

Minute of the meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Central Committee held on Thursday 23 March 2023 (1000-1200), via Video Conference.

In Attendance	
Anne Campbell	Management Side
Sue Clyne	“ “
Liz Connolly	“ “
Debbie Kerr	“ “
Derek Smeall	“ “
David Watt	“ “ (Chair)
Collette Bradley	Staff Side
Donny Gluckstein	“ “
Chris Greenshields	“ “
Annemarie Harley	“ “
Eileen Imlah	“ “
Alison MacLean	“ “
Laura McLean	“ “
Charlie Montgomery	“ “
Jim O’Donovan	“ “
Gary Ross	“ “
Katrina Daly	Management Side Secretary (Lecturing)
Heather Stevenson	Management Side Secretary (Support)
Stuart Brown	Staff Side Secretary
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat
Gavin Donoghue	Director of College Employers Scotland
Frances Harrower	Job Evaluation Project Manager
Louis Martin	Zoom Administrator
Catherine McCreath	Note Taker

01/22 Welcome and Apologies

The Management Side chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted from Sarah-Louise Nandadasa and Alan Ritchie, Management Side and Lorcan Mullen, Staff Side. It was also noted that Alison MacLean, Staff Side, had to leave the meeting at 1100.

02/22 Minutes of Previous Meetings and Any Matters Arising

The minute of the meeting held on Thursday 31 March 2022 was agreed.

Living Wage Accreditation

The Staff Side requested a list of colleges that are now fully accredited, stating this has not been shared by the Management Side. The Management Side clarified that a full list of colleges accredited as Living Wage employers and paying the Living Wage was provided in a previous jointly agreed media release with Support Staff Secretary. The staff side noted that some time had elapsed since this point and requested an updated table.

Policy Working Group

The Staff Side requested progress on the National Dignity and Respect Policy, which had been previously agreed to be added to the remit of the Policy Working Group. be tabled to the Policy Working Group. It was agreed that the Policy Working Group would consider the matter at its next meeting.

Health and Safety

The Staff Side wished to note that its request for a National Health and Safety Committee/forum to be developed remains outstanding and would be added to the next Central Committee agenda.

Frequency of Central Committee Meetings

The Staff Side requested a review of the frequency of the Central Committee meetings, as in its view business matters have been stalled. It was agreed this matter would be addressed later in the meeting.

03/22 Fair Work Working Group Update

The Management Side Joint Secretary provided an update on the Fair Work Working Group, highlighting that the group has met four times and has been tasked with developing a Fair Work Statement. Limited progress has been made on developing a Fair Work Statement and on the work plan for the sector. Latterly, the staff side shared survey information relating to Fair Work, which was reviewed by the Management Side Joint Secretaries to establish a way forward. The Staff Sides' surveys provided interesting feedback. However, each staff side union had taken a different approach to their respective survey.

It was noted the Management Side expressed a desire to create a common baseline by conducting a joint survey, and that the Staff Side had declined this proposal. The Management Side indicated that it may explore other methods to achieve a baseline.

To progress matters, it was agreed by the working group to focus on the utilisation of zero hours, supply, or bank contracts. The Management Side agreed to conduct a survey on the utilisation of these contracts in the sector and to report its findings to the group's next meeting on Thursday 4 May 2023. It was noted there were still several outstanding issues that the group must address and resolve.

The Staff Side expressed disappointment and stated that the working group has not progressed as desired and its view was that instead of establishing a baseline, the group should focus on setting targets and assessing the current situation. The Staff Side stated it presented sixteen suggested initiatives pertaining to Fair Work, which it believes must be addressed prior to agreeing on a Fair Work Statement.

Following lengthy discussions on Fair Work and the current state of the sector, the Management Side proposed the creation of a national mission statement, noting that a similar document was drafted and submitted in 2021, and suggested revisiting it to determine its relevance, and recommended identifying specific areas where both sides could reach a consensus and using them as a foundation for further progress.

The Staff Side noted that while the Management Side seeks a Fair Work statement, the Staff Side prioritises the establishment of Fair Work practices i.e. Staff Side viewed any statement to be an output from evidence demonstrating good practice.

The Management Side requested an adjournment.

Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Management Side expressed the view that they were underrepresented in the previous meeting and given the Staff Side's submission of sixteen items for review, proposed an early meeting, if a date can be agreed by all parties, in order to move forward on these items.

This was agreed by the Staff Side.

04/22 Policy Working Group Update

The Management Side provided an update on the Policy Working Group, which had previously focused on a draft Menopause Policy, that has now been published and being used by the sector.

The subgroup has produced a draft Disciplinary Policy and is currently discussing a draft model disciplinary procedure. Both documents are still undergoing further revisions and will be shared with the wider Policy Working Group at a future date.

The Staff Side also highlighted it felt that the Menopause Policy was released before the final version was formally agreed by the Central Committee, which resulted in a couple of changes being required to be made retrospectively. The Management Side acknowledged and noted the feedback.

Additionally, the Staff Side requested an update on the Work-Related Stress workstream that was committed to in 2019. The Management Side agreed the Policy Working Group would take this forward.

05/22 Lessons Learned

The Management Side shared that it has consulted with its members and provided a response to the Scottish Government. It noted it has a number of reservations, however, expressed its desire to move forward and adopt the practices suggested in the report, particularly more frequent meetings and an independent Chair for these meetings and sought Staff Side's support for this.

The Staff Side expressed some reservations about the report and the idea of an independent chair. It requested a full discussion with the Management Side to address its concerns. The Management Side agreed that a discussion between both sides would be beneficial but suggested a smaller number of representatives.

The Staff Side requested an adjournment to consider the points raised.

Adjournment

Following an adjournment, it was agreed a further meeting comprising of a smaller group will be convened in order to review and consider the contents and recommendations of the report.

06/22 Draft COVID Circular

The Management Side noted there have been several attempts to progress discussions on the draft COVID Circular, since the September 2022 Central Committee was postponed and that the Staff Side Joint Secretary has confirmed that the EIS-FELA is happy for the circular to be issued in its current form. However, the draft circular is still outstanding with the Support Staff Side, despite several attempts to schedule a meeting to discuss.

It was agreed the Management Side Joint Secretary will meet with representatives from the Support Staff Side to discuss and finalise any outstanding points.

07/22 Staff Governance Standard

The Staff Side presented Paper 6, which outlined concerns regarding the Staff Governance Standard and stated that the standard is not being widely used, and that there are several colleges where it is not discussed at all. The Staff Side suggested a review of the current framework and requested feedback from the Management.

The Management Side clarified that the Staff Governance Standard was published in 2011, before the Code of Good Governance was released in 2014. The Code mandates college boards and regional strategic bodies to ensure compliance with the Standard. Compliance with the Code is a prerequisite for grant allocation by SFC, and internal and external effectiveness reviews are conducted to assess compliance. It was noted that the Staff Side raised similar concerns at a previous Side Table (Support) meeting, and in response, it was suggested that their concerns were raised at the Good Governance Steering Group, which was scheduled for Friday 24 March 2023.

The Management Side recommended the matter was referred to the Good Governance Steering Group and acknowledged the Staff Side's desire for action and that this will be conveyed to the Good Governance Steering Group.

08/22 Central Committee and Working Groups

Schedule of Meetings for 2023/24

Both sides agreed there that the Central Committee should convene more frequently, provided that there are substantial items on the agenda and to oversee the advancement of significant matters.

The Staff Side suggested that a Central Committee meeting should take place in June 2023, before the end of the summer term, to review the topics discussed today. The Joint Secretaries agreed to progress the arranging of this meeting.

09/22 Date of Next Meeting

The date of next meeting is still to be confirmed but will take place before the new academic year commences. A schedule of further meetings will be agreed over the summer period.