

Time to Pay Up campaign is working



In March this year UNISON and the FE unions launched the Time to Pay Up campaign. The campaign is targeted at the minority of FE colleges in England that consistently refuse to honour national pay deals.

2.5 per cent from August 2008. But UNISON reps responded by mounting a campaign calling on the college to make an improved pay award to match the national deal of 3.2 per cent or £550. The pressure paid off when the college management agreed to pay a further increase of 0.7 per cent from 1 May 2009. Like the national deal, this too includes a guaranteed minimum increase of £550. Hastings branch has seen the college implement the pay deal in full – and agree to job evaluation.

Since March, UNISON has notched up some significant successes.

- Brockenhurst College in Hampshire has agreed to increase its minimum rate of pay from £6.14 to £6.96 an hour (matching the national pay deal). The college has also agreed to backdate the increase to 1 August 2008.
- Thurrock and Basildon College in east London, and Hastings College on the south coast, have also agreed to honour the national pay deal negotiated for English further education colleges.

The moves are a marked success for the local branches.

Thurrock and Basildon college had originally implemented a pay award of just

Pressure is building at Bradford College where management have so far refused to pay the £550 underpinning to its lowest-paid staff. UNISON reps recently held workplace meetings attended by over 150 college employees. Following these mass meetings UNISON has made it clear to management that they must pay the £550 underpinning and introduce a national pay scale for support staff.

The campaign is working, so if your college has failed to honour national pay deals then visit www.timetopayup.org.uk for ideas on running a local campaign and let us know what's happening. Email education@unison.co.uk

Stop press: Great result in Doncaster, see page 6

Unions reject 1% pay offer – ENGLAND

UNISON and the five other FE unions have formally rejected a one percent pay offer for college staff from the employers' association, the Association of Colleges (AoC). The offer did not include any underpinning, which would guarantee a minimum salary rise for the lowest paid workers in FE colleges.

Another meeting between the unions and the AoC is scheduled to take place on 5 June. The FE unions are calling on the AoC to come back to this meeting with an improved pay offer including an underpinning for the lowest paid. One percent is clearly unacceptable and will do next to nothing to help low-paid college staff hit with high food and fuel bills. Keep any eye on the education pages of the UNISON website to find out what happens at our meeting with the AoC on the 5 June: www.unison.org.uk/education

UNISON IN COLLEGES



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College building projects rocked by funding chaos

Early on in the year the shocking news broke that the Learning and Skills Council (the quango that channels government funding to FE and sixth form colleges) had run out of money to fund new college building projects in England.

This came as a bolt out of the blue to 79 colleges that had already committed over £180 million, according to the Association of Colleges, in putting together building plans. These colleges had already been given 'second stage approval' from the LSC.

The problem was that colleges had not been warned by the LSC that the buildings budget was already overspent. As a result some colleges had started work by demolishing old buildings.

Once the scale of the problem became clear UNISON immediately made contact with the LSC and

government officials calling for additional money to fund these projects.

As result of hard political lobbying by the FE unions and the employers the government announced an additional £300 million of capital funding investment for college building projects. The government has stated that this money will fund only a limited number of projects.

UNISON welcomes the additional money, but it is absolutely clear that the £300 million will not cover the cost of all 79 college building projects that have already received approval in

principle from the LSC. Many of these colleges have committed significant expenditure and our absolute priority now is to ensure these colleges are not hit financially.

We are talking to government and LSC officials to try to secure guarantees that colleges whose projects are either delayed, or don't now get the money they expected from the LSC, are financially compensated for any losses.

Students and staff should not in anyway be expected to carry the can for problems with the college capital building fund.



College capital funding – the view from Barnsley

As you can see from the pictures, Barnsley College is a shadow of its former self. The demolition of a block was completed at Easter. We are lucky because we have three new buildings for sports studies, construction and science and computing, and at least we don't have to resort to using portacabins, which is the case in some colleges in the same position.

Staff had almost become immune to the daily dust and noise inevitable when buildings are being demolished. We were given "Going, going gone" newsletters, which kept us informed at each stage of the process. And here in Barnsley we have a commitment from the prime minister to meet with our principal to discuss the funding crisis.

So watch this space (quite literally in our case) for future developments. In the meantime we carry on doing what we do best in further education: making the student experience the best it can be despite all the setbacks.

**Maureen Lawson
Barnsley College**

Your FE questions answered

Nixon Todd, North West rep on the UNISON FE and sixth form national committee answers questions from members.



Q My college is outsourcing the cleaning contract, how do I find out if the contractor recognises UNISON?

A Call or email UNISON's Bargaining Unit (020 7551 1155), which has lots of information about the private companies that operate in FE colleges. In some cases a recognition agreement

transfers to the new contract but you need advice from your regional office.

Try and get union recognition and facilities arrangements written into the contract as it will be harder to do later. And make sure all the cleaners are in the union – they will need to be to keep their TUPE terms and conditions in tact.

But the best advice is: do everything you can to stop the transfer happening in the first place. It's bad news for pay, for pensions, for sick pay, for leave, for capability and disciplinary processes, for training. And it doesn't do much for quality of work either.

Q My workload has been increasing and though I have complained it continues to increase. It is beginning to affect my health and I am starting

to not want to go into work. What can I do?

A Talk to your steward. Tell them what your manager has said. Get a copy of your job description, keep a diary of changes, short deadlines and other stressful occurrences. Write down a list of your duties; how does it compare with your job description?

Is it about getting some training or having the right resources, or is it simply too much work for one person to do?

Then arrange a meeting with your manager/personnel department and your UNISON steward.

Be sure to write back and let us know how you get on.

If you have a question you want a member of the FE national committee to answer then email: education@unison.co.uk

A week in the life of a union learning rep

Jacqui McCarthy gives us a taste of a week in her life as a union learning rep at a Teesside sixth form college.

Monday Email all staff about courses starting: "Do you want to keep that holiday chill-out feeling a little longer? Improve your flexibility? (may become useful in the classroom). Come along and try Yoga, all welcome. £4 per session."

Wednesday I sort through the returned learner surveys to identify those who have expressed a need to build their confidence or be more assertive. There are five of us. I have spoken to the assistant principal (training) about the five members of staff attending the course and having time out together, as the staff are from different college areas: a cleaner, learner support, learning resource centre, RC, ICT support and a teacher.

We agreed that it would be beneficial to for them all to attend (I didn't need to

take out the IIP card from my sleeve). I spoke to each person individually and reassured them that it would not be too demanding. I then confirmed places with the ASPIRE contact at University of Teesside.

Friday I have had feedback from five people expressing an interest in the digital imaging course. Liaising with the prospective learners brought up a few questions: How in-depth will the course be? Will we get a manual to take away? Can we get help outside of the sessions?

There were also a few problems: learner one "I can't make Wednesdays"; learner two "I can't make Mondays or Thursdays"; learner three "I can't make any time after work"; tutor: "I can't make Friday". There are college meetings held on

Tuesdays and no one wants to give up part of lunchtime!

Help! Let me know if you know of a 15-minute course that is free, contains all you need to know about digital imaging, good demonstrations, one-to-one tuition, that takes place at any time other than before, after or during work time, oh and has a step-by-step manual for the learners to bring to you outside the session. I have five learners interested...

Being a ULR in a sixth form college can be frustrating and challenging but matching people to places for learning is also enjoyable, satisfying and very worthwhile.

To find out more talk to your branch or visit www.unison.org.uk/laos

LGBT and equality work in further education

Carole Towle, UNISON's LGBT officer reports on the work of the further education sexual orientation and gender identity forum.

The forum arose out of the Centre of Excellence's (CEL) research into sexual orientation discrimination in the sector. CEL's research discovered that there were significant issues around sexual orientation, including homophobic bullying and a lack of confidence or knowledge of how to address this.

The forum is made up of stakeholders in FE including UNISON, NUS, Lifelong Learning UK, Learning and Skills Network and the Association of Colleges. It addresses trans equality as well as equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and students.

In the past year the forum and its members have developed resources and been involved in activities promoting sexual orientation and gender identity equality. The

forum's first publication was launched in May 2008 giving practical guidance on trans rights. This reflects the fact that trans equality is increasingly being recognised as an equality strand in its own right, particularly within the Single Equality Bill.

The forum worked in partnership with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) to produce a DVD training toolkit for sexual orientation equality. This DVD showcases good practice in the lifelong learning sector and has been distributed to all providers in the sector, and some universities.

Plans for 2009 include a new project on the relationship between religion and belief and LGBT equality, which will produce a good practice resource for the sectors and serve as a launch pad for further discussions.



Sign up for UNISON further education updates

Keep up to date with the latest events and news by signing up for our email updates on further education and sixth form colleges.

Sign up today by visiting:
www.unison.org.uk/education

Or if you would like to become a rep contact your local branch and if you're not sure where that is, call 0845 355 0845.

Campaigning for race equality in further education colleges

The Workforce Race Advisory Group (WRAG) was set up as a result of the Commission for Black Staff that reported in 2002. Its primary task was to oversee the implementation of the commission's recommendations.

The purpose of the advisory group is to focus on race equality in the learning and skills sector workforce and to develop a strategic overview of activities that promote race equality

and opportunities within the sector workforce. To some extent we have achieved our goals. One of our most significant achievements is in relation to the Ofsted Inspections framework as there are now significant changes in how inspections are done with regards to equality and diversity and the workforce.

UNISON's further education committee leads the way on equality

issues within the union, but as activists we need to challenge our employers to ensure that as a sector it is a beacon of good practice in the public sector and society in general. So keep up the good work in your respective workplaces.

Joel Whittle, St Helen's College branch UNISON lay activist on the WRAG group

Seminar success builds knowledge and boosts members' morale

Every year UNISON holds a further education and sixth form seminar to bring together further education representatives from all over the UK to discuss the issues affecting college members. This year's seminar was in Cambridge.

Eight Scottish delegates attended the seminar and were given a warm welcome by Anne McCormack, chair of the FE committee, who was heartened to see a strong representation from Scotland.

A range of topics was covered, with national secretary for education and children's services, Christina McAnea, giving a strong report on the current situation and ongoing work, including in Scotland. Other areas covered included:

Health and Safety: sickness absence policies I learned a lot about how we should be looking at the policies within the workplace and how they impact on our members.

Institute for Learning While this topic does not apply to Scotland it made very worthwhile listening and it was interesting to understand how the system works in England.

Bullying and Harassment in FE delivered by Dr Karen McIvor. This raised my awareness of areas of concern that need to be looked at within the workplace.

For me though, the highlight of the weekend was Trevor Gordon who spoke on equality in FE. Trevor loves FE with a passion and explained his background as an East End lad who dropped out then went into FE and: "found respect in himself and learned to respect others"; worked his way up through the system, eventually becoming vice principal of an FE college. He gave a frank analysis of FE in the future and the many pitfalls that may lie ahead. Trevor's way is: work with staff, keep staff happy, respect staff and they will respect you, and a happy workforce makes for a more productive establishment.

I gained a lot of knowledge and found there was something worthwhile in every topic and discussion I participated in. I now look forward with enthusiasm to working together positively with new colleagues in FE in Scotland. Being together over the weekend gave us time to get to know each other a bit better and I am sure will help us to plan ahead for the future.

Anne Dunlop
Jewel & Esk College



I was the only Welsh representative at the FE seminar but it was a great chance to meet UNISON members from other FE colleges and the UNISON staff that support us, to share information and to learn from each others' experiences. It was also an opportunity to collect useful literature (and pens) and to update my knowledge on many topics.

Among the topics being discussed were organising and recruiting within FE, and the threat that bullying, harassment and stress pose to the FE workforce.

Another major theme of the seminar was the fundamental importance of equality in FE; especially as a way of providing an example to other parts of the community, in order to promote community cohesion and challenge the divisive message of the far right.

I was very happy that my branch, Ceredigion County, encouraged me to attend the seminar and to meet fellow FE activists.

Daniel Titley
Ceredigion College

Scotland gets organised



Work on organising the members employed in Scotland's colleges grows apace. We held a day-long training event on job evaluation for the local

information on the cost of local pay bargaining. We are in the process of compiling the results and hope to be able to persuade the Scottish

stewards as most colleges now seem to be commissioning job evaluation exercises of one sort or another.

We issued a Freedom Of Information request to all Scotland's colleges to try to get

government that it is in everyone's interests to return to national bargaining.

The sector committee is having a development weekend in June in Stirling to plan our activities for the year. A key objective will be to examine the membership figures and look to where we can do some targeted recruitment. We have put in a bid to the Regional Pool fund (money allocated specifically for recruiting and organising) for money to get some recruitment materials designed for use in colleges. Watch this space for details of our forthcoming campaigns.

For further information please contact: Nancy Kelly at n.kelly@unison.co.uk

Doncaster drops redundancy plans

Doncaster College has announced that its planned restructuring – involving 160 redundancies – has been abandoned following a successful local joint union campaign.

The college announced plans at the beginning of March to make 160 staff redundant, but was unable to tell UNISON and the UCU the size of the budget deficit.

The college has now announced that the principal and the director of finance have been suspended while an investigation is conducted into its financial management.

UNISON regional organiser Robin Symonds said: "The announcement that the redundancies have been abandoned is welcome news and is a significant victory.

"It shows what can be achieved when we stand together. We have worked closely with the University and Colleges Union to campaign against the cuts and to defend our members' jobs."

UNISON slams staff cuts and millions wasted in Birmingham

UNISON has slammed City College Birmingham for planning to cut 76 jobs, after a Freedom of Information request sent by UNISON revealed the college wasted £2,842,876 on agency staff in the financial year 2007/2008.

Recruitment agencies routinely charge more than 50% on top of what they pay their staff, while the college refused to give any pay rise to staff last year.

UNISON and UCU have joined forces locally to launch a campaign to oppose the redundancies.

City College Birmingham is one of the worst offenders when it comes to wasting money on agency staff. But they are not the only ones. UNISON has sent Freedom of Information requests to 78 other colleges that have refused to honour the 2008/09 national pay deal.

This is a warning shot to those colleges that are cheating staff on pay. We are prepared to use this information to name and shame colleges into giving staff the pay rise they deserve.

Check out www.unison.org.uk/education for all the news as it happens.

UNISON Wales wins fight for funding



UNISON has been playing a fundamental part in the fight against funding cuts at many Welsh colleges. UNISON, and the other trade unions in the sector, have been lobbying and campaigning to make the Welsh Assembly Government see sense. This campaign has been co-ordinated following the latest funding settlement for 14–19 provision in Wales. The overall budget has been cut by 1.06%, over £3m, with some colleges facing cuts of up to 7.5%. This situation is bringing about cuts in education provision and staff redundancies.

But it seems that the hard work and campaigning of UNISON members, alongside their trade union colleagues, has started to pay off.

At the fifth All-Wales Economic Summit, held in Swansea on 7 April, delegates were informed of the progress of the counter-recession measures implemented by the Welsh Assembly Government and the UK government since the last summit. Delegates were also informed of a number of new measures introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government as part of the continued drive to lead Wales out of recession, including extra support that is being made available to provide funding for a further 2,500 places for young people and adults in sixth form and further education colleges.

This announcement was made a week after a 300-strong demonstration and lobby of the assembly government in Cardiff Bay (pictured). The protest was against the funding cuts and potential jobs losses in the further education sector in Wales and UNISON played an active role.



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£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K

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