

Dear Member

I am writing to you ahead of your first day of industrial action, tomorrow, in pursuit of a fair pay deal that recognises your efforts over the course of the COVID 19 pandemic. As you know, despite a clear indication of your willingness to take industrial action, the management representatives at the NJNC have failed to seek further talks to avert disruption to both students and lecturers, at a pivotal time for both.

Taking industrial action is never an easy decision. College lecturers, like you, are committed to their students, their learning and their welfare. No professional educator deliberately wishes to take action that will disrupt the learning of the students they serve.

Every effort has been made by EIS-FELA negotiators to avoid the situation that you and thousands of fellow EIS-FELA members now find themselves in. Despite calls from EIS-FELA, at the point of your pay claim being submitted in June 2021, and throughout the negotiations, for management to engage seriously in discussion and conclude the matter of pay early, the talks have been slow, protracted and the offers made, by your employers, have only been marginally increased.

Despite the warnings you gave via a survey, a consultative ballot and finally a statutory ballot; your employers have failed to show that they properly value the work that you do and the commitment that you have continually shown.

Unfortunately, this is not an experience that is new to most EIS-FELA members like you. Over the lifetime of the NJNC, there has only been one occasion in which your employers have made an acceptable pay award without being pushed to it by industrial action. They can point to the terms and conditions of lectures elsewhere in the UK, but this ignores the fact that your terms and conditions have been hard won through trade union members taking collective action, not as a result of their benevolence.

You fought to establish national bargaining and you fought to defend it. You have fought before for fair increases in your pay and you have fought back attacks on the professional role of the lecturer in Further Education. While you have fought, college principals have routinely received significant increases in their salary to such an extent that two principals earn more than the First Minister of Scotland and the majority earn more than the Scottish Government minister who oversees FE.

It is clear that, regrettably, you and your colleagues must once again fight back against the intransigence and lack of respect shown to you by your employers.

I urge you to stand together with your colleagues, in colleges across Scotland, and through your collective action, once again, ensure that you receive a pay increase that recognises your efforts, your commitment and your professionalism.

Local EIS-FELA branches will be holding physical pickets, at campuses across the country, as well as online meetings. A national online 'virtual picket' will take place at 12:30pm, via the EIS Facebook page here. You do not need a facebook account to attend this event.

Your attendance at both physical and online events can send the strongest possible message to your employers - that you deserve a fair pay award.

By standing together, EIS-FELA members will continue to show that they cannot be taken for granted.

In solidarity,

Larry Flanagan
General Secretary