

MORAY UNISON

SINGLE STATUS – BULLETIN 1 - JULY 2001

Welcome to the first in a series of Single Status Bulletins which will be issued by the branch until the completion of the Single Status Agreement. In the June issue of the branch newsletter a brief update was given on the current state of play along with details of the branch's proposals for dealing with the negotiations. In this bulletin, we aim to give you more detailed information on the job evaluation process, issues for discussion in the wider context of Single Status and proposals on the branch organisation in consulting with members and carrying out the negotiations on your behalf.

As reported in the June issue of the branch newsletter, we've set up a working group comprising branch officers and stewards, all employed on both the former APT&C and Manual Worker grades and terms and conditions. The members of the Working Group are:-

Ken Matthews	Branch Secretary	tel	01343 563170
Jean-Anne Goodbrand	Branch Chair	tel	01343 563151
Gerry Harkins	Service Conditions Officer	tel	01343 552699
Eric Foley	Publicity Officer	tel	01343 563224
Steve Clegg	Health & Safety Officer	tel	01343 557300
Jeanie Henderson	Welfare Officer	tel	01343 562600
David Jack	Steward	tel	01343 543139
Naill Thom	Steward	tel	01261 815516

Consultation and Organisation

The focus of the development of the Single Status Agreement to date has been to implement the Job Evaluation Scheme. The majority of this scheme has been negotiated and agreed on a national basis. Issues for local negotiation have centred on procedural matters such as the Appeal's Procedure etc.

Now that the Benchmarking process is well underway, discussion on the wider areas of Single Status are beginning. Consequently, the branch wishes to ensure the involvement of members in matters for negotiation right from the start of the discussions. Members can express views in a number of ways. **You can either contact a Branch Officer or Steward or use the response sheet accompanying bulletins.** Each **bulletin** will be **compiled** using the **information** issued for **negotiation** by the **Council** and the **questions and comments** raised by **members** on **issues** up for **discussion**.

All details for negotiation will be discussed at the Working Group, taking into account the views of members, with recommendations then being made to the branch committee on our negotiating position.

Therefore, the **actual negotiating position** will be **decided** by the **Branch Committee**, based on your views and that of your fellow members.

JOB EVALUATION

Job evaluation has now entered its second phase with the start of the **SECONDARY BENCHMARK** process. An agreed list of jobs has been identified by each department and details will already have been sent out to the post holders and their line managers indicating their involvement in this part of the process. A series of briefing sessions is underway for all those involved. **If you have been selected to take part in the secondary benchmark and you wish support or have any queries on any aspect of the process, please contact your Steward, a Branch Officer or leave a message at the Branch Office.**

You will have been issued with a questionnaire to complete by a given time. **You are entitled to enough time, during working hours to complete the questionnaire.** Some people will only have to complete the questionnaire whilst others will be invited to meet with a Job Analyst for a job information interview. This interview is to get more detailed information about the job you do and assists the analyst to input the information correctly into the computer software.

If you were involved in the PRIMARY BENCHMARK process, you will now have received your Job Overview which you must now consider and discuss with your line manager. Only if you agree that it is correct, should you sign it. DO NOT AGREE TO SIGN IT IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY WITH THE CONTENTS. You have the right not to sign it. If you do not wish to sign it, contact your Steward or a Branch Officer for support and assistance.

If you have been involved in the Primary Benchmark process, or are about to start the Secondary Benchmark process, we would welcome any comments you might have on the process itself, the information the council has provided to you and any support you would wish from the union.

Further details will be issued in future bulletins on the process for other posts after the benchmarking has been completed along with details of the agreed Appeals Procedure.

The end result of the Job Evaluation process is to establish a new **PAY AND GRADING STRUCTURE**. The Council is currently looking at three options for a new pay structure to replace the existing system. Currently we have APT&C and Manual Worker grades. This will be replaced by either a single pay point for each job, a short pay scale of say three pay points, or a long pay scale similar to the current APT&C scale.

In a **Single Pay Point**, a post holder is paid a single rate for the job with no increments. All staff appointed to this job title are paid exactly the same regardless of experience or length of service. This is the method used in the Manual Worker scheme.

In a **Short Pay Scale** there are an agreed number of pay points, usually only three or four, through which an employee will progress.

In a **Long Pay Scale** there are a number of pay points which can range from, say, four to eight through which the employee will progress. This is the method used in the APT&C scheme.

The **Council** has previously indicated **their preference** for the **short pay scale** and would suggest a **four-point scale** as follows: -

- Point 1 New starts placed on this point – a ‘probationary’ rate
- Point 2 All employees progress to this point after 6 months satisfactory performance in the post.
- Point 3 All employees progress to this point after one further years satisfactory performance in post.
- Point 4 Progression to this point will only be made on the basis of exceptional and outstanding merit in the post.

To allow the branch committee to agree it's negotiating stance, we would welcome your views on the three options for pay scales and in particular, your reaction to the proposals made by the council for a short pay scale.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Job Evaluation has been the main focus of the Single Status agreement to date. However, job evaluation forms only part of the agreement. Discussions on the other terms and conditions will be taking place soon and the Council has produced a discussion paper to set out their position for negotiation. We therefore highlight below the main areas for discussion.

The Single Status Agreement brings about a **Reduced Working Week** to 37 hours. Within the Single Status document, it talks about a 'standard' working week of 37 hours which the Council interprets as the working week for all staff, including those currently working 36 ¼. (APT&C staff) Thus, by implication, those currently working less than 37 will work an additional ¾ hour extra per week. **This is not a view which is shared by Moray UNISON.** However, there may be options which will have to be explored if all staff have to work the same number of hours per week. Is the 37 hour week implemented along with additional pay for the additional hours? Will everyone come down to 36 ¼ hours instead of 37?

We have identified some options which may be thrown up by the negotiations assuming everyone must work 37 hours. **We would therefore like to have your thoughts on these options (especially from APT&C members)**

- Everyone moves to 37 hours with no change in salary
- Everyone moves to 37 hours with appropriate increase in salary
- Everyone moves to 37 hours with no change in salary, but with negotiated additional annual leave
- Everyone moves to 36 ¼ hours

Proposals have been put forward by the Council regarding **Flexible Working** patterns. It is proposed that all services and work areas within services are identified where overtime, allowances or enhancements equivalent to 10% of the wage bill are paid. Managers in these work areas must carry out a review of their working practices to identify where more flexible working could be introduced to reduce the need to work overtime, or times which attract enhancement. An example might be core hours with additional hours being banked and worked at peak times. Detailed arrangements would reflect particular circumstances and where changes would n't help to manage the situation, the reasons would have to be made clear. It is suggested by the Council that this proposal would improve flexibility and offer a wider range of working patterns, possibly helping staff to balance home and work commitments and assist the Council with being an equal opportunities employer.

Where overtime is to exist, including contractual overtime, the Council wants to consider the actual rates and calculations for such payments. Where enhancements are to exist, the Council would also wish to review the rates and calculations.

Details of your working pattern, and contractual or other overtime, enhancements or allowances along with your views on any changes to these arrangements would be welcomed.

In relation to **Bonus payments**, the Council considers that the existing arrangements leave them open to equal pay challenges and would wish to include these in the rate for the job. Moray UNISON would support the

view that members are entitled to be paid a fair rate for the job and in recognising members views expressed to date, would consider negotiating on this basis. The Council would wish to consider, where appropriate, performance measures at a later date.

Members who currently receive bonus payments, and performance payments are asked to record their views as appropriate.

The Council also wish to reduce the number of payments made to employees in lieu of annual leave. This would ensure that staff are actually taking their entitlements to time off work. Moray UNISON would wish to get more information on these proposals to allow for more meaningful consultation with members.

Discussions concerning **Car Allowances** are currently taking place at national level as they form part of the national agreement. As details become available on the union's position on the proposals, these will be shared with members. The employers, through COSLA, are currently proposing the scheme devised by the Inland Revenue, where by there is no lump sum, but an 'appropriate' rate per mile. It is currently difficult to do a comparison between the existing and proposed schemes due to the calculations for tax and national insurance. Moray UNISON has asked the union at national level to carry out this task to allow for members to compare the schemes accurately.

The Council has also considered two further areas for negotiation concerning **Leave arrangements** and **Pay-in lieu of holidays**. Whilst there has been little information given to the branch on this subject, the Council would like to consider arrangements for, in particular, special leave.

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At the next Trade Union / Officer meeting on the 21st August it is possible the negotiating process may start. The Unison single status working group will meet the day before (20th August) to agree the negotiating position. To enable the working group time to analyse all feedback can the response sheets be sent back to the branch office by the 17th August if possible.