

**Friday, 3 May 2019**

## **Colleges Welcome Suspension of Strike**

Representatives for the college sector have welcomed the decision by the Educational Institute of Scotland Further Education Lecturers' Association (EIS-FELA) to suspend strike action on Wednesday, 8 May, but have expressed disappointment that industrial action short of strike action continues, including withholding students' assessment results, and the strike action scheduled for Wednesday, 15 and Thursday, 16 May has not been suspended.

Representatives for the college sector held the 17<sup>th</sup> dispute meeting with the EIS-FELA yesterday (Thursday) in Glasgow and, although a deal has not yet been agreed, progress is being made.

Commenting, John Gribben, Director of Employment Services at Colleges Scotland Employers' Association, said:

"Colleges welcome the decision by the EIS-FELA to suspend their strike action on Wednesday, 8 May and, while we are moving closer to reaching a deal, we recognise there is more work to be done. We're disappointed that the EIS-FELA continues to target the students by withholding their assessment results and has not called off strike days scheduled for Wednesday, 15 and Thursday, 16 May.

"Colleges have made a further improved financial offer to the EIS-FELA subject to agreement on terms and conditions. We believe lecturers would accept the deal and have asked the EIS-FELA to take our offer to its members for approval.

"Lecturers in Scotland are by far the best paid in the UK, and the pay harmonisation rises from 2017 to 2020, combined with the improved pay offer on the table from colleges, equate to a national average increase of well over £5,000 – or more than 12%.

"Lecturers have also had significant improvements in terms and conditions over the same 2017-20 pay period, including an enviable 62 days' holiday per year and a reduction in class contact time to 23 hours per week, so they are well paid, have terrific terms and conditions, and we believe this further improved offer would be accepted by their members."

### **Outline of improved terms and conditions agreed for lecturing staff through National Bargaining:**

On top of the 9% national average pay increase from harmonisation over the same three-year period as this current pay dispute, lecturers are also receiving annual leave increases to 62 days' holiday, a reduction in teaching hours to 23 hours weekly contact with students, salary conservation ensuring the retention for four years where a member of staff is currently in receipt of existing local salary conservation arrangements, paid provision of 150 hours remission time within existing paid hours for approximately 1,500 lecturers who don't have formal teaching qualifications to gain a TQFE, plus other terms and conditions either safeguarded or enhanced. The combined pay rises from harmonisation and the new offer on the table increases the top of the unpromoted lecturer scale to £41,368.

### **ENDS**

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