branches reported a number of significant successes at the UCU ACE annual meeting.

Having won recognition for their branch this year, after a 2 year campaign, Hackney Learning Trust UCU have entered into meaningful negotiations with their management over moving away from the use of casual contracts.

Essex ACL branch has had some success in combating the misuse of fixed term contracts and in lecturers on fractional contracts being given unsuitable administrative tasks.

Bargaining for Better Lesson Observations

As in FE, graded lesson observations are a cause of enormous stress in ACE. UCU believes that they are not fit for purpose. Lesson observations should be a developmental, reflective and professional process owned by lecturers. UCU commissioned research by Dr Matt O'Leary that is the most extensive of its kind. It shows how observations can be used in the future to exploit their real value. Branches can use this and UCU lesson observation bargaining guidance to tackle this issue: www.ucu.org.uk/lessonobservation

ACE Annual Meeting

A successful ACE annual meeting was held on November 19th 2014

Despite the serious difficulties facing the sector, members were full of positive fighting spirit and put forward many workable ways in which we can pull together and achieve significant local successes.

National update

The meeting received a national update from Andrew Harden, UCU Head of Further Education, who spoke about the 'pick and choose' nature of pay increases in ACE and the need to reinvigorate the ACE membership by recruiting and organising around successful local negotiations and campaigns. Andrew also encouraged members to hold Labour run councils to account on issues such as zero hours contracts.

ACE organising priorities

The overwhelming issue of the day is clearly funding. The meeting was very clear in its opposition to funding cuts to this vital sector and the need to fight against them. Many of the local issues we discussed were shared by most of the branches.

The issues included: pay; recognition and having a seat at the negotiating table; mergers; casualisation and redundancies.

We also discussed national bargaining and why this had ceased in ACE. UCU are taking this work further and are investigating whether it might be possible to pursue the reinstatement of national bargaining.

UCU CPD Courses and Resources

Effective continuing professional development is an essential part of post-school education and benefits both staff and students. We offer a range of free courses and resources in personal and professional development. Courses include classroom management, voice care and getting the most from your career.

There are also downloadable guides on topics including assertiveness, applying for new jobs and using social media.

We bring together material from a variety of education specialists including UCU members. Courses have proved very popular with members and have provided the practical help they need in their careers. For more information:

<http://cpd.web.ucu.org.uk/>

Build Your Union

Our reps make a real difference to the lives of their colleagues. Our thanks must go to them for the work they do. Please give them your support. For example, offer to distribute UCU material and to talk to colleagues about joining us – it is vital that your union recruits.

There are some excellent resources on our Build The Union blog that will help you to strengthen your union. These include newsletter templates, induction presentations and great ideas from branches that are actively recruiting and engaging with members and potential members. Please see:

<http://btu.web.ucu.org.uk/>

Spread the message!

Please pass this newsletter on to other ACE members (or potential members).

Encourage them to join or get more involved!

To join UCU see:
www.ucu.org.uk/join

To be added to the ACE mailing list, for hard copies of this newsletter or any other ACE materials please e-mail rkershaw@ucu.org.uk or kallen@ucu.org.uk

If you have any questions on ACE matters, have ideas for future articles, want to get more involved or talk about recruiting ACE members contact us by e-mail: rkershaw@ucu.org.uk or kallen@ucu.org.uk



Reasons to join UCU

Your union: we are the main union representing teaching staff and managers in adult and community education including full-time, fractional salaried and hourly-paid part-time lecturers. With almost 110,000 members we are the largest post-school education union in the world

Join today: funding cuts and reorganisations mean there has never been a better time to join your union

Support: UCU members can get advice and representation from trained local UCU representatives and full-time officials. Where appropriate, expert legal advice is available. Last year, UCU's legal services won more than £7 million in settlements for members treated unfairly at work.

A local voice: UCU ACE branches negotiate pay and conditions of service at a local level.

A national voice: we represent your profession to government and professional bodies. UCU campaigns to defend jobs and education provision, including opposing cuts to ESOL.

Support 24/7: through Recourse, we offer a one-to-one counselling and advice service on a range of issues including stress and debt.

www.ucu.org.uk/recourse

Subscription rates vary depending on what you earn and you can claim tax relief on a proportion of your subscription:

www.ucu.org.uk/whyjoin

A CHARTER for ADULT and COMMUNITY EDUCATION MEMBERS

A new charter for ACE

Below is a draft charter for ACE that was discussed at the annual meeting. Some years ago a rather lengthy document, a vision for ACE, was published by UCU. This remains an excellent resource. ACE representatives were clear that in addition to this more detailed overview, members also needed an attention grabbing, short piece that captures the key issues for the sector. This can be used for recruitment, for liaising with employers, councilors and MP's and other campaigning and negotiating purposes. We would welcome your feedback!

Please e-mail Kerith Allen kallen@ucu.org.uk or Ronnie Kershaw rkershaw@ucu.org.uk with any comments or ideas.

UCU's charter for adult and community education

UCU believes that open access to high quality adult education, delivered by professionals, is an integral part of healthy, vibrant and economically sustainable society. Adult education, or learning, continues to face cuts to its funding and in some areas its provision has already disappeared. The threats to adult education have potentially wide reaching consequences. This vital service must not only be protected but developed for the future.

UCU believes adult and community education must be underpinned by the following key principles:

- Its value as an integral characteristic of life, work and culture should be recognised by adequate and secure funding
- It is high quality learning delivered by a professional, dedicated and expert workforce
- It is available by whom it is needed, when it is needed
- There should be no financial, physical or social barrier to access
- It has an essential role to play in the economic, social and civic wellbeing of our communities and in the regeneration of disadvantaged areas
- It has a negotiated, comprehensive and liberating curriculum alive to the diverse economic and social benefits of lifelong learning
- It is the active transmission of knowledge and skills
- It has equality and diversity at its core. The benefits that diversity brings to adult education should be celebrated
- It harnesses technology to meet the needs of adults and to empower them in a globalised world
- It has a system of governance that is truly accountable and recognises the importance of learners, practitioners and their communities, including local employers.