



27 June 2018

Dear Gerry,

On 1 May 2018, the joint trade unions submitted their heads of claim for 2018/19 to Association of Colleges (AoC) representatives at a National Joint Forum (NJF) officer level meeting. That claim focuses exclusively on pay and is:

- **5% on all pay points with a minimum uplift of £1,500.**
- **Foundation living wage to be the minimum wage and FE colleges to become accredited foundation living wage employers**

Staff in FE, who received all AoC recommended increases, have suffered a staggering real terms cut in pay of over 25% since 2009. In cash terms, that means a £2,484 pay cut on the bottom point, rising to over £9,000 for experienced lecturers and more for those higher up the scale. Many have suffered worse where few or no increases have been awarded over those years.

We note the AoC's comments in response to our 2017/18 claim, in particular:

*"We understand and accept much of the Joint Trade Unions' argument that there is a need for better pay in FE, with clear evidence that median pay in colleges is falling further behind that in schools."*

There is a unanimous acceptance among further education participants (staff, learners and leaders), stakeholders and commentators, that there is an urgent need for increased investment in FE staff pay.

At a time when pay settlements in the rest of the public sector are no longer subject to a 1% cap, there is a real danger that FE falls further behind. We all surely agree that this would be disastrous for the sector's ability to recruit and retain the committed and experienced staff that colleges rely on and will make existing problems worse.

All of the joint trade unions remain committed to meaningful national bargaining and firmly believe that this year's talks must focus exclusively on addressing pay for all staff in FE colleges. We see no need to propagate elaborate argument on what is an uncontested point – that there is a problem with pay in FE.

The joint trade unions are more interested in what is to be done about pay in FE. We are looking for a different approach from the AoC for the 2018/19 round. An approach that makes a declaration of the true worth of staff in FE, an approach that accepts the problem and proposes a solution.

Ultimately the responsibility for delivering better pay and better jobs in FE rests with the sector's leadership. With a skills shortage, BREXIT looming and acceptance that FE pay is a problem, there has never been a better time for the sector's leadership to stand up and demand the sector's worth. FE staff look to their leaders to make a statement on pay worthy of the sector's ambition and their value.

We call on the AoC to make an offer that meets our members' reasonable expectation for an above inflation pay rise and catch up from a decade of real cuts in pay.

Yours sincerely



**Andrew Harden**  
Joint Secretary NJF Trade Union Side  
Head of Further Education  
University and College Union



**Leigh Powell**  
Joint Secretary NJF Trade Union Side  
National Official  
UNISON

CC: Mary Vine-Morris, Evan Williams