

National Bargaining News

February 2019

News from the national negotiators

Negotiation Update

We have been attempting to negotiate a cost of living pay rise for lecturers for over two years, and we have now taken two days of strike action with huge disruption to colleges as a result.

Our proposals are fair, affordable and reasonable. There is a gap of just £3.8m between our proposal and management's 'budget', a gap we believe is affordable, not least given the millions put in Arms' Length Foundations in recent years. We can close this gap—if management want to.

We fought long and hard to gain equal pay for lecturers and we do not intend to sit back and see those gains destroyed as soon as it is delivered.

We meet again with Management on Thursday (28th), and should no progress be made at this meeting, will take further strike action on Wednesday 6th March.

In addition, we will escalate our campaign and will seek to move to a resulting boycott with a ballot opening on 5th March (FAQ to follow in the next few days!)

If the Employer's Association are not capable of negotiating, the Scottish Government can and must intervene to resolve this dispute.

Management's position:

Management has set an arbitrary budget of £10.1m for the cost of the three year cost of living pay rise and has refused to budge from this, despite Scottish Funding Council (SFC) costings indicating that the support staff cost of living deal—entirely separate to equal pay—cost £31m in cumulative costs. Management has in the last ten months made two offers to us:

- April 2018—Unconsolidated one-off payments of £600 and £1000 in 2017 and 2018 only to staff who received less than this in equal pay uplifts, followed by a 2.5% consolidated uplift in 2019
- January 2019—Unconsolidated payments of £425, £200 and 2% for those earning on points over £36,500. This breaks the link to equal pay, but is a worse offer for nearly everyone working in the sector.

EIS FELA position:

Equal pay and cost of living are separate and distinct. We have based our cost of living pay claim on public sector pay policy and the settlement agreed with college support staff.

At the January NJNC, after the first strike day but before the second, we made a proposal based on the £14m year-on-year costs which management had claimed the support staff deal had cost.

This proposal was for unconsolidated payments of £200 in 2017, £200 in 2018 and a consolidated payment for everyone of £1600 in 2019 (approximately 4% at the top of the unpromoted scale).

We offered to suspend the second day of industrial action if management recommended this to the Employer's Association Executive—they refused.

Pay Negotiations FAQ - What's the difference between consolidated and unconsolidated? -An unconsolidated offer is a one-off cash payment—it doesn't increase the salary you get the following year and in that sense is not a 'pay rise'. A consolidated offer increases your salary year on year.

What is the difference between cumulative costs and year on year costs? - Costings done on a year on year basis only account for the additional cost to the college for that year and don't calculate their cost in subsequent years. Cumulative costing takes account of the rolling costs which an offer made in one year will have in the following years.

Colleges Scotland claim I got a far bigger rise than I actually did. Are we challenging this 'fake news'? - Yes—we have contacted the SFC to question the calculation of figures management has circulated on lecturer pay.