

**Agreed Minute of the Meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Support), on Friday 21 July 2023 at 1400-1600, via video conference**

<b>In Attendance</b>	
Martin Clark	Staff Side
Alison MacLean	“ “
Fiona Wallace	“ “
Liz Connolly	Management Side
Sarah-Louise Nandadasa	“ “
Derek Smeall	“ “
David Watt	“ “
John Mooney	Staff Side Joint Secretary
Gavin Donoghue	Acting Management Side Joint Secretary
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat

**Welcome and Apologies**

The Staff Side was in the Chair for the second dispute meeting. Apologies were noted from Collette Bradley, Chris Greenshields, Laura McLean and John Slaven, Staff Side and Heather Stevenson, Management Side.

**No Compulsory Redundancies – Second Dispute Meeting**

The Staff Side opened the meeting by requesting the meeting focuses on its paper that was presented to the NJNC – Side Table (Support) on Wednesday 28 June 2023. It reminded the Management Side it is seeking a perpetual no compulsory redundancy guarantee agreement for all colleges that are signatories to the National Recognition and Procedures Agreement (NRPA).

The Management Side reaffirmed its position that a sector-wide guarantee is not feasible but the commitment to job security as contained in the pay offer would apply. It also reminded the Staff Side of the Scottish Government direction on this matter and that compulsory redundancies should only be used as a last resort.

The Staff Side chair suggested that as there was no agreement by both sides on the staff side paper that it would be comfortable recording a ‘failure to agree’ on this matter. This was agreed.

The Staff Side then requested the Management Side consider a proposal on the current pay offer which, if agreed, would cease the proposed industrial action due to commence after the summer period.

The proposal was for the employers to consider and agree to a one year offer only which included the £2,000 pay element for 2022/23 and a commitment to reach agreement on a guidance document for the sector to avoid redundancies by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

The Staff Side confirmed there were no proposed changes to the current wording on Terms and Conditions or Job Evaluation.

The Management Side requested an adjournment to consider the proposal. This was agreed.

## Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Management Side advised it was unable to agree to a one-year deal. However, it was supportive of developing guidance for the sector to help avoid redundancies or for colleges to refer to when facing a redundancy situation.

The Staff Side was disappointed by this position as, in its view, this could break the deadlock and provide a period of stability to allow discussions to continue on year two of the offer.

The Management Side advised that discussions have already taken place on year two, and a full and final offer has been made and that a two-year deal would provide longer term stability for the sector to then focus on other matters such as Job Evaluation and the Four Day Working Week.

Representatives from UNISON and Unite indicated that following member meetings and a recent multi-question survey, members were seeking an enhancement to the monetary amount for year two and that job security was equally important. UNISON and Unite also advised it was unlikely the two year pay offer would be accepted if the offer was put to members and reminded the management side of its mandate for industrial action.

The Staff Side also noted the offer was initially made on the basis that it comes with job losses.

The Management Side responded that compulsory redundancy in the sector is extremely low and regrettable as no employer wants to lose staff as staff are the business. It stated that the pay offer is not threatening jobs as it is not just salary, but also wider cost increases and funding reduction that has led to this situation.

The Staff Side acknowledged the point about compulsory redundancies being low in the sector but stated there are currently two colleges undertaking them. It also stated that due to the Scottish Government policy in further education the trade unions needed to be more mindful than other sectors such as NHS and local government as the pay deals in those sectors do not have the potential consequences on jobs. In its view, it is clear that job losses will happen in the college sector and that it is not guaranteed that they will come through Voluntary Severance, therefore, it cannot put the offer out without explaining this to its members.

The Management Side again requested the offer is put to trade union members through a ballot which would hopefully resolve this dispute and allow resources to be focussed on other areas outstanding.

A Unite representative repeated its position that it did not think its members would sign up to the deal based on recent member feedback.

The Management Side advised it would be helpful to know whether the offer would be put to ballot.

UNISON advised it could not comment on GMB, however, it was not balloting on a yes/no fashion and had asked its members if it wanted the offer to be put to them formally. The feedback was no.

The Staff Side advised it would be responding in writing to an ongoing communication between the Joint Secretaries by the week beginning 24 July 2023.

There was no further discussion.

**Close**