

31 March 2009

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Dear Sue

I have warmly welcomed the work that has been done since the formation of the Offender Learning and Skills forum. It really is a significant step forward for us to be able to have direct contact with key stakeholders again.

I know that one of the main issues for you over the last year has been the issue of re-tendering. As you are well aware, it is something that my members await with some trepidation given what has happened in the past. I'd like to acknowledge the commitment given by ministers which you have passed on, that specifically in terms of TUPE and pensions, that there is a solid commitment in the retendering process to only accept bids which offer 'broadly comparable' schemes to TPS.

However, there are a range of other employment issues that our members feel should also be considered and I thought it might be useful for you to see the outcome of a petition that was circulated recently.

As you will see, 980 prison educators signed a petition calling on the LSC to ensure that whoever wins the contracts provides pay rates and career progression structures that are comparable with Further Education lecturers, allows paid time off for professional and personal development and makes a genuine commitment to fostering good industrial relations with trade unions in offender learning. These are issues about which our members feel very strongly and I hope that the LSC will take note of their views.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely

Sally Hunt
General Secretary