

Minute of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Support) Meeting on Wednesday 10 September 2025 (1400-1600), at Colleges Scotland Offices, Argyll Court, Stirling

In Attendance	
Susan Elston	Management Side
Debbie Kerr	“ “
Chris O’Neil	“ “
Alan Ritchie	“ “
David Watt	“ “ (Chair)
Hazel Coutts	Staff Side
Keir Greenaway	“ “
Alison MacLean	“ “
Laura McLean	“ “
John Anderson	Management Side Joint Secretary
Deborah Smith	Acting Staff Side Joint Secretary
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat
Catherine McCreath	Note Taker

1/25 Welcome and Apologies

The Management Side was in the Chair. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Richard Gordon, Chris Greenshields, and Janet Stewart.

2/25 Minutes of Previous Meetings and Any Matters Arising

The minute of Wednesday 4 June 2025 was agreed.

A query was raised on the first paragraph of page 3 of the minute of Tuesday 10 June 2025. It was agreed the Joint Secretaries would discuss this offline.

Matters Arising

The Staff Side queried the March 2025 action of the minutes and whether feedback collated from HR Leads on the Miscellaneous Leave document had been shared. The Secretariat confirmed the work was complete but would check whether it had been issued.

The Staff Side (GMB) requested confirmation in writing of the CES position on pay harmonisation, referenced under the 4 June 2025 minute. It was agreed that the Management Side Joint Secretary agreed to check this.

3/25 Facilities Time

Support Staff Side – Facilities Time Agreement 1 Aug 2025 – 31 July 2026

The Side Table noted and agreed the Facilities Time Agreement as set out in Paper 2. It was noted that the Agreement will be published on the NJNC website and reviewed annually. It was further noted that Job Evaluation release time will be managed separately.

Facilities Time Log/SharePoint

It was noted that a SharePoint site is now live for recording National Facilities Time following each meeting, providing a clear basis for annual reimbursement to employing colleges. Guidance has been issued to UNISON and Unite representatives and relevant HR leads/line managers. GMB representatives and their HR leads/line managers will be added once arrangements have been confirmed for named representatives.

4/25 National Recognition and Procedures Agreement (NRPA) Reform

Both sides considered the draft revised NRA/NRPA for the College Sector as set out in Paper 3. The new framework retains common principles and protocols but separates into two appendices covering Lecturing Staff (LS) and Professional Services Staff (PSS).

The Staff Side welcomed progress but highlighted a number of concerns. It noted that the dispute resolution process for PSS appeared weaker than that for LS. It further noted there was a need for clarity on whether procedures, as well as policies, should be subject to national negotiation, with GMB emphasising that policies without minimum procedural standards risk inconsistency across colleges. The inclusion of "Status Quo Ante" wording was requested to ensure parity with LS. Queries were also raised regarding quorums and whether costs such as travel should be borne by CES or by individual colleges.

The Management Side confirmed that any strengthened wording agreed with the LS, including on disputes or "Status Quo Ante", would also be mirrored for PSS, and that the disputes clause had been left unchanged for the LS draft as discussions have only just started. It noted that the existing NRPA did not incorporate procedures and stated that policies should be agreed first, with any future extension to procedures considered separately. The Management Side confirmed that the only expenses covered nationally are Facilities Time reimbursement.

The GMB requested that a draft revised NRA/NRPA including GMB as a signatory be provided for its full consideration.

It was agreed that a revised draft, reflecting these points and following further discussions with LS, would be prepared and circulated to all three unions.

Progress was noted.

6/25 Job Evaluation

The Management Side reported that good progress had been made on the Job Evaluation project, with work ongoing across the key areas of activity. The Business Case is being prepared, and discussions are continuing on the engagement of a scheme provider, with a move towards using formatted Job Descriptions rather than questionnaires, and the development of principles for pay and grading.

It was noted that a Single Source Justification had been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to continue with ECC as the provider. It was confirmed that ECC remains the preferred option, although due process requires formal consideration by SFC before confirmation can be given. Colleges have completed preparatory work by reviewing and submitting details of all roles.

The Staff Side emphasised that there would come a point where discussions need to be formalised within the NJNC, noting the limits of member involvement in preparatory stages.

The Management Side highlighted that a CES Executive Group meeting would take place on 15 September 2025, followed by a Secretariat meeting on 16 September 2025, at which key documents would be considered in advance of wider circulation.

It was agreed that an extraordinary NJNC – Side Table (Support) would be arranged in October 2025 to formally consider and agree the Business Case and related documents prior to submission to SFC and the Scottish Government.

7/25 Meeting Schedule 2025/26

The meeting schedule for 2025/26, as set out in Paper 4, was noted. It was confirmed that provision had also been made for Support Staff Working Group meetings between Side Tables (Support) meetings, if required.

AOCB

The Staff Side raised concerns regarding Forth Valley College's proposals for the closure of the Alloa Campus. It was noted that trade unions had not been consulted despite the matter having been under consideration for some time.

The Management Side stated that the NJNC has no formal role in local colleges decisions but that, while the matter is ultimately for the college, it would continue to encourage colleges across the sector to engage recognised trade unions at the earliest possible stage on significant issues.

8/25 Date of Next Scheduled Meeting

The date of the next scheduled meeting is **Wednesday 26 November 2025**.

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	March 2025
Convene a series of meetings to further discuss Pay once more information on funding is known.	CES Team	In Progress
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	Initial response received May 2025
Tuesday 10 June 2025		
Action	Owner	Status/ Anticipated/ Completion Date
Consider the Management Side's offer and provide a response.	Staff Side	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	In Progress
Clarify the recording of GMB's request for costings in the 10 June 2025 minute.	Joint Secretaries	In Progress
Confirm in writing the CES position on pay harmonisation, as referenced in the 4 June 2025 minute.	Management Side Joint Secretary	Shared with Staff Side Secretary – April 2025
Prepare and circulate a revised draft NRA/NRPA, including GMB, following further discussions with the Lecturing Side.	Joint Secretaries	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	October 2025