



17<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Dear Committee Clark,

**Re: Scottish Parliament Education Committee: Personal and Social Education**

We are writing on behalf of the PCS Young members committee who want to make a couple of points in advance of the Committee's roundtable discussion next week and before the cabinet secretary's session on 8 March.

Our committee are keen to point out that the political landscape in Britain has become somewhat unstable. Since 2008 we have seen stagnating wages, a rise in zero hour contracts, a greater gap between the rich and poor, the bedroom tax, and recently Brexit which could potentially see the loss of jobs and workers' rights as a result. The last ten years has seen our young people become one of the most exploited and disadvantaged groups in society. The young people of today face many hardships; the most crushing of which being an extreme lack of reasonably paid jobs. This has resulted in young people falling victim to exploitation in the work place through the horrific effects of zero hour contracts and the gig economy which has led to a lack of regular hours, a lack of proper workers' rights and being underpaid the minimum wage as result of these contracts.

It has been reported that this generation of young workers will earn less than previous generations in real terms pay. Current and future generations of young workers face a massive challenge to overcome these threats which they are faced with. One of the ways this can be overcome is through education. Our Committee would like to propose that it should be compulsory to educate pupils about workers' rights and the principles of trade unionism in PSE classes, as this can empower future generations to overcome the problems aforementioned.

Many young people enter the workplace having little or no knowledge of trade unions. The Scottish Trades Union Congress' "Union Into Schools" programme is brilliant, but we argue that the materials used in these sessions should become part of the PSE curriculum. All young people in Scotland should start their working lives aware of their rights as workers, but more importantly understand why being a member of a trade union will help them to actualize these rights, and fight for better terms and conditions.

We hope both sessions go well.

Yours sincerely,

Lewis Asker  
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