



Agreed Minute of the Meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Support), on Wednesday 31 May 2023 at 0900-1100, via video conference

In Attendance	
Collette Bradley	Staff Side
Chris Greenshields	“ “ (Chair)
Alison MacLean	“ “
Laura McLean	“ “
John Slaven	“ “
Debbie Kerr	Management Side
Alan Ritchie	“ “
Derek Smeall	“ “
David Watt	“ “
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
Catherine McCreath	Zoom Administrator

Welcome and Apologies

The Staff Side was in the Chair for the third dispute meeting. Apologies were noted from Martin Clark, Staff Side.

Pay and Terms and Conditions Claim 2022-23 – Third Dispute Meeting

The Staff Side confirmed it had rejected the previous offer and invited the Management Side to advise of any movement on the offer. The Management Side confirmed it had a further proposal for discussion and highlighted the current dire situation financially, whereby some colleges are currently undertaking voluntary severance schemes and others are going further. It stated that in its view, this is likely to continue over the next three-five years given that the Scottish Government has been clear that there is no more money available for the sector in the foreseeable future. The Management Side encouraged the Staff Side to use any influence it had in communications with the Scottish Government to make the case for additional funding, noting that the Management Side are doing, and will continue to do so, on a regular basis.

The Management Side confirmed that in all its discussions with College Employers Scotland (CES), it recognises the need to recompense staff, however, for this to be affordable, it creates the unfortunate situation where an increase in pay correlates to a need to have fewer staff and stated its expectation that this is likely to continue for three to five years.

The Management Side noted this is not a situation it wants to see but that this is the scale of the challenge faced by the college sector and advised that this is the background to the offer due to be tabled.

The Staff Side expressed concern that the Management Side has stated its expectation that the current situation with potential staffing reduction is likely to continue for the next three to five years.

It advised it has an upcoming meeting with the Minister and will be raising the concern that workers in the sector appear not to have the same protections as counterparts in other sectors, noting that historic conversations with the Scottish Government has indicated an expectation that the sector should take all possible steps to avoid compulsory redundancies, including working in partnership with the trade unions. The Staff Side also expressed its disappointment, that a number of colleges have already made a choice to enact compulsory redundancies following recent comment from the Minister, which advised that the sector is not bound by Public Sector Pay Policy.

The Staff Side stated, in its view, that it is difficult to work in partnership when colleges are making compulsory redundancies as opposed to working with the trade unions to find alternative options.

The Management Side expressed its view that there needs to be recognition given to the financial challenges facing the sector; the reduction of funding for apprentices; the withdrawal of funds and the increase in staff costs and asked that, in conversation with the Minister, the Staff Side request that the situation of flat cash for three to five years be removed.

The Management Side then tabled a full and final offer to the Staff Side and requested the trade unions take the offer to its members.

The Management Side confirmed the pay element of the offer now comprised of a consolidated award of £2000 on all salary points for support staff effective from 1st September 2022 and a consolidated award of £1500 on all salary points for support staff effective from 1st September 2023.

Additionally, the Management Side provided an overview of the Terms and Conditions elements of the offer, reaffirming its commitment to the agreed programme of work in this area. Job Evaluation was also included, taking into account concerns about available finances, elapsed time since the project's initiation, and the validity of current data.

The Staff Side acknowledged the pay increase included in the offer, however, expressed concerns regarding potential inflationary pressures. It also raised concerns with regard to Job Evaluation and that the revised offer shows no movement in relation to Terms and Conditions. The Staff Side expressed concern about entering pay deals that would potentially result in job losses for their members.

The Staff Side requested an adjournment to review the details of the revised offer.

Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Staff Side again acknowledged the movement in relation to pay, however, it expressed disappointment in some areas and urged the Management Side not to make this a full and final offer and to give consideration to a number of concerns.

The Staff Side advised it is not comfortable with the level of operational detail on the Job Evaluation element and in its view is not appropriate within pay negotiations and would have preferred to see completion dates identified. It also expressed concern about certain areas within the Terms and Conditions elements potentially remaining unresolved until 2024.

In regard to the pay element of the offer, the Staff Side expressed its view that the £1500 for 2023/23 is significantly below inflation. It also stated that in order to advise members not to reject the revised offer, it would want a no compulsory redundancy guarantee together with movement on Job Evaluation and Terms and Conditions.

The Management Side queried the comments regarding the second year pay uplift, given that colleges are facing the same inflation charges and increasing costs. In its view, this is a fair offer which shows commitment to the staff.

The Management Side reiterated that the offer is now full and final in relation to pay. As regards changes to Terms and Conditions elements, the Management Side stated that requesting additional holidays in the current climate is not realistic. In relation to Job Evaluation, it restated its commitment to move this forward.

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

Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Management Side reiterated again that there would be no further movement on pay.

In relation to the Staff Side request for a no compulsory redundancy guarantee, the Management Side stated it was impossible to give such a guarantee, given that colleges are facing three-five years of flat cash, whilst at the same time facing cuts and funding being withdrawn, however, it advised that this is absolutely last resort and that colleges would work with trade unions to minimise job losses and to effect change through voluntary measures wherever possible.

In relation to Job Evaluation, the Management Side agreed to work with the Staff Side to look at amending the wording and advised it is committed to continuing discussions around the four day working week and the Terms and Conditions Working Group.

The Staff Side advised it was meeting with the Minister that afternoon and requested offline discussions following this meeting. The Management Side agreed to this but clarified there would be no movement on the pay element or the request for a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies.

The Management Side stated that it hopes that the Staff Side will take the revised pay proposal to its members with a recommendation to accept.

The Staff Side was advised that following the NJNC – Side Table (Lecturing) meeting scheduled to take place tomorrow (Thursday 1 June 2023), the sector will be informed of the full detail of offers made and the responses from the respective staff sides.

Date of Next Scheduled Meeting

The date of the next scheduled NJNC – Side Table (Support) meeting is **Wednesday 7 June 2023**, however the agenda and papers have not yet been agreed with the staff side.