

# MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE USS – NATIONAL DISPUTES COMMITTEE

Held at UCU Head Office Carlow St. London

October 5 2018

## **ATTENDEES:**

### **Elected Members:**

Bruce Baker (Northern)

Andrew Chitty (South East)

Karen Evans (North West)

Deepa Govindarajan Driver (South

Jo Grady (Yorkshire and Humberside)

Susanne Hakenbeck (Eastern and Home Counties)

Gholam Khiabany (London)

Linda Moore (Northern Ireland),

Rebecca Richards (West Midlands)

Tim Wilson (Scotland)

### **Standing Committees**

Sue Abbott (Women Members)

Blaise Nkwenti-Azeh (Black Members)

Themesa Neckles (Disabled Members)

Joao Florencio (LGBT + Members)

Sam Morecroft (Anti-casualisation) -Attended Via dial-in for second half of the meeting due to hospitalisation

### **Observer:**

Douglas Chalmers (President-elect)

### **Officials**

Paul Bridge (Head of Higher Education)

Christine Haswell (National Pensions Official)

Matt Waddup (National Head of Policy and Campaigns)

### Proceedings:

Following a welcome to all and a round of introductions, Douglas Chalmers set out the terms of reference for the National Dispute Committee (NDC) as resolved by HE sector conferences (HESC) in May and June 2018.

1. The meeting discussed the NDC enabling motions from HESC in May and June.
  - a. The NDC **AGREED** that its role would be one of providing direction to the SWG, and to union leadership, and reporting back to the SHESC regarding the progress of the dispute.
  - b. Following further discussion on the motions, the NDC **AGREED** the need to established the need to interpret motion from the June SHESC. Following an adjournment to discuss the motion, an NDC motion was proposed by Andrew Chitty seconded by Jo Grady and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**:  
*While recognising the importance of the June Special HESC Motion 1, the NDC is of the opinion that this motion does not refer to the NDC and accordingly agrees to be guided by the May HESC motion HE13 and the June Special HESC motion 12 in formulating our role and terms of reference.*
  - c. The quorum was **AGREED** at 50% of NDC membership.
  - d. The NDC **AGREED** decisions of the NDC would be taken by a simple majority with no casting vote by the Chair
2. The meeting then discussed the chairing of the NDC.
  - a. Following a discussion with regard to how the meetings of the NDC would be chaired and how the NDC would work with the Higher Education Committee (HEC) and Superannuation Working Group (SWG), the group requested that the Chair of NDC was elected from the members appointed to NDC, rather than agreeing Douglas Chalmers chairing as ex-officio Chair as proposed in the pre-meeting documents.
  - b. It was **AGREED** that the Chair of NDC would be elected from the group. Deepa Govindarajan Driver was unanimously elected by the meeting. Douglas offered to act as Co-Chair and continue to liaise with and report to the HEC.
3. The committee discussed how often they would meet.
  - a. It was suggested to the NDC that the next meeting should take place before the Special HESC on 7 November.
  - b. NDC members also requested that the meeting took place prior to the HEC meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> November.

- c. It was **AGREED** that future meetings would take place at regular intervals to keep pace with the development of the dispute and any documentation or analysis that came to light during the duration of the dispute.
4. The NDC considered the JEP report and the report from UCU-nominated members of the JEP.
- a. The committee thanked the UCU-nominated representatives on the JEP for their report to NDC.
  - b. The committee **AGREED** to express concern over the confidential nature of all submissions to the JEP and the lack of detail in the minutes of the JEP.
  - c. The NDC **REQUESTED** the JEP to provide NDC with a list of which submissions from UCU members, employers or others were accepted, and which were rejected, and details of why this was the case.
  - d. The NDC **REQUESTED** the JEP for a full and complete list of any conflicts of interest that had been declared as per the Terms of Reference of the JEP and the details of any members of the JEP with conflicts who had recused themselves from JEP meetings thereby rendering JEP meetings non-quorate.
  - e. Clarifications were requested re: the inclusion of a proposed motion for the NDC requesting NDC to endorse the SWG the position on the JEP. Officials and Douglas Chalmers confirmed to NDC that it was at the request of SWG that this motion was included.
    - i. NDC **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that it was a matter of grave concern that existing UCU policy areas such as Equality and CDC were ignored by the JEP in phase 1.
    - ii. It was **REITERATED** by NDC that as per UCU Congress decision, CDC was not to be considered as an option for alternative scheme design replacing the DB element.
    - iii. NDC expressed concern that JEP in phase 1 had progressed to a level beyond its authority by suggesting revised contribution rates.
    - iv. NDC **UNANIMOUSLY expressed concern** regarding the governance surrounding the underpayments by employers – NDC **REQUESTED** SWG to re-examine the underpayments and associated loss in investment returns during the period of underpayments.
    - v. It was further **AGREED** that a smaller NDC working group will put together a position paper regarding the concerns around the JEP phase 1 report. Related matters would also be discussed by the sub-group who will report to the next NDC meeting
    - vi. The NDC **AGREED** to invite a representative of the SWG to its next meeting.
    - vii. After a lengthy discussion, the NDC **AGREED** the following statement; *The NDC welcomes the SWG statement on the JEP report. The NDC notes there are important areas of concern to UCU members and matters of UCU policy that are not covered in the JEP report. The NDC recommends that the SWG push for negotiations on these issues.*

5. The NDC discussed the way in which it will communicate to branches.
  - a. The NDC **AGREED** to publish its minutes, NDC papers, reports and decisions and make these available on the UCU website, where it will have a dedicated NDC page via which members can contact the NDC directly.
  - b. It was also **AGREED** that a central mailbox visible only to NDC members would be made available by UCU HQ, for members to directly contact NDC.
  - c. The NDC discussed communications. It was **AGREED** that a message would be sent from the Chair of NDC on behalf of NDC to UCU members. In addition, NDC suggested that UCU leadership send a short message to students thanking them for their support and solidarity, given this vindication of the strike action by the JEP report.
6. The NDC Chair thanked Paul Bridge for the pre-meeting preparation and notes and for facilitating the arrangements for the meeting, Christine Haswell for taking minutes and Matt Waddup and Douglas Chalmers for attendance and for contributions,
7. Dates for the next meeting were suggested and the next meeting date was agreed (by poll offline).