

## Weston College Group UCU 2023/2024 pay claim

**This year our claim has two parts.** The first part is focused on pay, and the non-pay elements in the second part are gate time and workload.

### Part 1 – Pay

Since submitting last year's pay claim, inflation has continued to rise steeply and is at a 40-year high (13.5% RPI at March 2023<sup>1</sup>). Members' incomes are squeezed even more as essential costs continue to rise. The enormous surge in costs faced by staff includes<sup>2</sup>:

- A 133% increase in gas prices;
- A 67% increase in electricity prices;
- A 51% increase in mortgage interest payments;
- A 19% increase in food prices.

**The Ministry of Justice PEF uplift of 10.4% (CPI at February 2023) is a good starting point for this year's negotiations.** It alone does not account for the full reality of the impact of rising inflation, more appropriately captured by the retail price index (RPI) inflation rate of 13.5%. And as highlighted by the examples above, even this does not cover the severely increased costs of essentials such as heating and eating.

Retaining motivated, experienced staff is known to be a key issue in the prison education sector, and 70% indicated that they are thinking of leaving prison work in the next five years<sup>3</sup>. The same report found that poor and stagnating pay was a major factor affecting retention<sup>4</sup>, and a report by the Education Select Committee<sup>5</sup> noted the hundreds of vacancies within prison education and the current crisis of retention and recruitment. Decent pay that keeps up with inflation is thus of major importance to the future of prison education provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics, Inflation and price indices

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics, Consumer Price Inflation Reference Tables, March 2023

<sup>3</sup> UCU and PLA, Hidden Voices, August 2021: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/11712/Seven-in-10-teachers-set-to-leave-prison-education>

<sup>4</sup> UCU and PLA, Hidden Voices, August 2021: [https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/11726/Hidden-voices/pdf/Hidden\\_voices\\_Aug2021.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/11726/Hidden-voices/pdf/Hidden_voices_Aug2021.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Education Committee, Not just another brick in the wall, May 2022: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmeduc/56/report.html>

We are seeking:

- A pay increase of RPI (13.5%) plus 2% to match inflation and include an element of catch-up for the real terms pay cuts suffered over the past decade.

## **Part 2 – Non-pay elements**

**Members have indicated that in addition to pay, their priorities are a meaningful workload agreement and inclusion of gate time.**

It is inequitable that prison educators do not receive gate time despite being subject to the same requirements and processes as other prison staff. Gate time has been successfully negotiated with Novus, and Weston would do well to follow this example of good practice.

Workload is a growing concern for the vast majority of UCU members in prison education: they work on average one unpaid day a week, and 90% report that their workloads have increased over the last three years<sup>6</sup>. Over a third of survey respondents reported that their workload is unmanageable. This is unacceptable and has negative implications for staff health according to Health and Safety Executive's [Management Standards](#), as well as staff retention and the provision of education. Staff shortages have been noted as an additional contributing factor in excessive workloads for prison educators and it is clear to see the vicious circle that results from overworked staff having to take time off due to ill health or leave the sector. High turnover has been noted as a particular issue for prison educators at Weston and anecdotal evidence suggests that high workloads and lack of support contribute to this.

Meaningful negotiations on an effective agreement to manage workload would include:

- An agreed maximum for contact hours;
- Fair and transparent workload allocation model which provides for a set ratio of teaching:administration time, and protected 'chunks' of admin time greater than 30 minutes;
- The resourcing of more teaching, administration and support staff;

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<sup>6</sup> UCU Workload Survey, 2022: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/12905/UCU-workload-survey-2021-data-report/pdf/WorkloadReportJune22.pdf>

- Wellbeing and workload protocols.

We are seeking:

- i. Gate time to be included as part of normal working hours and to be given the same time allowance as prison staff in their local establishment.
- ii. Significant movement towards a meaningful agreement to address excessive workloads.

In order to engage in meaningful negotiations, we request the following data:

1. Current pay bill
2. Proportion of annual pay bill to operational costs
3. Annual overall staff costs broken down by role type
4. Number of employees by grade and role type (e.g. SMT, Managers, Teachers, Tutors, Support Staff)
5. Number of workers by role type (e.g. teaching staff, support staff)
6. Quarterly staff turnover in prison education, broken down by the following categories:
  - a. Role type (e.g. tutor, lecturer, administrative support)
  - b. Gender; age group; race/ethnicity

We look forward to a positive and early response to our claim.

Yours sincerely,

Rowan Campbell

UCU Bargaining and Negotiations Official