

Your Union Is Making A Difference

We have come such a long way over the past 12 months in prison education.

- The Health & Safety processes that are now in place are more responsive and rival many of those in place in colleges and universities
- We beat the ballot threshold, took successful strike action and won a 9 month long dispute against Novus, the biggest prison education provider
- We consulted members and responded to the Education Select Committee inquiry
- We lobbied in Parliament, formed alliances, organised members and formed a key group of branch officers to coordinate our work further
- We've drafted the first ever pay claim in prison education
- We have successfully represented individual members who have overcome bullying management, discrimination and overbearing sickness absence monitoring to name but a few

These achievements are as a direct result of the hard work, commitment and determination of reps and members working together. We look forward to progressing our bargaining agenda this year, especially around pay and conditions.

Register for your branch AGMs

AGMs are a great opportunity for members to discuss key issues with their branch committee, reps and other members. You will also be updated on what UCU is doing and what is happening in other prisons, as well as a chance to ask questions. Please register for your branch AGM to get an online meeting link. All members are encouraged to attend.

UCU Weston College Prison Education Branch AGM will be held at 1:30 – 3.00pm on Friday 21st January 2022. To register: <https://ucu.wufoo.com/forms/weston-branch-agm-2022/>

UCU Milton Keynes College Prison Education Branch AGM will be held at 3:30 – 5.00pm on Friday 21st January 2022. To register: <https://ucu.wufoo.com/forms/mkc-branch-agm-2022/>

UCU People Plus Prison Education Branch AGM will be held at 1:30 – 3.00pm on Friday 28th January 2022. To register: <https://ucu.wufoo.com/forms/people-plus-agm-2022/>

UCU Novus Prison Education Branch AGM will be held at 3:30 – 5.00pm on Friday 28th January 2022. To register: <https://ucu.wufoo.com/forms/novus-branch-agm-2022/>

Prison Education Annual Meeting

The annual meeting will be held online on Friday 18 February.

All members are welcome to attend.

This is an opportunity to discuss the challenges that prison education staff face, shape UCU's responses and hear reports from prisons and UCU nationally.

To register: <https://ucu.wufoo.com/forms/annual-meeting-of-prison-educators-2022/>

The deadline for registering is Monday 14 February.

We Want Your Views!

The Prisons Strategy White Paper

The Prisons Strategy White Paper was recently published, and there is a consultation period until 4 February 2022. UCU and the Prisoner Learning Alliance will be submitting a response to this, and we would be very grateful for PLA and UCU members' input. We are hosting a joint consultation session on 19 January from 6:30PM - 7:30PM for teachers working in prison education to share their thoughts on the White Paper and its implications for prison education. Please email us at info@prisonerlearningalliance.org.uk if you would like to join. If you can't make the Zoom session, please do email us your thoughts, or let us know if you prefer to set up a separate call (before 21 January). The White Paper can be accessed here: [Prisons Strategy White Paper - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/102424/Prisons-Strategy-White-Paper-2021.pdf)

H&S Update – Testing and Safety Advice

For the latest safety advice please see: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/prisons>

Included in the guidance is the following (see the full guidance for more details).

UCU met with HMPPS head of health and safety via the Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance (JUPA) on Tuesday 11 January. At the time of writing there are now over 100 prison outbreak sites with 17 on the watch list. HMPPS also set out that they will be shortly enforcing Prison Rule 73, which affords them the right to refuse entry to anyone who does not evidence a negative Covid test result. UCU have been informed that HMPPS guidance on this will be issued shortly. The envisaged requirement will be LFD testing 5 x per week with 1 x PCR test UCU raised with HMPPS the issue of test availability and that this system had to be operated on a no detriment basis. I.e members should not suffer a detriment (I.e loss of pay) if for any reason there were no availability of tests which led to the prison refusing entry.

Updated Hazards & Controls

In addition to the comprehensive advice set out previously, Reps should also seek the implementation of the following control measures at this critical time:

- Given the requirements by HMPPS now that anyone accessing prison sites need to produce evidence of a negative test, employers need to ensure access in work time to regular, free testing (PCR and LFD tests) and provide support to those who are asked to self-isolate.
- Employers should ensure that staff do not suffer a detriment if for reasons outside of their control, no tests are available and they are refused access to a prison site.
- Ensure all staff have access to vaccinations and boosters in work time without loss of pay.
- Ensure staff who are required to self-isolate or have caring responsibilities for those who are isolating are offered appropriate levels of support and do not suffer detriment to their pay or conditions notwithstanding contract type such as those on atypical or insecure contracts.

Raise any concerns with your line manager and local rep.

Are You On a Milton Keynes Contract?

UCU is currently undertaking a systematic review of prison educators' terms and conditions. As part of that review and in relation to a prospective legal claim, we would like to hear from anyone who is currently working under a Milton Keynes contract and has **not** been considered for an increment and/or received a PDR.

This would include anyone who has TUPE'd from MKC in the past and is currently working for another employer under that same contract of employment.

If you think that this applies to you please contact us at dbussell@ucu.org.uk and we will be in touch with further information.

Shape The Future Vision Of Prison Education Join The Conversation - Join The Union

To help shape UCU's response to a rapidly evolving situation and to take a proactive strategy to the challenges you face every day as prison educators we are calling on ALL UCU members to become involved in a conversation about the future of prison education.

If there is no UCU rep at your site, then have the conversation between other members on site. Consider signing up as a rep!

UCU Future Vision of Prison Education Conversation starters:

- What does a good day as a prison educator feel like?
- What does a prison education department need to meet the aspirations of both staff and learners?
- What is needed to make blended learning a success?
- If you could start afresh – what would a prison education curriculum look like?
- If you could run a prison education department:
 - how would you staff it?
 - What would the teaching day look like?
 - What resources would you have access to?

Do you want to become more involved in this piece of work? Have you a special interest in blended learning/on-line delivery? Do you want to have a voice in how curriculum can be better designed and delivered? We want to hear from you. Ask about becoming part of UCU's Action Group on the Vision for Prison Education here: RKershaw@ucu.org.uk

Parliamentary Update

UCU is a member of the Justice Unions Parliamentary Group and the Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance which is calling on HMPPS to sign up to our Safe Inside Charter [SafeInsidePrisonCharter2020.pdf \(ucu.org.uk\)](#) and through our work in these forums, we are pleased to announce to members the tabling of the following 10 minute rule bill on reducing violence in prisons, the debate around which is scheduled to be read just after Prime Minister's Questions on 19 January.

At the heart of this Bill is a framework for minimising violence in prisons and holding the employer and management directly responsible and accountable for this outcome. This aligns closely with the approach laid out in the recent Prisons Strategy White Paper, which calls for safety to be included among the Key Performance Indicators that prison governors will be accountable for. Of course, health and safety legislation already requires employers to take all reasonable steps to protect workers, but many prison staff and unions feel that management doesn't take this responsibility seriously, and are calling for more robust action to be taken against governors, HMPPS, private prison operators and the MoJ itself to ensure that staff safety is at the top of the agenda.

Using the premise that safer prisons for staff are safer for prisoners too, staff safety should be a key focus of the Bill – and its scope will include enshrining the JUPA Safe Inside Charter into law.

You will be able to watch the debate here: <https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/LL4wCX6o3CXyOvLt6vB5O?domain=parliamentlive.tv>

UCU Needs You

If you would like to help your branch there are various ways to get involved.

- Be a contact and distribute UCU material
- Consider becoming a UCU rep or health and safety rep. Training and support is provided: www.ucu.org.uk/training .

Ask your local rep how you can help or contact Ronnie Kershaw rkershaw@ucu.org.uk for leaflets or ways to be active in your local branch.

Membership Benefits

1. UCU is the national and local collective voice for prison educators
2. We campaign for the nationalisation of a prison education service that provides educators with a 'national contract' that cannot be used by providers to make a profit or outbid competitors.
3. Branch reps negotiate with your employer about issues that concern you.
4. Every day our trained local representatives, backed by full-time UCU officials, help to resolve hundreds of problems in branches across the UK.
5. UCU's legal scheme covers **employment rights**, **personal injury** (free and covers workplace stress), and **immigration employment advice**.
6. 24/7 confidential support including counselling from Education Support
7. Reduce the cost of your subscription by claiming **income tax relief**.

For membership benefits: www.ucu.org.uk/ucuplus Join: www.ucu.org.uk/join

Your UCU region can ONLY represent you on issues that occur after joining.

Please forward this newsletter to colleagues and encourage them to join UCU