



Support Staff Pay & Terms & Conditions Offer 1st September 2021 to 31st August 2022

MEMBERSHIP CONSULTATION

UNISON Scotland Further Education Branch Committee recommends that you ACCEPT this offer

Further to the second pay dispute meeting on the 24th of May and having raised the prospect of re-balloting our members following the recent narrow miss of the legal threshold for industrial action, the Branch has secured a revised pay offer from the employers. This offer was put to a meeting of its committee on the 1st of June where the Committee agreed to recommend acceptance to the members.

The revised offer (along with some non-pay add-ons) is now a consolidated £1,000, which is a material improvement from the previous offer of £850 consolidated and £150 unconsolidated with the same add-ons. Consolidated means that the £1,000 is now added to your salary permanently whereas unconsolidated is a one off.

The Committee believe you should accept this offer, at this time, for the following reasons:

1. IT IS NOW OVER 9 MONTHS SINCE YOU SHOULD HAVE HAD A PAY INCREASE TO COMBAT THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Pay rises should have been in your account in September 2021. This is a time of unprecedented rises in the cost of living and most other sectors have had some sort of pay increase to address this. You will be aware that we have condemned the employers' approach to pay negotiations this year and their insistence we ballot members on "final offers" that were unacceptable to us and which we told them were unacceptable to you. It is clear this was a deliberate strategy by the employers to exhaust you in the hope you would accept an offer which was less than what is now on the table.

You have had to bear the brunt of this 'cost-of-living catastrophe' without a pay rise to help and that pay rise is now nine months late. Many of you, it is clear, need cash now without further delay.

Given that we will shortly begin negotiations on 2022/2023 pay increases which are due by September of this year, it is time to close the negotiations, we believe, on this year and look ahead to the next while factoring the shortfall into next year's claim. The alternative would be to ballot over summer for action in the new term which would involve further financial difficulty for you for another three or four months.

2. OTHER UNIONS ARE RECOMMENDING ACCEPTANCE OF THE OFFER

The EIS, UNITE & GMB have also stated that they will recommend acceptance.

3. THE EMPLOYERS HAVE MOVED FROM THE INITIAL OFFER

It is clear that in the second dispute meeting there was a change of mood from the employers which helped us broker this deal. This was welcome and we are pleased that the more

progressive and less combative employers' voices have won out over those who would seek that the sector continues to have industrial relations crises while staff and students suffer.

The offer represents a move of £150 from the employers which is more than they say they can afford but also a move from us to accept an offer which is £150 less than what we know you need right now.

This offer is a pay rise of between 4% & 5% for our members earning between £20k and £25k and a considerable increase on Public Sector Pay Policy for others. Although this is still real terms pay cut, it is greater than any amount we have achieved through the machinery to date.

4. BALLOT READINESS

As you know, there was an overwhelming vote in favour of rejecting the previous offer and taking industrial action although we fell slightly short of the 50% threshold requirement. We will continue to work over the weeks and months ahead to ensure our membership database is up to date, members' contact details are correct and to review the ballot process itself to ensure we do not face similar issues going forward. It is clear for example that the timeline of two weeks did not aid us in ensuring we maximised the vote. Please ensure UNISON has your up-to-date details.

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

As we previously stated we are keen to move forward quickly with the implementation of some of the other elements of the agreement such as the pilot 4-day week workgroup & allowing you to take your self-directed career development planning and research days.

6. MORE TIME TO LOBBY THE GOVERNMENT FOR MORE MONEY FOR FE

The employers have, for years, refused to jointly lobby the Scottish Government with the unions. This has clearly been a mistake and adds to the view that our sector has real industrial relations problems as well as not helping to bring more money into our sector. The employers appear to be slowly changing position on this. If the employers embrace Fair Work, the unions will be happy to join forces to increase our settlement in future years.

7. THE SECTOR'S FINANCES

Although the sector agreed to an 'open book' exercise with us to demonstrate how little money they had, this was little more than a presentation of information we could have accessed from the SFC website and requests from us on detail (on what happened to the furlough money, for example) were not supplied. Accepting the offer, at this time, allows you to get some money in for the year which is ending and affords us more time to work with the employers on examining the books properly.

The economic crisis hasn't gone away but this increased pay rise will bring much needed relief to many of you right now.

This is why we recommend acceptance of the pay offer

