



## STUDENT CAMPAIGN FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN LONDON

### Take Action – Fight the Funding Cuts

#### The Campaign

Students from City Lit, Morley College, the Mary Ward Centre and the Working Men's College are campaigning to make the Government and the London Assembly aware of the way current funding priorities are damaging adult education in London.

#### You can Help - Act Now!

We need your help to fight the funding cuts. Write to your MP, Government Ministers, The Mayor of London and the London Assembly members. Explain how you, your college and your community are being affected by the cuts in funding for Adult Education. Act now to protect the future of your course and your college.

#### London's Adult Education Colleges

Central London has four colleges that specialize in Adult Education; City Lit, Morley College, Mary Ward Centre and the Working Men's College. They are called Specialist Designated Institutions (SDIs). Their aim is to provide high quality courses that are open to adults from any background, regardless of ability, social class, race or wealth.

The majority of their courses provide education for personal development, civic and social engagement, pleasure and interest. The Government calls such courses "Personal and Community Development Learning" (PCDL).

#### Spending Priorities – The Skills Agenda.

The Government's key priorities for public funding of Adult Education are skills relevant to employment, numeracy, literacy and, in particular, younger adults.

It also believes that adults should pay a higher proportion of the total cost of courses they take. The Government currently pays about two-thirds of the course costs. Students pay about one-third on average. By 2010, the Government will only pay half of the course costs.

These policies mean that public funding for non-priority Adult Education courses will decrease in the future. This affects the SDIs particularly badly because most of the courses they run are regarded as low-priority funding areas.

As public funding reduces, the colleges will either have to raise more money - from students and commercial ventures - or reduce spending, which means closing courses and departments and reducing service levels.

#### Consequences of Spending Priorities

**Loss of Expertise:** Funding cuts have already forced class and departmental closures.

Teaching expertise and support facilities that have taken years to build are being lost.

**Loss of Opportunity:** Course fees are likely to continue rising by around 10% each year until 2010. This has most effect on those on low incomes or pensions, many of whom will be excluded from Adult Education because they cannot afford to pay course fees.

#### Loss of Breadth and Scope of Courses:

Rising course fees lead to falling class sizes, making more courses not financially viable. Course closures reduce the breadth of courses available to students in London.

#### The need for Public Funding for SDIs

It is right that the Government should expect that students, who can afford to, should contribute more to the cost of Adult Education. But, the Government should recognize that current funding priorities have a disproportionate effect on the SDIs. Funding allocations for Adult Education in London must be rebalanced to stabilize the SDIs while the colleges develop other sources of income.

#### We want the Government to:

- Make no further cuts in funding of Adult Education to the four London SDIs
- Allocate additional funds to reduce the impact of rising fees on the participation of people on low income (as distinct from those receiving state benefits)
- Reduce bureaucracy by rationalising the number Government agencies that regulate the work of Colleges and require them to account for how they have used public money. Reinvest these savings in teaching.
- Promote cross-departmental funding for Adult Education within Whitehall and Local Authorities

***We must persuade the government to strike a fairer balance between skills training for the young and non-vocational Adult Education.***

### The SCAEL Campaign Message

1. The Government is right to prioritise funding for Adult Education on the “skills agenda” and younger learners. It is also right to expect adults to make a greater contribution to the cost of their own education, but only if they can afford to do so.
2. The balance of funding priorities is critical.
3. The current balance of priorities is especially damaging to the four London SDIs, because the majority of their work concerns non-priority areas for funding.
4. Funding cuts to the SDIs have caused:
  - loss of teaching expertise and support infrastructure
  - narrowing participation as increasing fees exclude low-income earners and pensioners
  - narrowing of the curriculum offered as falling class sizes force closures
5. Funding priorities for Adult Education in London need to be rebalanced, with more public funding allocated to the SDIs to prevent institutional collapse and support low-income earners and pensioners.
6. Public money could be released to support this increased funding by:
  - more cross-departmental funding of Adult Education in recognition of the wide range of social and health benefits Adult Education delivers to the community.
  - reduction of bureaucracy by simplifying the number of reports the SDIs have to make to Government agencies as a consequence of receiving public funds.

### What we plan to do:

- Write letters of protest to MPs, Members of the London Assembly and newspapers.
- Encourage students to discuss these issues with their MPs and other influential contacts they might know
- Hold lobby meetings with relevant Government Departments and the London Assembly

### Act now!

Write your letters as soon as possible, ideally before the end of May.

### Write a letter to your MP

- Say you are a constituent
- If one of the Colleges is in your constituency say so
- Explain the SCAEL Campaign Message
- Make your letter personal – say how the funding cuts have affected you, your course and your college
- Mention that Adult Education benefits your community
- Ask your MP to raise these issues with the Minister of State for Education and Skills
- End your letter with a question, or an offer to meet your MP, that invites a reply

### Write to other influential MPs

The House of Commons, Westminster, London. SW1A 0AA. [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

**Bill Rammell, MP:** Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education.

**Barry Sheerman, MP:** Chair, The Education Select Committee.

**Patricia Hewitt, MP:** Secretary of State for Health

**Tessa Jowell MP:** Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

### Write to the London Assembly:

The London Assembly, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London. SE1 2AA [www.london.gov](http://www.london.gov)

**Ken Livingstone:** Mayor of London.

**Brian Colman:** Chair of the London Assembly

**Dee Dooney:** Chair of the Economic Development, Culture, Sport & Tourism Committee.

**Jennette Arnold:** Chair of the London Health Commission

**Joanne McCartney:** Chair of the Health & Public Services Committee

**Send us a copy of your letter:** We will compile a dossier of all the letters, so please send a copy of your letter to: SCAEL Secretary, Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, London. SE1 7HT.

**More information:** There is a detailed briefing document and more information available on the website [www.scael.org.uk](http://www.scael.org.uk).

Thank you for your help and support.

Best wishes, Stephen Green. Chair, SCAEL

