

P-04-644 The Future of Further Education

Petition wording:

We note the decision of the Welsh government to cut Further Education funding by £26m for the year 2015/16 and recognise that the 8% cut in the Welsh budget imposed by Westminster, has created financial challenges for Wales. However we fail to understand the decisions of Welsh Government to then allocate money from Westminster in a way that will cause great hardship to a key member of the 'Education Family' in Wales. Colleges have dealt admirably with several years of successive funding cuts and we do not see how they can continue to deliver the remit expected of them by Welsh government. We also note the policy of the Welsh Government to increase reliance on employer contributions to fund employee training, but are not convinced that this will be sufficient to plug the level of Government underfunding. In addition the 50% slash in funding to part time courses will decimate further education provision leaving thousands of adults without access to opportunities to improve their education or to retrain. It will also put hundreds of FE jobs at risk. Further education colleges in Wales have co-operated with Welsh Government over previous funding cuts and a series of mergers, but are now at breaking point. We call upon the Welsh Government not to implement these cuts and to invest properly in lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Additional information

UCU Wales are concerned that:

- * Employers will be unwilling or unable to plug the gap left by the withdrawal of Welsh Government funding.
- * Adults will be restricted to training that is deemed suitable by employers.
- * Adults in low paid, unsatisfactory jobs will be unable to access the education they need to improve their employment opportunities elsewhere.

* Cuts in funding will severely limit choices available to adults. *
Opportunities to improve the life chances of many adults and their families will be removed, which in terms of tackling poverty and improving the economy of Wales, is counterproductive.

* The quality of remaining provision will be reduced as there will be fewer staff, bigger class sizes and less time to teach the courses.

Petition raised by: UCU Wales

Date petition first considered by Committee: 16 June 2015

Number of signatures: 1,861 Online signatures