



FURTHER EDUCATION UNIONS REJECT ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE'S 2.25% PAY OFFER

The joint trade unions (GMB, NEU, UCU, UNISON, UNITE) met with the Association of Colleges (AOC) for a negotiating meeting on Thursday 26 May.

At that meeting, AOC informed union negotiators it would be recommending a pay offer of 2.25% for the year 2022/23. The offer is not binding, meaning individual colleges are under no obligation to implement it.

This meeting took place in the context of over a decade of real terms pay cuts for further education staff, which has seen pay fall behind inflation by more than 35% since 2009. During an unprecedented cost of living crisis, and with inflation currently at a 40 year high and set to rise further, this offer is insulting. The employer body has chosen not to use significant increases in core central government 16 – 19 funding to invest in college staff, despite unions campaigning alongside AOC to secure it.

In March, the unions jointly submitted a claim for a pay rise of 10% on all points with a minimum uplift of £2000, all colleges to become accredited Foundation Living wage employers and for significant movement towards agreements on workload in colleges.

As well as failing to meet the unions' pay demands, AOC refused to commit to ensuring all colleges become Living Wage employers and on workload offered only to set up a working group to investigate further.

None of the measures proposed by AOC will solve the college workforce crisis, which the employer body itself describes as being the 'worst in two decades'. Today's failure to make an offer which will properly uplift pay and address unmanageable workloads could now see this crisis worsen further.

The unions have unequivocally rejected the offer from AOC and informed the employer body that they plan to move to ballot.

AOC have been encouraged to return with a much improved offer to ensure college staff are not forced to take industrial action this Autumn term. The unions agree that they will continue to engage in negotiations while making plans for action.

A joint statement agreed by all five FE trade unions, 26 May 2022.