

From: <REDACTED>

Sent: 11 February 2019 15:46

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>;
Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: College Lecturers

Good afternoon,

Please see below the update Mr McMillan has received from his constituent who I refer to in my initial email. Mr McMillan has also been contacted by a number of other lecturers who live in his constituency. Any information and advice on this subject would be greatly appreciated.

Dear Stuart/<REDACTED>

Hope you're both well.

As you will be aware, EIS/FELA members are going out on strike tomorrow in support of our cost of living claim. This is Day 2 of the current round of industrial action (Day 9 if you look at the last 3 years).

Until now, Colleges Scotland has justified its stance on the dispute by stating that the lecturers' pay claim is simply not affordable.

The settlement for college support staff was, however, deemed affordable and had been costed by Colleges Scotland and validated by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) at around £14m back in September 2018. In a press statement, your colleague, John Swinney commended the deal, highlighting the collaborative approach which had delivered this deal without industrial action. It came as some surprise, therefore, when the EIS-FELA's similar claim was returned with an estimated cost of over £31 million.

EIS-FELA has now learned that different methodologies were applied to the costing of the two deals by Colleges Scotland and validated by the SFC. In the support staff deal, the year-on-year cost was used, while in the lecturers' claim, the cumulative costs were used. Whilst both are valid calculations, they are not comparable and led to a different cost being associated with each claim despite the fact that the claims were similar. When the EIS challenged the SFC's "validation", they found that the real cost of the support staff deal was £31.2m, just £300,000 less than the EIS-FELA claim.

Colleges Scotland heralded the support staff settlement as 'affordable' and 'a £14 million investment in support staff', 'providing long term stability' for the sector. Now that we know that the costings are so similar, why are Colleges Scotland not prepared to invest about the same amount in its lecturers to provide stability and avoid industrial action? Why has it applied different standards in its calculations of the lecturers' claim?

This is yet another example of the ineptitude of Colleges Scotland in relation to its handling of this dispute.

I wonder if Mr Swinney was aware of the background to the costing of the lecturers' pay claim when he was questioned by Iain Gray MSP during a session of the Education and Skills Committee on 16 January 2019?

I would be grateful if you could raise this matter with Mr Swinney and Mr Lochhead.

Yours sincerely

Kind regards,

<REDACTED – Out of Scope>

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