

Minute of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Support) Meeting on Wednesday 26 November 2025 (1000-1200), at Colleges Scotland Offices, Argyll Court, Stirling

In Attendance	
Debbie Kerr	Management Side
Alan Ritchie	“ “
Jon Vincent	“ “
David Watt	“ “ (Chair)
Collette Bradley	Staff Side
Richard Gordon	“ “
Keir Greenaway	“ “
Stuart Lee	“ “
Alison MacLean	“ “
Laura McLean	“ “
Colin Watson	“ “
John Anderson	Management Side Joint Secretary
Janet Stewart	Staff Side Joint Secretary
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat
Anne Davidson	Note Taker
Louis Martin	IT Administrator
Steve Farrell	Management Side Observer

9/25 Welcome and Apologies

The Management Side chaired the meeting. The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting. There were no apologies.

10/25 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of Tuesday 10 June 2025 and Wednesday 10 September 2025 were agreed.

11/25 Job Evaluation

Proposal – A Two Staged Approach

The Management Side outlined the contents of Paper 2a. It noted that following a survey to colleges it has been identified that there are between 4500 and 5500 roles to be evaluated, and that given the capacity of the Scheme Provider to evaluate roles, this would equate to a minimum two and a half year timeframe to complete the job evaluation process. Therefore, the Management Side proposed a two-stage approach, where Stage One evaluates all current job roles in scope and to apply the relevant regrading and pay, with Stage Two addressing the historic roles backdated to 2018, following on after that. It was suggested that the advantage of taking this approach is that the role evaluation part of the project could be completed within an approximate 12-month period, providing that there was agreement and receipt of funding from the Scottish Government

UNISON advised that it has plans to commence information/training sessions for 27 Staff Side Job Evaluation Coordinators on the 10 December 2025.

GMB wished to note its view that the current agreed allowance of six hours of Facilities Time to attend meetings is insufficient and as a result of the limited facilities time, it has not had an opportunity to fully review the proposals on the Job Evaluation staged approach and feels the input from lay reps has been omitted as only Full Time Officials (FTO's) have been in attendance at meetings. GMB queried who had made this decision and why, stating its belief that there is currently a lack of democracy in the process.

The Management Side responded, saying that it had been noted in the Facilities Time Agreement, that additional Facility Time may be provided once the project commenced, and funding was available.

The Management Side also confirmed that there was no decision taken to exclude lay reps and that the assumed route for inclusion and communication from discussions with the FTO's, would be that FTO's would update their lay reps and members on discussions as they felt appropriate, or were required to do.

Those views from reps and lay members could then be brought back for further discussion. It is for the FTO's to jointly request to include lay reps as required in future meetings.

The Management Side also noted that the opportunity to hold extraordinary Side Table meetings for additional formal discussion and decision making as required, outside the scheduled NJNC – Side Table Meetings; at which Lay Members would be involved, is already built into the Job Evaluation governance framework. The Management Side view is that the decisions reached so far, have been made with the involvement of the FTO's and it has been for them to ensure their democratic processes are met.

GMB also noted that its members had expressed nervousness around the level of detail in the Job Description that will be used for the evaluations and whether this allowed for the appropriate level of complexity associated with some roles, and the potential for underscoring. In addition, GMB noted its intention would be to ballot its members in relation to the staged approach for job evaluation.

The Management Side reminded GMB, that the arrangements of the Side Table is on the basis of single table bargaining unit and while GMB may ballot their members if they wished., the decision made at Side Table is binding on both the Management Side and the Support Staff Side, and does not provide for discussion/negotiation with trade unions on an individual basis.

UNISON confirmed it has kept lay reps and members up to date regarding the job evaluation discussions/proposals and would not expect to ballot its members. Unite confirmed the same.

UNISON gave feedback that, from its experience working in various colleges, the general sentiment among its members is excitement/anxiousness to get the project underway.

Following lengthy discussions and an adjournment, the Staff Side agreed that the two-stage approach is a positive method to take the project forward, and that Paper 2a was agreed.

GMB stated it had a number of remaining queries relating to the two-stage approach paper and asked how these would be addressed, given Paper 2a has been agreed. The Management Side asked for these queries to be submitted to them, and that they would respond, outwith the meeting.

Survey to Sector – Number of Roles and Job Descriptions

The Management Side noted that a follow up survey is to be issued to all colleges to confirm the number of current roles in scope, Job Descriptions and college preparedness ahead of the commencement of Stage One. The responses to the surveys are anticipated to be complete by the end of the year with an associated RAG status across the sector.

This information would be disseminated to the Side Table once available.

Scottish Funding Council Update

The Management Side advised that a meeting is arranged with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Scottish Government on Wednesday 3 December 2025, to discuss the progress to date on job evaluation, the proposed staged approach, the format of the business case, procurement of the preferred scheme provider and the means to expedite the necessary funding to allow commencement on job evaluation.

Job Evaluation Communications

It was agreed that the Joint Secretaries will issue updated Job Evaluation communications to the sector, reflecting the agreed next steps following the meeting with the SFC and Scottish Government on Wednesday 3 December 2025.

12/25 Support Staff Pay Offer

The Management Side advised that on 11 November 2025, the Scottish Government confirmed additional funding will be provided for Years 1 and 2 to support the pay deal. The Scottish Government also confirmed that this funding should be treated as a baseline in future college budgets. This confirmation allowed a formal offer to be made to the Support Staff Side, via the Joint Secretary, on 11 November 2025. The proposed offer provides a three-year package covering pay, overtime eligibility and standby allowances.

The Management Side requested an update from the Staff Side on the ballots on the pay offer.

UNISON confirmed that its ballot had closed on Tuesday 25 November 2026 and it had returned a 'yes' result. Unite advised that its ballot closes on Friday 28 November 2025 at midday and that it will provide an update as soon as they have informed its members. The GMB confirmed its ballot will close on Monday 8 December 2025.

GMB raised a query relating to the Organisational Change commitment made in the original offer on 10 June 2025 which was not in the current offer. The Management Side confirmed that the commitment remains in place to developing Organisational Change Guidance by 31 December 2025.

13/25 National Recognition and Procedures Agreement (NRPA) Reform – Update

The Management Side introduced paper 2 and confirmed that UNISON and Unite have already agreed the revised NRPA as set out in Annex and GMB was asked to confirm its position.

The GMB verbally confirmed that it also accepts the final document and agreed to confirm this in writing today.

With all parties confirming agreement, the revised NRPA will be taken forward to the Central Committee meeting scheduled for **Thursday 4 December 2025** for ratification.

14/25 Date of Next Scheduled Meeting

The date of the next scheduled meeting is **Wednesday 11 March 2026**.

Action Monitoring Log

Wednesday 12 March 2025		
Action	Owner	Status/ Anticipated/ Completion Date
Jointly approach the Scottish Government/SFC to establish its clear position re PSPP.	Management Side/Staff Side	Overtaken/Complete
Convene a series of meetings to further discuss Pay once more information on funding is known.	CES Team	Complete
Thursday 24 April 2025		
Action	Owner	Status/ Anticipated/ Completion Date
Provide written confirmation on the Scottish Government position in relation to the College sector and PSPP.	Management Side Joint Secretary	Overtaken/Complete
Tuesday 10 June 2025		
Action	Owner	Status/ Anticipated/ Completion Date
Consider the Management Side's offer and provide a response.	Staff Side	Complete June 2025
Wednesday 10 September 2025		
Action	Owner	Status/ Anticipated/ Completion Date
Confirm whether feedback from HR Leads on the Miscellaneous Leave document has been issued.	Management Side Joint Secretary	Complete
Clarify the recording of GMB's request for costings in the 10 June 2025 minute.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Prepare and circulate a revised draft NRA/NRPA, including GMB, following further discussions with the Lecturing Side.	Joint Secretaries	Complete October/November 2025
Arrange an extraordinary NJNC – Side Table (Support) in October 2025 to consider and agree the Job Evaluation Business Case and related documents.	Joint Secretaries	Complete October 2025
Wednesday 26 November 2025		
Action	Owner	Status/ Anticipated/ Completion Date
GMB to forward queries relating to the two-stage approach to the Management Side for review.	GMB/Management Side	November 2025
Follow up survey to be issued to all colleges to confirm the job descriptions, the no. of roles in scope and college preparedness for commencement of stage one.	Management Side	November 2025.
GMB to issue written confirmation to the revised NRPA following its verbal confirmation in the meeting.	GMB	Complete – 27 November 2025
Job Evaluation comms to be drafted between the joint secretaries in relation to the joint approach for job evaluation.	Joint Secretaries	November 2025