

Zone Report 2018

Further Education

Vice President:
Emily Chapman

Zone Conference Report

Vice President (Further Education)

Introduction

This paper sets out the accountability report from the Zone Vice President. It also contains a summary of Zone Policy 2016 – 2019.

Questions

Any Individual Student member of the National Union of Students' may ask a question of the Vice President. Questions must be submitted in advance of the Conference using the online form. You will be asked to state your name and Constituent Member (your Student Union or Association).

You can access the form to ask accountability questions at:

<https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/conferences/zone-conferences/accountability>

The deadline for submission of accountability questions is Wednesday 24 October at 12.30pm. Questions will be asked during the accountability sessions at Zones Conference.

Outgoing Committee

Last year's Zone Committee was:

Vice President: Emily Chapman

Jessica Foster	FE Zone Committee Member (NEC place)
Cameron Hartley	FE Zone Committee Member
Dan Wood	FE Zone Committee Member
Hayvi Rahem	FE Zone Committee Member
James Gibbins	FE Zone Committee Member
Juliana Mohamad Noor	FE Zone Committee Member
Romana Jabeen	FE Zone Committee Member
Thomas Shacklady	FE Zone Committee Member
VACANT	FE Zone Committee Member

Zone Committee 2018/19

Elections for the Zone Committee (including the NEC place) will be taking place at the Zone Conference. Any individual student member of the NUS from FE can nominate themselves online to be a member of the committee. Nominations are online via a form and the deadline for nominations is 24 October 2018 at 12.30pm.

More details of the election and the nomination form can be found at:

<https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/zones/elections>

Dates of Committee Meetings 2018/19

Date of meetings for this Zone are: 14 November 2018, 23 January 2019, 19 March 2019, 29 May 2019

Further Education Zone

Summary of Policy 2016–2019

The following document summarises policy active for 2018–19 in the Further Education Zone, covering policy passed at NUS National Conference in 2016, 2017 and 2018

Overview

National Conference 2018

Motion FE101 | This Story is getting old... time for investment in FE/College our voices to be heard!

Motion FE102 | The Scourge of Day 42

National Conference 2017

Motion 201 | Putting Learners at the heart of the Post 16 Skills Plan

Motion 203 | Save Our Support Services

Motion 205 | An Agenda on Tertiary Education

National Conference 2016

Motion 202 | Area Reviews – Colleges are on life support; don't pull the plug!

Motion 204 | Free Education, Further Education, For Everyone

Motion 206 | Qualifications - Once the golden rule... now just pieces of paper

Policy Passed in 2018

This Story is getting old... time for investment in FE/College our voices to be heard!

What NUS believes

Further education is consistently underfunded, including new initiatives like T Levels, and pushed towards marketisation. As a sector, FE should be focused on the education needs of the individual, and the social needs of society, rather than profit and big business.

FE institutions should be democratically controlled, and students who study at them

should be funded with universal living grants – this is part of the fight for free and liberated education. The mental health crisis must also be tackled.

How NUS should work in this area

As a priority, there should be a campaign for investment in FE, working across nations. It should include learners with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) and learning disabilities (LLD). The demands of this campaign should be for apprentices to be paid a living wage, and FE students to receive living grants. This should be delivered with education trade unions.

How students' unions should be engaged

There is no specific policy on this

Related active policy

This covers similar themes to *An Agenda on Tertiary Education [2017]*. This motion proposes that NUS should have a policy platform on tertiary education as a whole to make the case for better funding, as funding Further Education has been shown to be unpopular with the public in polls. While education is both an investment in the individual and a social investment, our position on education must be engaged with the labour market as many people do go into education to get a decent job. Similarly, our position must recognise the relationship that colleges have to local communities and civic life.

The priority should be ensuring that all adults achieve a Level 3 qualification, and that this is free for any age.

NUS should campaign alongside unions and grassroots groups for better and fairer funding of institutions, and participate in events which put forward the benefits of the sector.

The Scourge of Day 42

What NUS believes

Colleges that withdraw students before 42 days do not have them counted towards official retention rates. This incentivises colleges to remove students, and disproportionately disadvantages vulnerable students. Those deemed troublesome should be given support, and colleges shouldn't be incentivised to withdraw students.

How NUS should work in this area

NUS should undertake research into the impact of day 42 policy on students. If research shows that this policy is disproportionately harmful, NUS should lobby across the sector to have the policy removed. NUS should work towards the introduction of a funding and inspection framework which doesn't have these problems and is equality impact assessed.

How students' unions should be engaged

NUS should work with students' unions to raise an awareness of students' rights.

Policy passed in 2017

Putting Learners at the heart of the Post 16 Skills Plan

What NUS believes

We welcome some of the interventions suggested in the Post-16 Skills Plan, such as positive visions for SEND support and free or subsidised training for young people aged 19-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS). We do, however, have concerns about its implementation, particularly the policy of putting employers at the heart of the plan. Further to this, we believe the expansion of University Technical Colleges is flawed and that Advanced Learner Loans are not working for FE learners.

How NUS should work in this area

NUS should work with the Department for Education (DfE) and the National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) to influence the plan, ensuring learners' needs are central to decisions.

We should continue to lobby for high quality, impartial IAG and act on any careers strategy that is released.

Working with NSoA, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) and the Institute for Apprenticeships, NUS should define and improve the quality apprenticeship experience. NUS should work with SEND colleges on specialist provision, lobbying DfE to include it in the plan.

NUS should campaign against a fees and loans model for level 4 and 5 qualifications, and against the expansion of university technical college (UTCs). NUS should also demand better bargaining rights for students who are also workers.

How students' unions should be engaged

NUS should work with SUs to raise awareness of the skills plan.

Save Our Support Services

What NUS believes

College mergers will put increased pressure on their support services. Support services are important because they are cited by learners such as parents and those with caring responsibilities, who are disproportionately women, as key to being able to access education.

How NUS should work in this area

Working across zones and nations, NUS should ensure that protection of student support services is included in any future work around Area Review implementations.

How students' unions should be engaged

NUS should support SUs to collaborate and campaign at a regional level to protect their services.

Related active policy

In policy on *Area Reviews [2016]*, NUS believed that merged colleges must not cut back on student support services.

An Agenda on Tertiary Education

Covered in 2018

Policy Passed in 2016

Area Reviews – Colleges are on life support; don't pull the plug!

What NUS believes

The government intends to create more efficient and larger FE providers through the area review process, but this will see colleges merge and possibly more cuts to the FE budget. Continued cuts to further education are a national scandal which undermine access to education, and mergers are only being viewed as necessary because of the cuts to public funding.

A distinction between prestigious specialist colleges and general FE colleges will harm those who study at level 2 or below.

Area reviews do not account for students' needs, and will make way for private providers which will further marketise education. There is no evidence that larger and more specialised providers are more cost efficient.

Larger, regional colleges will increase the travel costs for many learners, and there is inconsistent support for this across regions.

NUS should prioritise fighting all of these attacks by launching a unifying campaign to oppose cuts facing FE and HE and pushing for free, publicly funded education for all.

How NUS should work in this area

NUS should continue to condemn and call for a halt to cuts to further education and sixth forms, as well as call for reinvestment where cuts have been halted.

NUS should endorse the National Union of Teachers' (NUT) #SaveOurColleges campaign, and upcoming actions against mergers.

NUS should lobby for discounted and accessible travel locally and nationally for college students and apprentices.

NUS should launch a campaign against the attacks on FE and HE – 'Save Our Futures' – and organise activist training days. The voices of women, Black, LGBT, disabled and international students, as well as student parents and carers, should be at the heart of this campaign. The campaign should put forward a vision of free, accessible and funded education, using a variety of tactics. There should be a demonstration on a Saturday, which other education trade unions are invited to co-organise, with a focus on 'Stop the HE

reforms', 'Stop College Cuts,' and 'Grants Not Debt'.

How students' unions should be engaged

NUS will make FE students aware of risks to their local colleges and bring together student representatives in affected areas.

Free Education, Further Education, For Everyone

What NUS believes

FE funding has been cut across all nations since 2010, and adult learner numbers have fallen, while colleges feel themselves to be 'financially stretched'.

NUS campaigns on funding could have the greatest impact in FE, and these need to expand on the meaning of free education.

Maintenance support for those aged 16-19 needs to be expanded to equal with pre-16 funding in real terms, as introducing loans in FE has not worked and their expansion is not a suitable solution. The apprentice minimum wage should be in line with the national minimum wage, and the government should support apprentice living costs.

Learning English should be a right of all UK residents, and cuts to English as a Second Language (ESOL) funding are a disgrace. Local authority cuts are also reducing the places available at specialist colleges, many of which are in significant financial difficulty.

How NUS should work in this area

NUS should further outline a vision of free education for further education across the nations, and campaign for:

- Equalising the apprentice minimum wage with the national minimum wage
- Free prescriptions for 16 – 18 apprentices
- The extension of Care to Learn
- A portion of apprenticeship spending to be spent on wage support and widening participation
- The expansion of learner maintenance grants across all four nations
- The government to extend the statutory right to free education in all subjects up to Level 3, regardless of age
- Sustainable government funding and investment
- Investment in ESOL

NUS should campaign against:

- The extension of the fees and loans system for adult learners
- Any further cuts to ESOL spending

How students' unions should be engaged

NUS will deliver activist training for students across the UK.

Qualifications - Once the golden rule... now just pieces of paper

What NUS believes

Students who don't have a Grade C or above in Maths and/or English at GCSE have to repeat them as part of their study programme.

Funding for this has been cut and the grading system has been changed. This will become confusing for both students and employers.

While Maths and English qualifications are good, they should be relevant to the needs and ambitions of the student.

Failing to improve students' GCSE results can lead to colleges receiving poor Ofsted outcomes. It is unfair to expect colleges to fix what schools have failed to do in 12 years, with less funding.

How NUS should work in this area

NUS should research and suggest alternate methods of delivering Maths and English FE in this area. NUS should campaign to remove mandatory retaking of these qualifications and replace them with something more suitable.

NUS should work with the Education and Training Foundation on it's the review of Functional Skills for Maths and English to ensure it meets students' needs.

How students' unions should be engaged

There is no specific policy on this.

Zone Conference Accountability

Vice President (Further Education) Zones Report

Author: Emily Chapman

Date Produced: September 2018

Priority Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To improve students' unions profile and investment in the FE and skills sectorTo protect and improve funding for 16-18 educationTo win improved student travel discounts and access locally with students' unions
Strategy
<p>To achieve the key aim of putting the importance of students' unions and learner voice to colleges, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborate with key influencers across the sector to run campaigns with students at the forefront, showing the strength and value of effective student voice.Capitalise on these campaigns to make the case for greater investment and support for student voice in collegesPromote strategic approach to learner voice through sector promotion of the LVF

Breakdown/Update

Area of work	Progress
Improving students' unions profile and investment in the FE and Skills Sector (All Year)	<p>This is the overall goal to be achieved whilst achieving the 2 areas of work below.</p> <p>FEZone have been working closely with AoC on promotion of NUS Events and resource to principals affiliated to them (similar to our own).</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <p>NUS have been invited to speak at AoC Conference in mid-November where the opportunity to influence principals and senior staff is critical and available to achieve.</p>
To protect and improve funding for 16-18 education (Term 1)	<p>FEZone have joined with the Association of Colleges (AoC) and other Education Unions for a week of action on the 15-19 October called #loveourcolleges. Which includes a national day of action on October 17th in London:</p> <p>This involves Mass Lobby of Parliament & #loveourcolleges rally</p> <p>FE Learners have the opportunity to meet their local MP to talk to them about fair funding and better pay in further education. NUS FE Zone are supporting students with how to organise a meeting with your MP, and what to say on the day – just let us know if you're coming.</p> <p>From 13:30-14:30 on the same day there is a rally in Parliament Square to make sure everyone knows just how much we #loveourcolleges and want the government to invest more in further education, with lots of speakers from across education.</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <p>On the Follow day the FE Flagship event of there year Festival will be in Sheffield with special guest from the AoC to welcome FE leaders to NUS and look back at the campaign to learn and decide the next steps of the campaign.</p>

To win improved student travel discounts and access locally (Term 2)	During last year FEZone launched a campaign to tackle Transport costs facing FE Students and Apprentices. At national conference 2018, FE Zone gave an overview of its survey findings which had 1000 views to look over. I saw the spilt of issues dependant on region across the UK. Time was then taken to compare with findings in the Poverty commission and give findings to the Post-18 Funding Review and Sector contacts Next Steps In Term 2/Early 2019 FEZONE will be supporting students' unions to effectively lobby their local authorities so we can work together on campaigning for better transport costs in your area.
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Membership Visits/Engagement

Since July 2018, Myself and FEZONE have visited/attended:

- Blackpool and Clyde College
- City College Norwich
- Northen Regional College (Ballymena Campus)
- Leeds City College
- Portsmouth College
- North East Officer Network @ Teeside University
- Narco Centre (Leeds)
- Launch of Women for Peoples vote campaign (Speaker)
- North East Rally for Peoples vote (Speaker)
- The Gathering
- City of Glasgow College
- BBC Look East - A Level Segment (Guest)
- NUS Lead and Change (Hertfordshire and Leeds)
- Tradeshow 18
- NUS Awards 18
- Students' Union 18

I have had several internal meetings around events and planning over the summer. These can be over nights so I have time in the office.