

The Prison Education Framework (PEF)

As I am sure you are all now aware, the PEF contracts have been awarded, and from 1 April 2019, a number of prisons will be changing providers.

The following providers will now run education provision in the listed Lots:

- Weston College - Avon & South Dorset; Devon & North Dorset; Kent, Surrey & Sussex.
- PeoplePlus - Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Norfolk; East Midlands; Hertfordshire, Essex & Suffolk; North Midlands.
- Novus - Cumbria & Lancashire; Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire; London; Tees & Wear; West Midlands; Women's Estate North; Yorkshire.
- Milton Keynes College - Long Term High Security Estate, North; Long Term High Security Estate, South; South Central.

As you can see the core providers remain the same, although both Weston College and PeoplePlus have significantly increased their provision. A lot of money has been spent on a commissioning process that has ultimately changed very little, and UCU will be asking some questions of government about the cost and benefit of this process to tax payers.

Although we know what is happening with the core provision, there is still little clarity about the Dynamic Purchasing System that governors can use to commission some education and how extensively it will impact on current provision.

Providers, both current and future, are now in discussions with governors about curriculums at each individual prison, and we are led to believe that initial curriculums should be completed by the end of February. UCU will be putting pressure on providers to share them with staff as soon as possible to ensure that meaningful consultation about the transfers, but also about any possible redundancies, can start when the proposals are at a formative stage. We will keep UCU reps posted as we are updated.

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Pensions – accessing TPS and LGPS

The one big change that staff could be facing with a change of provider is a change of pension.

PeoplePlus staff are currently not members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) or the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), and many members have expressed their concerns about transferring to a private education provider because of the considerable loss of pension benefits. PeoplePlus have told staff and UCU that they are seeking 'admitted body status' to both of these pension schemes. If they achieve this status then staff transferring from Milton Keynes College and Novus would be able to maintain their current schemes and continue to contribute towards this pension pot.

UCU welcomes this development, and will do all it can to support these applications, to ensure that staff benefits are maintained as is.

Should the application fail, it is important that members are aware about which pension scheme they are moving into and what implications that has for future contributions and existing pensions.

There could be some members moving into or out of TPS, in particular those aged around 60 or older, who will need to take financial advice about their situation whether they are thinking of retiring or not. Pension Age will be different for those in the final salary section, either 60 or 65, compared to those in the career average section, which is state pension age.

If you are moving back into TPS you may not have the same type of pension or the same pension age as when you left. If you are returning to TPS after your original pension age, you may need to draw the pension or lose out financially. Similar issues may arise for those LGPS pensions.

UCU strongly urges all members, who are not sure how this affects them, to ask their employer and either TPS or LGPS.

General pension information can be found here:

<https://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/about-pensions/when-things-change/leaving-your-pension-scheme/tupe>

TPS contacts can be found here:

<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/public/contact-us.aspx>

And LGPS contacts can be found here:

<https://lgpsmember.org/>

UCU members can also access some free financial advice with their UCU membership number from Lighthouse Financial Advice. You can find out more here:

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/financialadvice>

Please make sure that you inform yourself about your pension entitlements, so you don't miss out on any deferred wages you have been contributing to throughout your working life.

Jenny Lennox, UCU Bargaining and Negotiations Official.



Prison education annual meeting

The Prison Education Annual Meeting takes place on Friday 8 March. Each prison is entitled to send one delegate to the meeting to find out what UCU has been doing in prison education over the last year, and discuss our approach for the year ahead.

Ian Bickers, HMPPS Deputy Director for Education, Employment Strategy and Accommodation on release will be speaking at the event and answering attendees' questions.

With the start of the Prison Education Framework (PEF) contract on 1 April, we will also be using the meeting as an opportunity to bring together those transferring to a new provider with reps/members already working for that provider, and hold elections for the newly formed branch committees.

Please ensure that someone is attending from your prison. If no one is and you would be interested in attending please consider coming along.

PeoplePlus, Milton Keynes College and Novus have all agreed to provide paid time off for the person attending the meeting. We are still trying to sort out arrangements with Weston College. Do email Jenny Lennox, Bargaining and Negotiation official responsible for prison education, at jlennox@ucu.org.uk, if you need to arrange or having problems sorting paid time off.

Please forward this newsletter to a colleague

If you are already a UCU member you will be aware of the many benefits of UCU membership. Please pass this newsletter to a colleague and help to raise awareness of your union.

Photos: prison education annual meeting 2018

Previous page: Shadow Secretary of State for Justice and Shadow Lord Chancellor Richard Burgon

This page: PeoplePlus chair Steve Boyce contributing to a discussion.



Your union needs you

If you don't yet have a UCU rep please get in touch if you are willing to distribute UCU leaflets, are interested in becoming a UCU rep or H&S rep, or can help in any way eg organising a meeting at your prison, contact your UCU reps.

- UCU reps help members with individual workplace problems, raise issues with management and communicate with members and potential members
- Health and safety reps have strong legal rights, carry out inspections and cover excessive workload and stress

UCU branch contacts

PeoplePlus branch chair Steve Boyce stephen.25boyce@btinternet.com

Novus branch chair Brian Hamilton barkinhouse@yahoo.co.uk

Milton Keynes prison branch chair Gina Hillsdon ginaucurep@hotmail.co.uk

Weston College prison branch Jenny Lennox jlennox@ucu.org.uk

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For more information:

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