



Sixth Form Colleges: Briefing on NEU Ballot on Industrial Action

What is it about?

The NEU is in dispute with the Secretary of State in relation to the pay, working conditions and security of employment of NEU members in the sector and in particular the detrimental effects on these of the cuts in college funding since 2010.

The NEU has asked the Secretary of State to address this by increasing the funding rate per student as proposed by the Raise the Rate campaign to which the NEU is a signatory, and by paying the Teachers' Pay Grant to all sixth form colleges in order to support an adequate pay increase. He has declined to take these steps.

The impact on pay

Teachers and support staff in sixth form colleges have suffered a substantial real terms cut in the value of their pay since 2010. Their pay has also fallen back compared to other workers. Now the parity for sixth form college teachers with schools has been lost as well.

The Secretary of State's decision to provide the Teachers Pay Grant only to those colleges with academy status was one of the main reasons why the NEU and SFCA could not reach a 2018 pay agreement for teachers maintaining pay parity with schools.

The impact on working conditions - affecting staff, students and the sector

Sixth form colleges suffered a 22% reduction in real terms funding between 2010/11 and 2016/17 - deeper cuts than any other group of education institutions.

During this period, there was a 15% reduction in teaching staff numbers despite a 6% increase in the number of students.

The consequences of the funding cuts are that:

- SFCs are teaching students in larger classes, increasing teachers' workload significantly,
- there have been significant cuts in support staff posts,
- responsibility payments have been removed,
- teachers' contact time has been increased, and
- staff training budgets have been reduced.

What is the ballot process?

The NEU is balloting teacher and support staff members in the sixth form college sector.

The ballot will be conducted on a college by college basis and will require a majority and 50% turnout in each college for action by members in that college.

Any colleagues who do not receive a ballot paper should contact us at 6fcballot@neu.org.uk by Monday 9 September, providing their name, address, college and membership number.

Our demand

A significant improvement in the pay and working conditions of NEU members, requiring not merely a cessation of the real terms cuts in funding but their reversal.

Our will

Members will take industrial action in the autumn term and spring term if necessary to secure these demands for students, staff and the sector.

Your call

Please VOTE YES to action in support of our campaign for better pay and working conditions for all employees in sixth form colleges.

Your 'Yes' vote stops a thousand cuts. Please vote as soon as you can.