

**Tuesday 27 September 2016**

**Colleges Scotland's Comment on the Industrial Action by GMB and UNISON**

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive of the Colleges Scotland Employers' Association said:

"It is disappointing that a very small number of GMB and UNISON members have opted to strike today. With the exception of one campus, we are pleased that all of our colleges have been able to remain open. However, there can be little doubt that such industrial action affects both students and the wider college community.

"All college support staff will benefit from what we contend is a fair and reasonable offer. For instance, those earning £22,000 or less will gain a 3.6% increase over two years which is well above inflation and public sector pay policy.

"The time for strikes has surely come to an end as they are only penalising students. We encourage the trade unions to be mindful of current public sector finances and move forward to jointly develop the college sector's Workforce for the Future."

**ENDS**

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**Notes:**

The offer is loaded towards staff on the lower end of the pay scale to address low pay which is what the unions wanted. For a support worker on a £22,000 salary, the combination of last year's settlement and the current offer equates to an increase of £800 over two years – a 3.6% pay rise.

For those support staff earning the Living Wage, the offer equates to more than a 5% pay rise.

Colleges have also awarded additional holidays and standardised the working week at 35 hours a week, which for some support staff is a reduction in working hours with no detriment.