

NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR STAFF IN SIXTH FORM COLLEGES

STAFF SIDE

National Joint Council

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Sixth Form Colleges Association
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20 May 2021

Dear Graham

SIXTH FORM COLLEGE TEACHERS' PAY FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

I attach the Staff Side pay claim for sixth form college teachers from September 2021. It would be useful if we could discuss when the Committee might meet to discuss the claim. The Staff Side is happy to meet at the earliest mutually convenient date.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW MORRIS
Staff Side Secretary
Committee for Teaching Staff

SIXTH FORM COLLEGE TEACHERS' PAY FROM SEPTEMBER 2021

This pay claim sets out the position of the Staff Side in relation to sixth form college teachers' pay from September 2021.

This year's negotiations take place at a time when the COVID-19 crisis continues to dominate the landscape. They will also happen at a time when pay review bodies across the public sector have been instructed by Government to freeze or severely limit pay increases. The NJC for Sixth Form Colleges, as an independent negotiating body, is not subject to that Government policy. This claim considers how we should therefore proceed in light of the above.

The past year has demonstrated the value of the commitment made by all parties to the NJC to seeking to work together for the greater good. The joint statements made by the SFCA and the Staff Side unions in pursuit of safe wider opening have reflected that commitment. Teachers' response to the COVID-19 crisis has underlined their own commitment and contribution. The challenge of supporting students through new ways of working increased teachers' workload even before the impact of the significant increase in enrolment for the current academic year was felt. The value of their contribution should be recognised, firstly by rejecting any notion of a pay freeze and secondly by agreeing a substantial pay increase which reflects a positive funding position and addresses the deterioration of their pay since 2010.

The Staff Side welcomes the hard work done on both sides in order to reach the pay agreement for 2020-21. The agreement, which appears to have been implemented appropriately in almost all colleges, has restored the parity in teachers' pay between the sixth form college and school sectors at the maximum of the scales. It should be remembered, however, that the agreement was achieved by means of a staged increase which has only recently been implemented in full from 1 May 2021.

In the current year's negotiations, the Staff Side will want to discuss the issue of pay comparability at other points of the pay structure, as well as the issue of an overall pay increase which maintains both the relative and the real value of pay. The Staff Side believes that the shortfall at points 1-8 and in particular points 5-8 in comparison to the school teachers' pay scales must be addressed in order to reduce the cumulative comparative loss of earnings for sixth form college teachers.

Regarding the issue of a general pay increase, the Staff Side believes that a significant across-the-board pay increase for sixth form college teachers is necessary.

The Government may have a different policy for this year's pay increases across the public sector; but that policy is yet to be reflected in pay decisions for any group, and as stated above it is in any case not mandatory for this negotiating body. The Staff Side asks the Employers' Side to accept and agree that our negotiations should not be constrained by Government pay policy and to reject the notion of a pay freeze.

The Staff Side believes that the funding position of sixth form colleges this year supports a general pay increase. We have consistently accepted that sixth form colleges have, over recent years, suffered from greater real terms cuts in funding than schools. We have on that basis agreed to accept reduced and staged pay increases which have limited the impact of pay increases on colleges.

At the same time, the Employers' Side has undertaken as part of previous agreements that improvements in the financial position of colleges should lead to consideration of improvements in pay. For the 2020/21 college year, the increase in the funding rate from £4,000 to £4,188 was an increase of 4.7% per student. Taking other factors into account as well, it was estimated that the total EFSA funding allocation to each sixth form college increased by an average of 8%. The Government committed as part of the 2020 Spending Review announcement that core funding for 2021-22 will be maintained in real terms, and funding levels will be further bolstered by the lagged funding deriving from the increased enrolment of students in 2020-21. We therefore regard the current financial year as one in which the pressures of the recent past have lifted.

The Staff Side continues to believe that the pay of all teachers, whatever their sector, is too low and must be significantly increased. Over the past ten years, the value of teachers' pay in schools and sixth form colleges alike has fallen significantly, both in real terms and in comparison to pay for graduate employment generally. The cumulative effect since 2010 is that pay levels have fallen by about 15% relative to Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation. Pension and NI contribution increases have further reduced take home pay. The combined cumulative loss arising from below-inflation pay increases and increased pension contributions since 2010 is now, in total, more than one full year's pay. On top of this, however, many sixth form college teachers earn less than their school teacher counterparts as demonstrated below.

The SFCA and the Staff Side unions share an ambition to ensure high standards in the sector. SFCA members know that they are competing for their teachers with the schools sector, whether maintained schools, academies or the independent sector, and with other graduate employers. The 2021/22 pay agreement should therefore take the opportunity offered to improve pay and help colleges to attract and retain teachers as student numbers rise.

With RPI inflation at 1.1% in September 2020, the agreement for 2020-21 started to reverse the real terms pay cuts since 2010. This was, however, due to the exceptional economic conditions during the pandemic. RPI inflation is predicted to increase to about 3% by the fourth quarter of 2021, while the median forecast for average earnings is 3.5%. This year's pay increase should not reverse that initial improvement and create a further real terms cut which simply makes problems of teacher supply worse.

Regarding pay comparability at points on the structure below the maximum, points 1-8 on our scale are lower than the equivalent points in schools and points 5-8 are considerably lower. The shortfall in pay at these points is an obvious potential disincentive to moving to this sector from schools. The annual shortfalls on each point are as follows:

Pay Point		
1	0.56%	£144
2	1.23%	£336
3	2.02%	£588
4	2.48%	£770
5	3.12%	£1,032
6	4.82%	£1,698
7	5.43%	£1,994
8	2.53%	£991

During last year's negotiations, we discussed the implications of the Secretary of State's intention to increase starting pay in schools to £30,000 over three years. That intention remains in place, despite the intended pay pause, and it will also have obvious implications for pay comparability and competitiveness. The deletion of pay point 1 was discussed last year and, while it did not eventually form part of last year's agreement, both Sides agreed to continue to discuss it in relation to this year's agreement. We look forward to discussing how that step might be implemented.

We also remind the SFCA that recent agreements have not touched in any way upon the long-standing issue of pay comparability in the London and Fringe areas and in particular the level of the Inner London allowance. In Inner London, school teachers on the Upper Pay Scale are paid around £5,000 more than their sixth form college counterparts on the equivalent pay points. This pay gap must be addressed.

In summary, therefore, the Staff Side urges the Employers' Side to reject any notion of pay restraint or pay freeze when considering the Staff Side's pay claim and proposes the following:

- **A significant pay increase for September 2021 on all pay points and allowances;**
- **Resumed discussions leading to the deletion of pay point 1;**
- **Discussions about discrete additional increases to other pay points and allowances.**

Staff Side, Committee for Teaching Staff
May 2021