

Minute of the Meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Support), on Wednesday 17 March 2021 at 1000-1200, via video conference

In Attendance	
Collette Bradley	Staff Side
Chris Greenshields	“ “ (Chair)
Alison MacLean	“ “
Nick Steff	“ “
John Slaven	“ “
David Alexander	Management Side
Gary Bisset	“ “
Jackie Galbraith	“ “
Frances Harrower	“ “ (from agenda item 9)
Debbie Kerr	“ “
Alex Linkston	“ “
Derek Smeall	“ “
John Gallacher	Staff Side Secretary
Heather Stevenson	Management Side Secretary
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat
Debbie MacLeod	Zoom Administrator

01/21 Welcome and Apologies

The Staff Side was in the Chair for this meeting. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Martin Clark (UNISON) and Audrey Manning (Unite).

02/21 Minute of Previous Meeting

The minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 December 2020 was agreed.

Matters Arising

Management of Minutes

The Staff Side had raised concerns on the detail of the minutes from previous meetings, stating that in its view they may not be an accurate reflection of full discussions. The Joint Secretaries confirmed that they had agreed that there is no requirement to amend the process however, there is an opportunity to review and provide comments on the minute in a shorter timeframe, an action that will be taken forward.

It was agreed that the matter was closed.

Living Wage Accreditation

The Staff Side had previously suggested that it would be valuable for a joint communication to be issued to acknowledge the sector wide accreditation of the original 20 National Recognition and Procedures Agreement (NRPA) signatory colleges. The Staff Side also asked for an update to be provided on the newly signed colleges.

The Joint Secretaries confirmed that a joint communication will be taken forward.

The Management Side advised that progress on accreditation had been delayed due to other priorities for the two new signatory colleges.

Scope

The Staff Side requested an update on what actions have taken place relating to roles out of scope as its view was that these roles have an impact on the Job Evaluation and Pay Working Groups. The Staff Side also stated its disappointment at the lack of engagement and progress on these matters which have been reported as work in progress.

The Management Side confirmed that discussions are ongoing and agreed to provide a short report on this matter to the next meeting. The Staff Side asked if senior pay was still a live issue.

The Management Side confirmed that this is correct however, other priorities due to COVID had impacted progress in this area.

Fair Work

The Staff Side wished it to be noted its disappointment that a Fair Work survey carried out by UNISON had only been shared with the HR Strategic Group and had not been shared with the college senior leaders.

This was noted.

03/21 2020/21 Support Staff Pay and Terms and Conditions Offer

The Staff Side confirmed that members of all three constituent unions had consulted and had agreed to accept the 2020/21 Support Staff Pay Terms and Conditions Offer, subject to an agreed joint circular which had already been drafted.

The Management Side advised that the 2020/21 Support Staff Pay and Terms and Conditions Offer would be presented to the Employers' Association for formal ratification, subject to an agreement being reached on a joint circular, following which the offer can be implemented.

The Staff Side advised that it would like to discuss the draft circular further in relation to breaks, and areas containing part-time and pro-rata working, and commitments made in relation to the Terms and Conditions Working Group. The Staff Side was seeking a reaffirmation that time and resources would be put into the working group to take forward matters that are required to be addressed as a matter of urgency, such as expenses around home working during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure that this happens before a return to campus.

The Management Side honoured the commitments made in the offer and advised that full discussions would take place at the Terms and Conditions Working Group.

The Staff Side invited early and urgent discussions around other matters included in the original submission from the staff side including examining a four day working week, making reference to a proposal that is currently under review within Skills Development Scotland.

The Management Side advised that this needs to be considered by the Employers' Association if there was a business case for it, but in the interim welcomed further suggestions on how this would work in practice.

The Staff Side confirmed that it had a few proposals for consideration however, suggested that this should be a joint approach.

The Unite full time official requested clarification on the timescale for members receiving the pay element of the offer.

The Management Side advised that it was committed to the earliest payment run, however, discussions on the circular had still to take place.

It was agreed that a joint press release would be issued once the circular was agreed.

04/21 Support Staff Side Workplan

The Management Side referred to the high-level Support Staff Side draft workplan, a copy of which had been shared with the Staff Side Secretary. To date, there had been no comments received or further discussions held.

The Staff Side acknowledged the draft workplan had been shared and stated that the workplan should include all areas of work that has previously been agreed to do and should also include the elements within the 2020-21 pay claim which had not been addressed.

It was agreed that the workplan was still under discussion and would be finalised in due course.

05/21 Annual Leave Carry Forward – Interim Agreement

The Staff Side submitted Paper 3 in advance of the meeting, recommending an extension to the terms of Circular 02/20 – *COVID19 Annual Leave (Support Staff)*, which provides advice and guidance on the carry forward and scheduling and rescheduling of annual leave.

The Management Side supported this request and advised that this would be presented to the Employers' Association for formal ratification and a response provided within a week.

06/21 Sectoral Approach to Consultation Under Fair Work

The Staff Side submitted Paper 4 which raised concerns that there is a lack of dialogue and engagement in some colleges with regards to the management and implementation of organisational change. The Staff Side view was that there is a requirement to introduce standard policies and procedures and for a joint approach to establishing guidelines and guidance and welcomed the Management Side's thoughts on the issue.

The Management Side thanked the Staff Side for the paper and for raising its points for consideration however, explained that the concerns impinged on the work of the Terms and Conditions Working Group. Therefore, due to the crossover, the proposals should be presented to the Terms and Conditions Working Group for further consideration.

The Staff Side expressed concern that the Terms and Conditions Working Group had made little progression and suggested that more frequent meetings were required to advance the work. The Staff Side also stated that it would not be an easy task to mesh Paper 4 with the current draft Organisational Change policy. Furthermore, a renewed confidence was required on the policy, particularly post COVID-19, and referenced the contents of the Ministerial letter issued in December 2020. The Staff Side urged the Management Side review the proposal and consider implementation.

The Management Side reaffirmed its commitment to the Organisational Change Policy and agreed to expedite this area of work and any areas not agreed at the working group should be brought back to the Side Table for a decision.

The Staff Side welcomed the commitment and a fresh approach to the Terms and Conditions Working Group.

07/21 Facilities Time/Recognition

The Staff Side raised concerns that there were a number of recognition issues in the sector and in its view, there is no intention to give facilities time for the UNISON Branch. It stated that representatives were not being afforded the time to attend and prepare for key meetings and this had resulted in apologies for today's meeting. The Staff Side added that there had been increased pressure on representatives and colleagues' health and wellbeing, due to increasing work priorities, particularly in relation to COVID-19.

The Management Side confirmed that discussions were ongoing in relation to National Branch Facilities Times, however, there was no further update to share at this time.

The Staff Side stated that the two recent signatory colleges are not recognising the branch and were not engaging in discussions and a Local Recognition and Procedures Agreement was required.

The Management Side Joint Secretary agreed to discuss directly with the two colleges.

08/21 2021/22 Pay Claim

The Staff Side advised that it was intended to submit the 2021/22 pay claim in June 2021 and requested that discussions are progressed quickly to achieve an outcome closer to the September claim date.

The Management Side explained that the September date had been implemented to align with college funding and given that the Scottish Funding Council allocated its funding in May each year, discussions on the pay claim from June onwards would be acceptable dependent on the submission of the claim.

09/21 Job Evaluation Update

The Management Side referred to Paper 5 and provided an update to the Side Table on the project progress to date, including the slippage of Stage Two until July 2021, and confirmed action plans had been put in place to address.

The Staff Side advised that it had raised concerns in December 2020 with regards to the project funding. The Staff Side stated that it had further concerns relating to roles that would be impacted post September 2018, and outstanding questionnaires that would now be approximately two years out of date. The Staff Side welcomed a response on what actions were being taken to move the project along and suggested issuing a joint communication on project progress and plans.

The Management Side shared the Staff Side's concerns however, advised that work continued with the colleges and that there had been several factors that had contributed to the delay, and were being addressed.

The Staff Side welcomed a speedy conclusion however added that a more detailed process would be beneficial.

The Management Side added that the key priority at this time was to complete the scoring phases of current roles and move to pay modelling on pay outcomes.

The Staff Side referred to what it believed to be an agreement reached at the Job Evaluation Working Group in June 2020 with regards to the post September 2018 roles, and requested that in its view, the pre agreed processes should be jointly communicated.

The Management Side raised that no agreement had been reached at the meeting in June 2020 with the action note from the meeting only being presented at today's meeting for noting.

Both the Management Side and Staff Side agreed to investigate this further offline.

The Staff Side raised the ongoing EIS-FELA dispute and the concerns it had on the impact of other roles being evaluated through the Job Evaluation project

The Management Side responded that there was currently no formal agreement as the consensus position reached was subject to ratification by both sides. The Management Side noted the Staff Side's concerns.

The Staff Side added that if the dispute resolution was believed to be detrimental to support roles then the staff side may consider raising a dispute on this matter.

Action Notes of Working Group Meetings

The Action Notes of the Working Group Meetings were noted.

The Staff Side reiterated that communications were required on Post 2018 roles. The Management Side noted this request.

10/21 Terms and Conditions Working Group

The Action Note from the previous Working Group Meeting was noted.

The Staff Side requested that the secretariat set up a schedule of meetings to move the work of the group forward. This was agreed.

11/21 Pay Working Group

The Action Notes from the previous meetings were noted.

The Staff Side stated that a Terms of Reference had been agreed at the Pay Working Group, however, in its view, expertise was required around the more complex aspects of the project, suggesting that this is a joint approach. The Staff Side recommended that the project fundamentals are established early to allow the project to move forward at pace and advised it was happy to take discussions offline due to the urgency of this matter.

The Management Side reiterated that whilst it would reflect on the Staff Side's comments, the key priority was to complete the second phase scoring on the Job Evaluation project, stating that finalised scoring underpinned the Job Evaluation project and once scores had been finalised discussions could be opened around pay and grading.

The Staff Side view was that it believed that progress had been slow and they could not wait until June/July. The Staff side stated that working group plans had been revisited in January 2021, however, there were concerns around the lack of commitment and collaboration, and timeframes. The Staff Side would like the focus to shift from Job Evaluation to Pay.

The Management Side reiterated that it would reflect on the comments made and that it was equally keen to get work on pay outcomes started, however, the scores from second scoring were required.

The Staff Side did not agree with this position.

13/21 - Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is due to take place on **Wednesday 9 June 2021**.

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Action Monitoring Log

Wednesday 4 December 2019		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Circular 05/18 – Staff Side to share results from FOI request on Permanency.	Staff Side	February 2020 – Outstanding
Wednesday 10 June 2020		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Pay Claim – full costings to prepared and then verified by SFC prior to the commencement of negotiations.	Management Side	On resolution of 1 st April Pay Increase dispute.
Wednesday 2 December 2020		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Joint communication to be issued to mark the sector achieving Living Wage accreditation.	Joint Secretaries /Comms Teams	In Progress – March 2021
Facilities Time – Staff Side to supply the detail requested to allow Management Side to prioritise work.	Staff Side	Complete
Wednesday 17 March 2021		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Issue joint communication on Living Wage Accreditation.	Joint Secretaries	June 2021
Short paper to update the Side Table on Scope.	Management Side	June 2021
Provide an update on branch recognition at two new signatory colleges.	Management Side	June 2021
Staff side will issue 2021/22 Pay Claim in advance of the next Side Table.	Staff Side	June 2021
Set up a schedule of meetings for the Terms and Conditions Working Group.	Management Side	June 2021