



ucu

University and College Union

Motion to Further Education Sector Conference - Mobilising support for prison educators and the fight for prison safety

Conference notes:

- the chaotic privatisation of our prison service and resulting failure to staff and run prisons safely
- the numerous drug-related incidents as evidenced in the recent Panorama programme
- the systematic dismantling of prison education including reduction of staffing to levels which routinely compromise safety and the short-sighted vandalism of the prison curriculum through privatisation and cuts
- the dangers prison educators work with, including pressure to work with large groups and individuals known to be intimidating or violent, failure to listen to staff concerns around safety, and regular failure to risk assess learners
- the December riot at HMP Birmingham, and the failure of G4S and the government in managing this or resolving the conditions which created it.

Conference further notes with dismay and frustration:

- the lack of progress by the Union following a national survey of members in November 2016
- the UCU/Institute for Education 2014 survey which highlighted health and safety as a key concern, yet little changed as a result.
- The survey results identified many areas of concern impacting upon our prison members in dangerous working conditions. Members are exposed to dangerous practices e.g. escorting prisoners alone, physical and verbal assault and are expected to engage in unpaid working time.

Conference calls on the NEC:

- to prioritise the launch of a high profile national prison education campaign and accompanying industrial strategy to address these issues with the employer and for a broad and balanced prison curriculum that leads to long term safety within prisons
- to work with the POA and any other relevant groups to fight for the safety of all prison workers
- to develop clear H&S guidance specifically tailored for prison educators and seek to negotiate its incorporation within the commissioning contract.
- It is time to make a significant difference to prison educators who work in difficult circumstances and for less pay than our FE colleagues. Survey results on their own do not change the working lives of our members.

What's happened so far...

- Meeting with POA General Secretary to agree in principle to joint working
- Meeting with RCN to discuss joint issues around health & safety for contract workforce
- UCU attended the Justice Unions and Family Courts Parliamentary Group meeting.

Other motions to FE Sector Conference

FE9 Prison educators should have career long access to TPS

Conference notes that:

- many UCU members who work in prison education see this as the area of education they want to commit their career to
- most prison educators are members of the TPS and access to this scheme is at risk in the next round of retendering of education contracts
- the decision as to the education provider lies solely in the hands of the prison governor, who through the commissioning process decides what pension scheme our members are eligible to join.

Conference therefore instructs the NEC to lobby MPs, the TPS and HMPPS to ensure prison education is a recognised part of the teaching profession and therefore prison educators should have access to TPS, whoever the education provider is, throughout their career.

Other motions to FE Sector Conference

FE15 Access to natural justice for prison educators

Conference notes that:

- members who work in prisons, can be excluded from their place of work and subsequently dismissed from their job, even if their employer finds they have no case to answer
- prison educators are denied a right of appeal unless supported by the education provider
- that prison educators can be interviewed by prison staff without access to support or representation.

Conference believes that HMPPS would not be able to treat their own staff in this manner and our members are placed in a position where they are unable to access natural justice.

Conference therefore instructs the FEC to:

- raise via media and through lobbying of MPs that prison educators cannot access natural justice under the current exclusion procedures
- using the OLASS Forum seek to agree new procedures and review the PSI with HMPPS to release this tension and protect our members.

Next steps: the plans so far...

- Seek to get guarantees on health, safety and wellbeing of staff during the PEF contracting process
- Seek to establish agreed H&S escalation routes with individual providers so we can successfully address H&S issues
- Agree a minimum standard for inductions for prison education staff across the estate
- Increase membership and Reps across prisons, so that members are supported through the TUPE process and have more bargaining power under the new contracts
- Seek to review the Exclusions PSI and ensure that staff are able to appeal decisions that affect their employment
- Seek to improve the terms and conditions of prison educators in particular focussing on:
 - Harmonising the terms and conditions of vocational trainers with tutors/lecturers
 - Improving pay and pay structures
 - Harmonising the terms and conditions of sessional staff with permanent staff, and where possible (and desirable) ensuring that sessional staff are moved onto permanent contracts
 - Securing access for all teaching staff to TPS irrelevant of provider