

National Bargaining News

Strike Bulletin #2

News from the national negotiations

Strike action to escalate

Negotiators met with Management again five times this week on the back of a second day of solid, national industrial action by EIS FELA members demanding that management honour the March 2016 NJNC Agreement.

Things looked up briefly at the first meeting on Thursday, when management trumpeted 'three new proposals' - but then they simply rehashed two of their | existing proposals with one new offer being "a willingness to discuss" paying to reduce annual leave.

Management are seeking to implement over several years an increase class contact so that all lecturers will do 24 hours teaching PLUS 2 hours cover to an annual maximum of 880 hours, and to cut annual leave to 56 days for unpromoted teaching staff. For promoted teaching staff, the cut is even more—as much as 21 fewer days for some promoted staff.

These proposals were not accepted by your negotiators. In our Wednesday meeting, our negotiators set out the benefits of the 21+3 weekly teaching hours with an agreed list of duties—and we agreed for a Technical Group to look at these on Thursday morning. This meeting took place and produced a list of

duties—although with different views as to which duties were within the timetabled hours or not.

We met a different management in a separate meeting on Thursday afternoon—who promptly questioned the morning's list of duties.

Management claim that the key driver is 'flexibility' and the development of a 'workforce for the future'. The Government states it wishes high quality FE provision.

We recognise the need for flexibility for colleges, staff and students. We also share a desire to deliver high quality education to every FE student. Our proposals have consistently reflected these aims—the management's proposals have not.

We have offered proposals which would deliver flexibility in a range of areas including holidays and class contact, and which would deliver not only a workforce for the future but a sustainable workforce able to meet the needs of the learners of the future.

At Thursday's meeting the EIS brought forward 5 new proposals; an increase in weekly contact hours to a maximum 22 hours with 'no detriment', improved cover arrangements with a '+2 hours' arrangement

with no detriment, an agreed list of duties for lecturers, and a commitment to negotiate annual leave if Management agree to no detriment.

The March 2016 NJNC Agreement includes a no detriment clause on pay, and so it is a principle that management have previously agreed to.

In today's (Friday) meeting, Management made a potential offer that would involved a shift on 'no detriment' as we requested. However, all this is subject to the approval of the Employers Association next week.

We welcomed this potential movement and change in attitude.

They have asked to suspend the strike action, but there is insufficient reason for us to do so—as major issues remain outstanding.

Management have not committed to honour the deal. They have swithered and spun, and in the meantime staff and students suffer.

The colleges are publicly funded bodies and they are accountable to the government. So it's time—SHIRLEY ANNE, WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

Sunshine in George Square

Over 600 EIS members, students and supporters crowded into George Square on Wednesday to listen to speakers and music at our second strike rally.

EIS FELA President John Kelly led chants of 'get them telt' and 'Shirley Anne, what's your plan?' before members heard updates from around the country before listening to speakers from the STUC, NUS, EIS and SNP.

Charlie Montgomery, staff side convenor, gave an update from an all day meeting on Tuesday, dismissing management's claims of 'three new proposals' as the same cuts to prep time and holidays regurgitated.

Pam Currie, EIS FELA Vice President, reported solid picket lines around the country—in contrast to the claim of one central belt Principal who claimed that the bigger colleges were doing the 'heavy lifting' while smaller branches sat back—a quick look at twitter would have shown him solid picket lines from Stornoway to Elgin and Dumfries to Thurso, with solidarity demonstrations repeated again in Orkney and Shetland.

STUC Assistant Secretary brought solidarity greetings and the backing of the entire Scottish trade union movement, urging EIS FELA members to continue the fight to defend public sector pay and T&C. Her call was echoed by EIS General Secretary Larry Flanagan, who reminded us that management are spending thousands of pounds a week on spin doctors to counter our dispute.

Speakers were invited from all political parties, and a statement of support was read out from Iain Gray, Labour Education spokesperson. Chris Stephen, SNP MP for Glasgow South West, rallied the crowds and promised to add his voice to those demanding Shirley Anne Somerville step in and press management to honour the deal.

A large number of students joined strikers in the square, and we were delighted to have Vonny Moyes, outgoing president of NUS Scotland and a former mature student at Langside College (now Glasgow Clyde), speak in support of our campaign. A large contingent of students from New College Lanarkshire attended the demo and have set up a facebook group for students.

Next steps—let's keep the pressure on

Following management's failure to make a meaningful offer, we now escalate our strike action to two days next week; Tuesday and Thursday.

We know that this is not a decision members take lightly, either in financial terms or in the impact on our learners. But we know that the alternative—huge cuts to prep time, cuts to holidays and the failure to implement equal pay—would be worse.

The strike is solid across the country, and we need to step up the pressure on management and especially on our politicians.

We have petitions for branches to take to students and to take out into their local high streets on the strike days next week, along with leaflets to explain why we are striking.

On the strike days, turn up and support your picket line, come to the street activities, be on social media—and above all, contact your MSP, your Councillor and your MP—what are they doing to honour the deal?

What students and supporters can do

We have had fantastic support from our students, with lots asking what they can do to help us win the strike. Here are some ideas:

- Students can write to their MSPs—and remember all MSPs are on social media, so they can tweet them or contact them on facebook.
- Students should ask to meet up with their MSP or elected representative to explain their concerns and demand that the government put pressure on management to honour the deal.
- Make placards and banners and come and join lecturers on the picket lines
- Join the facebook group at www.facebook.com/strikes2017



North Highland

Orkney



Inverness

Lewis Castle, Stornoway



Moray

Clydebank (above), Easterhouse (below)



Perth



Ayrshire



South Lanarkshire



West Lothian



Borders College, Galashiels



This is just a selection of the picket lines and protests from Wednesday—apologies to those branches we couldn't squeeze in!

Want to see more, or got pictures to share?

www.facebook.com/honourthedeal or Twitter @EISUnion