

3 November 2014

Dear Colleagues,

UNIFIED PAY AND REWARD and CHANGES TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Council and the Trade Unions have been meeting over the past two weeks to discuss proposals to change Terms and Conditions and to introduce a new pay and grading structure for those on Local Government Terms and Conditions including maintained schools

The recognised Trade Unions (GMB and UNISON) are negotiating on behalf of all employees under the Council's Collective Bargaining arrangements.

The negotiations to date have been constructive, with both sides working to achieve the best deal possible. At the same time both management representatives and the Trade Unions have been working jointly on evaluating roles under the draft Pay and Grading structure to understand more about the impact on employees.

The Council has committed to the new pay and grading structure not being designed to cut basic pay. It is important staff understand whilst negotiations continue positions on elements we are discussing may change. For example, the Council had proposed to reduce the redundancy entitlement and through negotiations have now withdrawn this proposal.

We can provide more information on the two key areas we continue to negotiate relating to pay:-

Pay and Grading: A new pay and grading structure that harmonises our current arrangements and creates a single scheme that applies to all staff, including senior managers who have been on a different scheme. Within these discussions we will be looking at how people progress through increments linked to performance and experience. The proposals put forward by the Council will mean coming out of national pay bargaining and setting pay locally with a 3 or 5 year pay deal.

Reward and Recognition: The Council has proposed a scheme to introduce some form of performance related pay. At this stage, until the impact of the basic pay changes are known, we are only looking at the principle of this.

At the same time, we are also negotiating on the terms and conditions applied across the workforce. The Council has proposed that terms and conditions are harmonised and simplified, meaning everyone should have the same entitlements and terms and conditions. We are still in discussion about what this means, however, we can confirm the areas being negotiated include:

Annual leave: the Council has proposed harmonisation of annual leave. We have not yet agreed how this will look, although the Council has increased its offer as a result of negotiations.

Occupational sick pay: The Council has proposed introducing a new scheme for occupational sick pay which involves moving away from current arrangements as set out in the National Agreement (Green Book).

Additional Payments, Retention Pay, Overtime and other Enhancements: Payments for unsocial hours, weekend enhancements, overtime and other additional payments are being reviewed. The Council has proposed reducing these pay elements and removing others. We are continuing to negotiate on this.

Travel allowances: The Council has proposed harmonising travel allowances and removal of the essential car user allowance.

Protected pay: The Council has proposed removing or reducing the current pay protection arrangements. This includes Teaching Assistants on 52 week contracts.

As part of the wider discussions, we are also looking at how policies for example; managing organisational change, absence and attendance management, capability, performance management and probation can be improved and reflect any new changes as outlined above.

As part of our joint working between the Council and the Trade Unions, we have agreed that we will focus our efforts over the next few weeks on concluding Job Evaluation and the design of the pay and grading structure so we can understand the full impact of these proposals on individuals. Hopefully this will then help the Trade Unions and management conclude negotiations before the end of the year.

The Council has been responsive to Trade Union requests for more information and for more time to continue with the negotiations. The Trade Unions have been providing their responses to the proposals and we are making progress.

We will let you know when we have finished the Pay and Grading review and the timetable for resuming negotiations.

Over the coming weeks, both the Council and the Trade Unions will be explaining their positions in more detail. The Council will be explaining more about the reasons for the new Pay and Grading structure, what performance related pay could look like and what they are trying to achieve through their proposals.

The Trade Unions will communicate to their members their approach to the negotiations and how they are representing members' interests.

Yours sincerely

John Hooton

Deputy Chief Operating
Officer

On behalf of the London
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John Burgess

Branch Secretary

On behalf of UNISON

Paul Coles

Convenor

On behalf of GMB