

# Further Education Noticeboard

Last update: 11 May 2023

## Latest Bulletins

### FE England – National Pay Talks 11 May 2023

Posted on: 11 May 2023



### No offer on pay

The joint FE trade unions met with the sector employer representatives from the AoC on 11 May for the second England FE pay negotiations. You can find a report of the first meeting here: [the first pay negotiating meeting for 2023/24](#). The joint union claim can be found here: [our claim](#)

It's deeply disappointing to report that the AoC failed to make any recommendation on pay. The AoC did comment on the fact that the union's claim was reasonable, and they recognise that staff pay needs to improve. Further to these points the AoC commented that it was the fault of the UK government for not adequately funding the sector which restricted their negotiating position.

While it is a fact that FE in England is underfunded, employers can and do make choices regarding what they prioritise to invest in, and for far too long employers have deprioritised investing in staff pay. The joint unions stressed the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on staff and the increasing strain of inflation on food and bills, and the damage to staff wellbeing and mental health.



The AoC position is to a large extent a function of the broken national bargaining arrangements in FE, where pay increases are only recommended, unlike in schools or sixth form where pay increases are implemented.

We challenged the AoC to publicly state their support for the principle of binding national negotiations; regrettably, they did not agree to our proposal. It is the joint trade union's view that the sector desperately needs a new settlement which covers funding, staff pay, negotiating frameworks and workloads. The reclassification of FE provides the opportunity for the AoC and the DfE to work with us to reset FE. Pressing repeat is not working.

We also called on the AoC to work with us on these matters, and instead of criticising the unions for taking action to defend the sector and our members, support us publicly and join us when we move to take joint action in the autumn. They declined that offer.

Regarding another important element of the claim on a national workload agreement, the offer is to work on a Charter of good practice. Regarding a Just Transition Commission for FE, the AoC's view is that the national bargaining table isn't the appropriate place for these demands, and they should be discussed separately.

Members in all five unions will have expected much more. The joint unions are now actively discussing how we can work together with a view to building for joint action in the autumn. We encourage branches to contact their principals and inform them that unless something significant changes quickly, a dispute now seems unavoidable.

## FE England – National Pay Talks 19 April 2023



Posted on: 20 April 2023



### No offer from the employers

The joint FE trade unions GMB, NEU, UCU, UNISON & Unite met with the sector employer representatives from the AoC on 19 April for the first England FE pay negotiations.



The unions pressed the AoC on their **claim** which is timely, ambitious and necessary as it not only aims to start to restore the loss in staff pay over recent years but also addresses unsustainable workloads, aims to establish meaningful sector level bargaining and create a pathway to a just transition in FE.

The AoC response, **that no meaningful offer could yet be made**, despite the claim being submitted on 17 March 2023, will understandably generate anger among the respective memberships during a cost of living crisis.

No serious offer was made on the other elements in the claim. The AoC did agree to consider their position further and respond in more detail at the next negotiation meeting on 11 May.

The joint trade unions are encouraging members and branches to contact their principals and press them to ensure a full and serious offer is made by the AoC at the next meeting.

Members in all five unions will expect much more from the next meeting and are actively considering the next steps they will take if one isn't made.

If any of your colleagues are not yet in GMB Trade Union, ask them to join on the link below.

[Join GMB](#)

## Association Of Colleges Makes Pay Offer, Refuses Living Wage Commitment



Posted on: 31 May 2022

**GMB and sister unions met with the Association of Colleges (AOC) for a negotiating meeting on Thursday 26 May.**

At that meeting, AOC informed union negotiators it would be recommending a pay offer of 2.25% for the year 2022/23. The offer is not binding, meaning individual colleges are under no obligation to implement it.

In March, the unions jointly submitted a claim for a pay rise of 10% on all points with a minimum uplift of £2000, all colleges to become accredited Foundation Living wage employers and for significant movement towards agreements on workload in colleges.



As well as failing to meet the unions' pay demands, AOC refused to commit to ensuring all colleges become Living Wage employers and on workload offered only to set up a working group to investigate further.

[Read the full joint union statement here.](#)

## Previous Bulletins

### Joint FE Unions Case To Government For Staff Vaccination Priority



Posted on: 13 January 2021

The joint unions in Further Education **have written to the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care, Minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment, and Secretary of State for Education** to make the case for prioritising staff in Early Years, Schools, Colleges and Adult Education settings for vaccination.

In brief, their rationale was:

- Fully reopening education settings is a national priority – the moment it is safe to do so.
- Learning often takes place indoors and in close contact with large numbers of students in multiple groups, putting staff at high risk of both catching and transmitting the virus.
- Vaccination prioritisation, combined with mass testing, would be a sure way to reduce transmissions, remove any further disruption to the education of our young people and to support the resumption of economic activity by reducing the burden of home schooling on working parents.

The government has set the priority list for phase one of the vaccination programme based on Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice focused on reducing risk of preventable mortality. JCVI have said that more occupations could be prioritised in phase two as it moves to a transmission reduction programme.

You can [read the full correspondence here.](#)



Posted on: 1 October 2020

GMB as part of the joint trade unions in further education have submitted a pay claim for the next financial year. You can read the full claim below:

The joint trade unions also wrote to the Michelle Donnelan, Minister for Further Education on 23/09/2020, to express urgent concerns around the September return and the risks faced by staff, you



can read the full letter here:

**GMB & Joint Trade Unions/National Association Of Colleges**



Posted on: 13 August 2020

**RETURN TO SITE – JOINT PLANNING GUIDE: SEPTEMBER 2020 UPDATE**



**GMB** and 5 joint FE trade unions nationally have worked with the NAC, in order to produce this guidance on planning any return to FE colleges, as well as specific guidance for the return in September:



## FE England Joint Trades Unions Open Webinar



Posted on: 8 June 2020

Working together to make any return to onsite working safe in FE.

Register [here](#). Registrations will close at **12 noon** Monday 8 June.





Full details [here](#).

**Date: 04/06/2020**

**GMB, NEU, UCU Unite, and Unison**, the 5 joint FE trade unions nationally have put to the government 5 tests it must pass before onsite learning or working is safe to begin:

- 1. Significantly Lower Numbers of C-19 Cases**
- 2. A National Plan for Social Distancing**
- 3. Comprehensive Testing**
- 4. A Whole College Strategy for Health & Safety**
- 5. Protection for the Vulnerable**

You can read the full statement [here](#):



## **March 2020**

GMB and sister unions have been discussing the current problems facing everyone in FE.

GMB continues to push for the best possible deal for workers in these extremely challenging times we are working with the employers to achieve this end.

The employers association is the Association of Colleges, and covers 95% of colleges involved in further education.



Government advice to slow down and halt the spread of the virus will continue to change, and you should follow it. The advice is to stay at home unless absolutely necessary, practice social distancing if you go out (a minimum of 2 mtrs), and frequent hand washing, all of which will help.

We have discussed FE college access to the job retention scheme

### **Key Workers**

If any FE staff are formally in the key worker category, you will already have been written to to confirm your status.

The employers association and trade unions are jointly seeking advice on the application of the furlough scheme to FE Colleges.

The employers consult unions on a regular basis and their up to date guidance can be found here

### **Employers guidance**

### **FE Pay 2020**

Initial pay discussions have begun, but have been put into abeyance while the Covid 19 problems are with us.

Further bulletins will be issued shortly.

If you need any further information, please  
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