

National Bargaining News

October 2018

News from the national negotiators

Pay dispute: will management make a new offer?

A massive thank you to all who voted in the recent consultative ballot and delivered a resounding vote to REJECT management's "full and final" pay offer. 90% voted to reject on a 60% turnout, well above the threshold imposed by the Trade Union Act, and this puts us in a strong position going forward.

We met with Management on 27 September, the day after the ballot result, and were astonished when Management was unable to engage in further negotiations, having apparently given no consideration to the potential outcome of a ballot. At that meeting, they couldn't even tell us when they would be in a position to meet with us again, and the meeting ended after less than an hour.

This meeting replicates a pattern in recent months where we have prepared for and met with Management, ready to engage in serious negotiation on pay,

T&C and wider issues around lecturer professionalism, to be met with a Management Side which stalls, stonewalls and is generally unable or unwilling to engage in negotiation.

This is hugely frustrating to us as negotiators, but more than that, it is hugely damaging to our sector. We are moving towards the third national FE strike in less than three years—not because we are mad militants or mendacious grandstanders but because we are dealing with a Management Side which has failed to show leadership.

We have sought for over six months to engage in serious negotiations with Management. Management's "full and final offer" has been resoundingly rejected, and it's now time for them to sit down and talk seriously—or face strike action across the sector.

We met with the Depute First

Minister and Education Secretary John Swinney last week, along with the new Further and Higher Education Minister, Richard Lochhead. During this meeting, we explained the lack of progress on the outstanding areas of T&Cs and the anger of our members at the derisory pay offer which for many members means that they will receive nothing in the first two years of the settlement.

Management has offered a further meeting on 25 October, and following last Friday's FELA Executive, we have written, asking them to consider a new pay offer framed around the public sector pay policy. We will meet once again on 25 October and hope that meaningful negotiation can finally begin. We are clear, however, that should an acceptable pay settlement which delivers a cost of living pay rise for all teaching staff not be forthcoming, we will request a statutory ballot for industrial action.

TQFE arrangements

Doing TQFE this year? Remember that the new national agreement means you receive 150 hours reduction in class contact for the year, which should appear as one day per week in your timetable.

Your college should also be paying all fees for the course. Contact your local rep if you need help!

EIS National March and Rally

Saturday 27 October, 11am Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow, March 11.30am, Rally George Square

We hope as many FELA members as possible will attend the national EIS rally on 27 October in support of the teachers' pay claim—bring family, friends and students, and don't forget your banner!

Buses arranged from across Scotland—see EIS website for details