

**Agreed Minute of the Meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Support), on Wednesday 3 May 2023 at 1000-1200, via video conference**

<b>In Attendance</b>	
Liz Connolly	Management Side
Susan Elston	“ “
Debbie Kerr	“ “
Alan Ritchie	“ “
Derek Smeall	“ “
David Watt	“ “ (Chair)
Collette Bradley	Staff Side
Martin Clark	“ “
Chris Greenshields	“ “
Alison MacLean	“ “
Laura McLean	“ “
John Slaven	“ “
John Mooney	Staff Side Joint Secretary
Heather Stevenson	Management Side Joint Secretary
Gavin Donoghue	Director of College Employers Scotland
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat
Anne Davidson	Note Taker
Louis Martin	Zoom Administrator

**Welcome and Apologies**

The Management Side was in the Chair for the second dispute meeting at the request of the Staff Side. There were no apologies noted.

Susan Elston, Regional Chair of North East Scotland and John Mooney, Regional Officer for UNISON and Lead Officer for Further and Higher Education, were introduced to the meeting.

**Pay and Terms and Conditions Claim 2022-23 – Second Dispute Meeting**

The Management Side gave an update on the current financial position of the sector and confirmed announcements of further funding reductions including formal notification from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that £26 million sum, which had been allocated for transformation purposes had been withdrawn and was no longer available.

The Management Side noted that the risk level in funding of colleges is growing, whilst at the same time, there is a deterioration in the level of funding. It advised that there are a number of colleges operating in deficit and therefore reliant on the SFC to remain operational. The Staff Side raised queries regarding details on costings of its pay claim and the employers offer, discussions with the Scottish Government on pay and any reasons given for the removal of the £26 million.

The Management Side confirmed that there is a request to hold a ministerial meeting and that they have been made aware of the severity of the current financial situation within the sector.

The Management Side confirmed that, historically, the SFC has provided a document noted as "Table1," which gives a comparison between the current and previous year, though this has not been supplied as yet and is expected by the end of May 2023 when the final funding allocation is made following negotiations with the Scottish Government. The Management Side committed to make this available upon receipt.

The Staff Side stated its view that the request for detailed costings has been outstanding for some time. It advised that previously a document detailing cost relating to specific roles and individual colleges has been provided and stated its view that this is required in order to progress negotiations.

The Management Side reiterated the funding challenges currently facing the sector as colleges face the real prospect of running out of cash and advised that a number of colleges are very reluctant to move beyond the 2%. It expressed its intention to continue pursuing the Scottish Government for increased funding.

Notwithstanding, the current financial position of the sector, the Management Side advised it recognised the need to progress the negotiations and made an improved offer to the Staff Side of a two-year deal at 3.5% for 2022/23 and a further 3.5% for 2023/24. It asked the Staff Side to consider this offer as well as giving due consideration to its own position on the existing pay claim.

The Staff Side responded that currently members have a mandate to strike. It noted that its pay claim included changes to Terms and Conditions as well as pay. It noted that the offer of 3.5% only equates to one third of inflation and that as the claim is for flat cash, a percentage offer will not be attractive to its members. The offer of a two year deal also provided risk to the union members as inflation in year two could outstrip the pay offer. The Staff Side stated its view that the claim of £5000 flat cash remains valid and expressed a need to find a way to improve the other elements of the pay claim if the financial element of the claim falls short of this.

The Staff Side requested that further consideration be given to its requests for improvements in terms and conditions and were advised that a full response had already been provided on each of the requests and that work was being carried out within the Terms and Conditions Working Group on the areas previously identified as a priority, many of which have cost implications for the sector. The Management Side also provided clarification on the status of the 4 day working week Working Group and the meetings planned with Scottish Government which had been postponed at the request of the Staff Side. The Staff Side did not agree that the meetings had been postponed at their request.

The Staff Side stressed the need for detailed costings from SFC and asked for clarity regarding the consensus from College Employers Scotland (CES) in relation to the improved offer, given that some colleges are advising they cannot move from the 2%.

The Management Side advised that the 3.5% was still not affordable for many colleges and that the revised offer required some reforecasting and identification of potential consequences.

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

### Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Staff Side stated that as there was not a full and final offer made, it was not in a position to accept the offer and restated its view that the offer of 3.5% would not be acceptable to its members.

It expressed its willingness to move forward with discussions and stated that in advance of further meetings there must be detailed costings provided with a flat cash equivalent and the cost of the £5000 claim.

It also requested solid proposals in relation to the Job Evaluation and Terms and Conditions elements of the pay claim. It also requested information on the costs associated with a four-day working week.

The Management Side again stated its view that a response has been provided on terms and conditions. It again requested the Staff Side consider the improved offer and advise of any movement on its current pay claim.

The Staff Side requested that the detail of the negotiation remained confidential for now, however, the Management Side advised that as a full and final offer had been made, it would need to communicate this to its members.

The Management Side advised it will provide an update following the upcoming CES meetings scheduled for Wednesday 10 and 17 May 2023.

### **Date of Next Scheduled Meeting**

The date of the next scheduled NJNC – Side Table (Support) meeting is **Wednesday 7 June 2023** although it has been agreed to meet earlier to continue discussions on pay.