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To: Secretaries of Branches with members in
FE Colleges and 6th forms
FE College Contacts
National FE & 6th Form Colleges Committee
Sixth form contacts

FE/48/09
1st December 2009

This bulletin updates branches and colleges on key equality work in the sector

Equality Update

This bulletin updates members on key equality work in Further Education.

New Agreement/Guidance on Disability Equality in Employment

The AoC and unions' working group has produced new national guidance on Disability Equality in Employment for Further Education Colleges. You can download the guidance here <http://www.unison.co.uk/education/further/agreements.asp>

The Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Post School Education

The forum has a new newsletter which can be downloaded from:
http://www.unison.org.uk/education/further/pages_view.asp?did=9605

Promoting Trans Equality

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) has designed a series of trans-equality development workshops. These were produced in partnership with the LSC and the Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Post-School Education.

These interactive workshops are designed give participants the skills to effectively promote and mainstream trans-equality. To find out more go to:

<http://www.lsis.org.uk/ED/PromotingTransEquality.aspx>

New research project explores the inter-relationship between sexual orientation and faith, religion and belief

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is undertaking research in FE and HE to explore the experiences of staff and learners and the interface between sexual orientation and faith. This project will also develop practical guidance that will enable providers to address this issue both in the workplace and in the learning environment. This project recognises there can be potential tensions between religion/belief and sexual orientation equality. A clear picture of the problems that can arise is needed to establish and promote good practice in this area. The project aims to:

- Identify issues arising around the interface between the two equality strands
- Identify areas of concern
- Promote good practice and foster good relations within FE and HE and the rest of the lifelong learning sector

Lifelong Learning UK would like to invite you to take part in this research project. You can either complete the on line survey by following this link www.lluk.org/managing-equality.htm or you could take part in a focus group or be interviewed - please contact Phil Barnett by email at philbarnett100@aol.com

Visible and Valued Master classes

The LSC are funding LSIS to host a second series of one day master classes for sector staff to provide expert guidance on how to effectively use the Visible and Valued sexual orientation equality staff training DVD. These master classes will help participants understand how to lead on implementing sexual orientation and transgender equality. They will also help participants train staff, governors and board members; support learners; deal with homophobic bullying and harassment and meet legal requirements.

Six master classes are being held across the country between December 2009 and February 2010 and can be booked online at www.lsis.org.uk/vvmasterclass2 or by calling 0870 060 3278. The cost for attending the master class is £40 per delegate.

AoC Conference on Equality and Diversity in the FE Workforce

24 February 2010 – This event will support providers managing equality in the workplace. Visit www.aocmsevents.co.uk/EqualityandDiversity2010 for details.

New Ofsted inspection framework

The new Ofsted inspection framework now applies a limiting grade for equality and diversity that will be considered before the overall effectiveness judgment is made. This means that where a judgement of 'inadequate' is given for equality and diversity, the overall effectiveness grade could be brought down to 'inadequate' or at the very best 'satisfactory'.

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FE/46/09
1st December 2009

This bulletin informs branches and colleges about the updated National Guidance Agreement; 'Disability Equality in Employment in Further Education Colleges'

National Guidance Agreement Disability Equality in Employment in Further Education Colleges

Attached to this bulletin is the new National Guidance Agreement; 'Disability Equality in Employment in Further Education Colleges'. This has been produced by the joint AoC and unions' working party. You can also download the guidance here <http://www.unison.co.uk/education/further/agreements.asp>

This guidance has been revised and updated to include disability leave.

What should union reps do with this guidance?

- Find out if your college has an agreement on disability equality in employment
- If it has not got an agreement then use this guidance to negotiate one
- If your college does have a disability equality in employment agreement in place then cross reference it with this new agreement to ensure it is up to date
- Promote the new agreement to your members
- Run a campaign and training around disability and disability leave in your college
- Use the work that you are doing to recruit new members
- Inform UNISON if your college implements the new agreement
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Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Sixth Form Colleges for information only

FE/43/09

23 November 2009

To: Secretaries of Branches with members in Further Education Colleges
Further Education Contacts

Adult FE funding cuts announced for England – UNISON seeks urgent meeting with Minister

UNISON has requested an urgent meeting with the FE Minister, Kevin Brennan, following the announcement of £240 million of FE adult “efficiency savings”/funding cuts.

Summary of 2010/11 budget

- The overall participation budget (the money set aside to fund learner and training places in colleges) will increase by 3%. However, this increase in the headline spend does not tell the full story
- Alongside the increase in the overall budget there will be across the board cuts in funding rates for 2010/11 (i.e. the money colleges get for each learner)
- There will be a 3% cut in Adult Learner Responsiveness rates (Unemployment training packages rates will not be cut)
- 6% cut in Train to Gain funding rates
- 3% cut in adult apprenticeships rates and 10% cut in funding rates for 25+ Apprenticeships

Overall these cuts in funding rates will mean colleges will have to recruit more adult learners than they did in 2009/10 simply to maintain existing funding and if they don't they will face funding cuts.

The Government has also shifted money around within the adult budget. They have cut the number of funded adult learner responsive places and then increased employer responsive places.

Please see Appendix 1 for a more detailed summary of these cuts.

UNISON's position

We have made it clear to the Government that they should be maintaining investment in our public services during a time of recession. The Government has to date rightly invested in our public services to help support people through recession. Cutting back in 2010/11 will pose a risk to the economic recovery.

We are meeting the UNISON Group of Labour MP's on Wednesday 25 November to ask for their help with our campaign against the cuts. We are also seeking an urgent meeting with the FE Minister, Kevin Brennan, in advance of the Government's pre budget report on the 9 December.

In the run to the election we need to put all parties on the spot over FE funding.

What you can do

We are urging members to write to their local MP asking them to lobby the Government on adult funding. Please find attached model letter (appendix 2). You can email the letter to your MP by visiting www.theyworkforyou.com

Our message to colleges

We are calling on colleges to join with us in a campaign against adult education funding cuts. Colleges must understand that we will not sit back and allow these cuts to be passed on to hard working college staff, some of whom are already amongst the lowest paid in our public services.

Colleges must not rush in to making hasty decisions; the final adult funding allocations to colleges will not be confirmed until April 2010. In addition the 16 – 19 budget for 2010 has not yet been released. For most colleges this will form a large part of their income.

Build the Union to defend Jobs

Finally we need to build our membership in every college so that we are in the strongest possible position to defend provision and jobs. You can now join UNISON online by visiting www.unison.org.uk

Summary of Adult FE and Skills Funding Cuts 2010/11

The money FE colleges in England receive from the Government is separated into two different budgets:

- For the education and training of young people (termed 16 – 19)
- For the education and training of adults (termed post 19)

This paper is solely concerned with the FE adult budget for 2010/11.

The 16 – 19 budget for 2010/11, which will form a large part of the funding settlement for colleges, has not yet been confirmed.

Efficiency Savings/Funding Cuts

- The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has just published the adult FE and Skills budget for 2010/11 – this was contained in the BIS document ‘Skills Investment Strategy’
- This document sets out full details of how £240 million worth of efficiency savings/funding cuts will be made from the adult budget in 2010/11

Increase in participation budget

- The overall participation budget (the money paid to colleges to fund learner and training places) will increase by 3% from over £3.4 billion in 2009/10 to over £3.5 billion in 2010/11
- However, this increase in the headline spend does not tell the full story

Cuts in funding rates

- Alongside this increase in the overall budget the Government has announced cuts adult in funding rates for 2010/11

Details of funding cuts

- 3% across the board cut in Adult Learner Responsiveness rates (Unemployment training packages rates will not be cut)
- The Skills for Life funding uplift (with the exception of Skills for Life Entry Level Numeracy) will be reduced from 1.4 to 1.2

- There will be a 6% reduction in funding rates for Train to Gain in 2010/11
- 3% cut in adult apprenticeship rates
- 10% cut in funding rates for 25+ Apprenticeships

Overall these cuts in funding rates will mean colleges will have to recruit more adult learners than they did in 2009/10 simply to maintain existing funding and if they don't they will face funding cuts.

Cuts to the Adult Learner Responsive Budget

- In addition to these cuts in funding rates the Government has also redistributed money within the adult budget
- Funding has been shifted away from education provided in response to adult learner demands towards employer responsive training.
- For example the Adult Developmental Learning budget has been cut by £144 million to fund, amongst other things, an increase in Train Gain places. This equates to a cut of 370 000 developmental learning places funded through the budget
- On the other hand The Train to Gain budget has then been increased by over £57 million and Apprenticeships funding by nearly £8.5 million.
- This increase in Train to Gain and Apprenticeship funding will fund an additional 280 000 and 41 000 places respectively – again this will be at reduced rates of funding compared to 2009/10

Other changes to Train to Gain

- Reintroduction of co funding for repeat level 2 qualifications - employers will have to pay towards the training cost of employees who already have a Level 2 qualification

More freedom for colleges

- Extra freedoms are being promised for 'outstanding colleges' All colleges (except poor performers) to be given more budget flexibilities

Adult Funding Cuts - Model letter to MPs

Name

Address

Date

Dear (Name of MP),

I am writing to you regarding the recent Government announcement of £240 million of cuts in adult further education funding England.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skill in its document 'Skills Investment Strategy' confirmed cuts in funding rates for adult learning and training places of between 3% and 10% in 2010/11.

In addition to these cuts the Government has also redistributed money within the adult budget. It has cut the number of funded adult developmental learning places by 370,000. This seems to have been done to fund an increase in the Train to Gain budget.

I am concerned that these adult funding cuts will lead to rising course fees and course closures all of which will be devastating for local communities struggling with impacts of the recession.

(HERE YOU CAN INSERT WHAT YOU THINK THE IMPACT OF THESE CUTS WILL BE ON YOUR COLLEGE AND LOCAL COMMUNITY)

The funding cuts could also lead to job losses in colleges. College staff are currently doing a vital job providing opportunities for young adults and helping older workers to re-train for new jobs. Many of them are on very low wages; some have not had a cost of living increase for years.

Finally I would ask that you raise my concerns with the Minister of State for Further Education, FE and Consumer Affairs Kevin Brennan.

Yours sincerely

