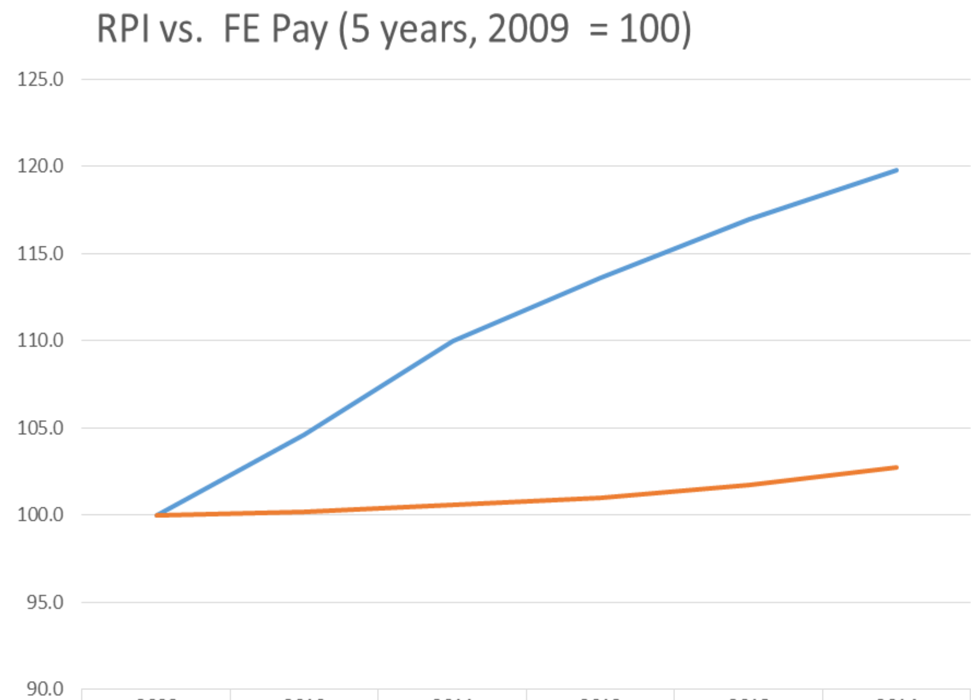
FURTHER EDUCATION NATIONAL JOINT FORUM TRADE UNION SIDE

Pay and conditions claim 2015/16

Parity, protection and fairness

The 2015/16 further education Joint Trade Unions' pay claim comes at a time when there has never been more agreement across the sector regarding the challenges facing further education in England. This claim also coincides with a broad community consensus, from trade unions, economists and politicians, including the Prime Minister, that Britain needs a real pay rise now.



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
RPI Indexed % change	100.0	104.6	110.0	113.6	117.0	119.8
FE Pay Indexed % change	100.0	100.2	100.6	101.0	101.7	102.7

Further education (non – SMT) staff have suffered real pay cuts totalling more than 17% over the last five years. For experienced lecturers at point 8 on the teaching scale this equates to a loss of over £6,100 a year. This year's Joint Trade Union claim acknowledges that the lower paid are hardest hit by the cuts in real wages over the last five years.

Protection and parity for the sector

All those who know and understand further education also understand that further education colleges provide local communities and their economies with the ability to prosper in a world where multiple routes to re-training for multiple career paths become essential. The challenges to colleges' ability to provide this service to their communities and to be recognised as doing this successfully are also multiple. While the further education sector in England unites to argue publicly it's value and essential role, it must also take steps to protect its capacity and retain the staff who deliver the service we know to be essential to communities.

Further education colleges compete with schools, academies and the new “free schools” for staff. Further education lecturers continue to be paid 5% less than school teachers who teach the same courses and students. School teachers will receive increases this year to address recruitment issues that exist for schools. The ability of further education colleges to attract and retain staff will decline unless a pay rise addressing the gap between further education lecturers’ and school teachers’ pay is applied.

Further education colleges reporting staff vacancies in teaching roles have increased from 70% in 2010 to 82.4% in 2014(AoC). The length of time to fill teaching vacancies has risen from 11.1 weeks sin 2010 to 12.5 weeks in 2014(AoC). Staff turnover for support staff has increased every year from 15% in 2010 to 18.4% in 2014 and for teaching staff from 13% in 2010 to 17% in 2013/14(AoC). Staff turnover rates for part-time support and teaching staff is now 18%(AoC). All of these figures show a trend of further education colleges’ declining ability to recruit and retain teaching and support staff.

Further education colleges’ ability to recruit and retain experienced staff is vital to maintaining their capacity and quality. Colleges and the joint trade unions both have issues with Ofsted’s inspection regime. However, we cannot ignore the coincidence of recent Ofsted inspection reports identifying a decline in English and Maths standards in colleges while at the same time college vacancies for teaching staff in these areas have increased (AoC and FE press). This demonstrates the threat posed to further education colleges’ ability to maintain a positive story around quality unless pay parity with schools is addressed.

Pay claim

The further education Joint Trade Unions claim is for an increase in pay of £1 per hour for all staff.

This claim is a flat claim because it delivers the same increase for all staff and therefore addresses the cost of living crisis faced by the lowest paid but it also addresses the issue of pay parity with schools, academies and “free schools”.

Living Wage

- To recommend that the Living Wage (LW) is the minimum pay rate in colleges with annual up-rating;
- To recommend that colleges enter into discussion with the Living Wage Foundation on achieving accredited status

The Joint Trade Unions celebrate the progress that the National Joint Forum (NJF) has made on the Living Wage (LW). A meeting of employers organised by AoC demonstrated commitment in the sector to LW in terms of moral leadership as well as business benefits. The AoC has not agreed to the element in previous claims that called for a recommendation to colleges to become accredited LW employers. This means that there is no commitment to honour the annual LW up lift that is announced in November with the expectation that employers will implement it by the following May. This means that in further education the LW payment lags behind the national rate and the Joint Trade Unions must present a LW claim afresh every year. Accreditation as a LW employer also requires an undertaking to ensure that out-sourced contracts employ staff on the LW which has proved a stumbling block in previous negotiations. Colleges have expressed concern about their inability to forecast funding or to procure cost-effective contractors if they are required to pay the LW. Despite this, an AoC survey (2013) found that 16 per cent of colleges were accredited or working towards it. The Joint Trade Unions acknowledge national insurance and pension costs, but wish to emphasise that those on the lowest pay are causing the least additional burden. The Joint Trade Unions are keen to continue to work in partnership with the employers to secure a LW sector, but believe that we must reflect this in our national negotiations or be open to accusations of hypocrisy.

Inflation forecasts

All-items retail price inflation forecasts, 24 February 2015

	CB	CG	JPM	MS	NO	RBS	SB	SG	Rounded average
	% inc	% inc	% inc	% inc	% inc	% inc	% inc	% inc	
February 2015	0.6	0.9	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9
March	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.8	1.0
April	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.4	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.1
May	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.3
June	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	0.8	1.0	1.5	1.2
July	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	0.8	1.1	1.7	1.3
August	1.0	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.3	0.8	1.0	1.8	1.2
September	1.0	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.7	0.9	1.1	1.9	1.4
October	1.1	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.2	2.1	1.5
November	1.4	2.2	2.1	1.7	2.1	1.4	1.5	2.2	1.8
December	1.5	2.4	2.3	1.9	2.2	1.5	1.5	2.2	1.9
January 2016	1.6	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.7	1.8	2.1	2.8	2.4
February	1.7	2.9	2.8	2.4	3.0	1.9	2.2	3.1	2.5
March	1.8	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.1	2.3	3.3	2.6
April	1.9	3.1	3.1	2.5	3.1	2.1	2.5	3.1	2.7
May	2.5	3.0	3.2	2.5	3.3	2.2	2.6	3.2	2.8
June	2.8	3.2	3.3	2.4	3.3	2.3	2.7	3.1	2.9

Forecasters: **CB** Commerzbank; **CG** Citigroup; **JPM** JP Morgan **MS** Morgan Stanley; **NO** Nomura; **RBS** Royal Bank of Scotland; **SB** Scotiabank; **SG** Société Générale

SOURCE: IDS

The table above shows forecast changes in RPI to June 2016 from eight City economists and a rounded average of their forecasts. These forecasts show that:

- RPI will steadily rise throughout 2015-16 and into 2016-17, the final month of the current forecast (June 2016) shows expected RPI of 2.9% and some forecasters predict RPI will rise to 3.3% in early 2016.
- The current low levels of RPI are due to falling commodity prices, mainly oil, but also falling food prices. Utility prices have fallen, especially those for gas, however oil prices have begun to recover, with most analysts regarding the recent fall as a short-term phenomenon. This means that inflation is likely to steadily rise, probably by autumn 2015.
- At the end of the year, the recent fall in oil and food prices will drop out of the annual comparison and the rise in inflation will become more rapid with the publication of the RPI for the year to January 2016. At this point, forecasters are predicting a rate of around 2.4% for the RPI.

- After this, the City economists expect the Bank of England to raise interest rates in the first quarter of 2016. If this happens as predicted, it will have a further upward effect on inflation, such that the RPI could reach 3% or so by summer 2016.
- The latest set of predictions is an indication that economists see the risk of deflation diminishing.

Review of the settlement date

Consultation with union membership suggests that some colleges have moved away from 1 August settlement date for a variety of reasons, not least the need to know September enrolment numbers. The TUS believe that the NJF should review the timing of negotiations and settlement to see if there is a mutually beneficial alternative date.

Workload

The Joint Trade Unions wish to work with further education employers to address increasing workload issues in the sector which pose another challenge to colleges' ability to provide high quality learning experiences. In addition to the national agreement on managing excessive working hours the joint trade unions call for a code of practice (attached as Annexe 1) for managing workloads in colleges.

Further education funding

The Joint Trade Unions welcome the close cooperation that currently exists between the Association of Colleges and other sector stakeholders in campaigning against proposed government adult skills funding cuts.

The Joint Trade Unions understand the extent of the funding context currently facing further education in England and also recognise the threat to the sector posed by continuing falls in real pay, increases in workload and a lack of parity with schools.

Colleges must wait no longer to address pay and workload or they risk a downward spiral. This would cause an increasing loss of ability to attract and retain staff, essential for creating quality experiences and outcomes for learners of all ages and life story. In turn, this will put at risk the very things that make further education special and which strengthen and justify our joint campaigning to protect and improve its' funding.

The Joint Trade Unions are committed to continue working alongside other sector organisations in support of increased funding for further education in England.

Annexe 1

A Code of practice for managing workload.

As a consequence of funding cuts, redundancies and the mantra of “doing more for less”, excessive workloads have become a daily issue for staff working in FE. In addition to fully implementing the national agreement on guidance for regulating working hours in further education colleges, staff and managers must remain vigilant in managing the risks posed to the health and safety of themselves and staff by excessive workloads. In addition to conducting risk assessments, managers and staff will observe all points contained in this code of practice.

- Ensure that job descriptions are clearly defined.
- All staff to have an agreed personal work plan defining their role and responsibility.
- Guidance from management to ensure correct task prioritisation by staff.
- Regular consultation so staff know what is expected of them.
- Employ sufficient staff to cover expected section or departmental workload.
- Hold end of academic year meetings to provisionally case-load staff for the new year.
- Finalise agreed case-loading early in the new academic year.
- Ensure targets that are reasonable and manageable.
- Agreement between individual staff and manager on workload, including hours.
- Ensure procedure in place to resolve case-loading disputes.
- Monitoring of individuals workload to ensure it does not become unreasonable.
- No increase in tasks without consultation and agreement.
- Increased workload should trigger appointment of additional staff.
- Agreed limits on class sizes.
- Timetable allowance for travel between sites - not in staffs’ own time.
- Timetables to minimise need to travel between sites.
- A place in an office to work and keep materials.
- Adequate resources for teaching and a proper resource provision service.
- Sufficient administrative and clerical support for non-teaching tasks.
- Ensure staff welfare facilities suitable and adequate for all staff.
- Encourage staff to take their lunch break.
- Encourage staff not to take work home habitually - only in exceptional circumstances.