

Approved Minute of the First Dispute Meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Support) on Thursday 7 June 2018 at 1100 at Argyll Court, Stirling.

In Attendance	
Chris Greenshields	Staff Side (Chair)
Martin Clark	“ “
Alison Maclean	“ “
Audrey Manning	“ “
Patricia Murray	“ “
Nick Steff	“ “
Alex Linkston	Management Side
Annette Bruton	“ “
Debbie Kerr	“ “
Andy Lawson	“ “
Graeme Stephen	“ “
John Gallacher	Staff Side Secretary
John Gribben	Management Side Secretary
Heather Stevenson	Depute Management Side Secretary

First Dispute Meeting

The Staff Side opened the meeting by re-iterating the key points of the dispute in relation to the pay claim for 2018/19 thus:

Pay 2018/19

The pay award element of the pay claim for a flat cash value of £750 for the lowest paid is as far as they wanted to go. The Staff Side stated that the pay award figure of £750 was already a reduction from claim of £1500 to reflect concerns over affordability. It was also significantly lower than amounts modelled previously at the residential meeting in Airth. Additionally, £750 was only acceptable if all other areas of claim were included which is not currently the case. A lower flat rate would assist few staff and would be meaningless and unacceptable. The Staff Side highlighted that the employers current offer of £1000 (which could yet rise) to lecturers was not comparable with that for support staff.

Pay 2019/20

The Staff Side explained that for a two-year deal to be acceptable all other elements of the offer would need to be right. The pay offer for the following year would again need to reflect and improve upon the hybrid model for this year.

Pay Review Date

The Staff Side were not in disagreement with moving the pay settlement date but that the pay award should be consolidated to achieve this.

Annual Leave

This Staff Side believed that lecturers and senior lecturers had received a better deal than support staff in relation to annual leave.

Pay Spine

A 1% step value for an interim pay spine was too low. The Staff Side pointed out that the pay spines modelled at the residential meeting in Airth were 3% and 2%. While the Staff Side strongly wished to see a movement to a national spine this year and believed it achievable, the spine offered is lower than most spines which currently exist in the sector.

Unsocial Hours

The Staff Side stated that after analysing sector terms and conditions, contracts and statements of particulars for support staff in the sector, 75% had defined hours as standard so represented the norm. The Staff Side pointed out that “norms” was what the employers said they wished to harmonise.

The Staff Side stated that the table supplied by the employers showing 223 staff in the sector working out with normal hours highlighted that 55% of those detailed were cleaners and related costs were minimal, controllable and affordable.

Conservation

The Staff Side welcomed the positive words of the Management Side in relation to conservation, however they stated that the sector had not delivered on similar promises to staff over this issue in the past and referred to the UNISON report previously circulated on this issue. This showed that only 3% of staff had managed to exit detriment and that support staff were more likely to be faced with financial detriment than any other group. The Staff Side re-iterated that guarantees were required.

Overtime

Small differences remained in the definition of the overtime bar threshold value.

The Staff Side commented that due to the lack of progress, consideration could be given to a one-year deal and to take a longer period over other outstanding matters including a pay spine. They set out that one additional dispute meeting was scheduled and that meetings with ACAS and/or intervention from the Minister lie ahead.

The trade unions believed that the pay claim can be salvaged with due process, however if not, this would end in a ballot for industrial action of members in the Autumn.

The meeting was adjourned.

Adjournment

The meeting reconvened and the Management Side advised the following:

The Management Side thanked the Staff Side for their clarification.

The Management Side agree, that with the benefit of goodwill and compromise on both sides, that the issues before us are resolvable.

The Management Side however need to take cognisance of affordability, sustainability, and the potential for unintended consequences.

The Management Side is minded to continue to pursue a multi-year agreement, coupled with agreement on core conditions of service, a total package approach as previously set out.

The Management Side do need to carefully consider the development of a National Pay Spine, and whether this is premature in advance of Job Evaluation. It is likely, this is deferred while we seek agreement on all other matters, including of the acceleration of the previously agreed Job Evaluation scheme.

There are matters that clearly require further discussion and exploration, inclusive of costs, sustainability and the impact of pay offers.

Both sides have agreed to a process of Job Evaluation, this programme needs accelerated.

The Management Side note the multiple comparison to lecturers are made, whilst we respect this, unfortunately, this is not helpful in our negotiations.

Both sides are close on several matters, the Management Side propose:

- Informally, continuation of a hybrid approach, considering alternative flat cash offers for those at the lower end of the pay scales
- Informal modelling of year two, with a combination of flat cash and %
- Informally, exploring core conditions of service, and identifying if a total package approach is achievable

The Staff Side responded by stating that they cannot ignore the lecturers pay position and reminded the Management Side that there is an outstanding dispute on annual leave. The Organisational Change procedure was urgent and pressing.

Both sides agreed to meet on an informal basis on June 18th at a time and venue to be confirmed to discuss matters further.

The Staff Side thereafter brought the meeting to a close.

Date of Next Dispute Meeting

The next meeting is Wednesday 27 June 2018 at 1100, Colleges Scotland, Argyll Court, Stirling.