

# National Bargaining News

June 2018

News from the national negotiations

## FELA moves to ballot on “final” pay deal

As members will know, we have been in dispute for some months over our cost of living pay rise. No FELA member (other than Principals and Senior Managers) has had a cost of living pay rise since April 2016, and our dispute covers settlements due in April 2017, 2018 and 2019.

We submitted our original claim in December 2016, and since then have made painfully slow progress.

We had hoped to engage management in serious negotiation at the April 2018 NJNC. Instead, management gave a ‘full and final’ offer which they refused to discuss further.

### The “final” pay offer

This offer consists of a 2.5% consolidated pay increase over three years (to be paid from April 2019), with only unconsolidated payments in 2017 and 2018, for some (but not all) members. Crucially, the offer of £600 for 2017 and £1000 for 2018 is linked to the harmonisation uplift—if you received more than that in the harmonisation uplift, you wouldn’t see a penny!

The £1000 cash payment in 2018 followed by the 2.5% consolidated increase means that members at NESCol would see their pay increase by just £1 in 2019. These are members who have already suffered among

the worst T&C in the sector, and who saw no financial benefit from the equal pay uplifts in 2017, 18 and 19. Members at Ayrshire, West College Scotland, New College Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Colleges find themselves in a similar position, as do many promoted staff across the country.

### Public sector pay cap

The #EqualPayLecturers campaign we embarked upon in 2016 was never intended to mean a pay freeze—and management know this full well. Their offer of a 2.5% increase over three years imposes a pay cap on Scottish FE lecturers at the precise moment when the Scottish Government is lifting the cap for the rest of the public sector, and we will not accept this.

It is not an easy decision to ask members to take strike action, and over recent weeks and months we have sought to avoid the situation we now find ourselves in.

We revised our claim—again—to £1000 unconsolidated in Year 1, £2000 unconsolidated in Year 2, and £5500 consolidated in Year 3 (an average 4.6% consolidated rise each year for 3 years, at a time when inflation has been running at 3.3%). Management

rejected this by email, refusing to meet us in May—even though we had made it explicitly clear that we were willing to negotiate and reach an acceptable settlement.

We have sought a meeting with the Scottish Government, with a view to encouraging management to engage in meaningful negotiations to avoid industrial action in the sector. At the time of writing—and within days of the summer break—we are still waiting.

We are seeking an offer which will apply to all teaching staff and which will deliver a real terms cost of living rise at a time when inflation is running at 3.3%.

### What happens next

Management have now decided that they will meet us for the next NJNC, scheduled for 21 June, and we hope that this will be a productive meeting with meaningful negotiations on pay.

Should no significantly improved offer be forthcoming, we intend to hold a consultative ballot for industrial action over a cost of living pay rise in September 2018, and we have already started to schedule dates for branch meetings in August and September.

We will send an update to members from Thursday’s meeting—watch this space!