



NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2011

Make your vote count in the pay ballot!

The ballot on this year's pay offer closes at midday on Wednesday 27 April, with the result announced on the website that day. Please ensure you send off your vote as soon as possible, in case of postal delays over Easter.

The 2011 pay offer in detail

The pay offer is in two parts:

- a 4.7% pay increase for 2011, measured against November's RPI, when Ofwat announces the rate by which AWS can increase its prices to customers. (Previously, the measure used was the average RPI during December, January and February which this year was 5.1%.)
- future pay settlements will be awarded in full to those employees who at least Meet/Meet their previous year's Personal Development Review targets. Anyone achieving an Almost Meet rating will be awarded 50% immediately and a further 50% upon successfully completing their improvement plan (see safeguards below).

Although the offer evidently covers two separate elements, it is offered as a package which must be accepted or rejected in its entirety. Your Unite representatives recommend acceptance of the complete offer.

Tips for a successful Personal Development Review (PDR)

As the PDR becomes ever more important, it is essential that you and your manager agree realistic targets that can be achieved within the 12 month period. They should be within your control and not reliant on, for instance, other members of your team or influenced by BU targets. To achieve the Meet/Meet standard, you should be performing at the normal level required for your day-to-day job. Unite has secured agreement that targets for new or less experienced staff will be set at a lesser standard. If you are unhappy with the targets you have been set, you should raise your concerns at the time of your initial PDR.

The PDR is an ongoing assessment that is reliant on regular 1-to-1 meetings with your manager to monitor your progress. These are opportunities to identify any factors that might prevent you reaching your targets, agree training requirements, or make adjustments to the detail of your PDR as early as possible in the process.

There should be no surprises at the end of the PDR year so it is essential that these meetings take place, ideally on a monthly basis. If they are not taking place and you feel you are not receiving the support you need, you should contact HR to formally record this.

The overall aim of the PDRs is for all staff to be performing at Meet/Meet level. Currently, approximately 12% of staff reached Almost Meet level and we shall work with HR to achieve 0% Almost Meet in future. We shall monitor any changes and HR have assured us that, if significant numbers within a team fall below this level, they will look at whether this is a reflection on the management of that team rather than on the individual members.

Newsletter distribution

As you know, Unite and AWS had a difference of opinion about our newsletter content so, in future, you will be able to catch up with our news online. We have created a new website where you will find the monthly newsletter, plus other useful information that can be easily updated. However, we shall still keep our noticeboards up-to-date and informative and distribute paper copies of the newsletters as widely as possible. Please help us by printing off a few copies and circulating them to your colleagues.

'Shaping the Future' update

We continue to hold discussions with management about compensation for loss of earnings, booking holidays, roster patterns and additional bank holidays. We shall be issuing a joint-union newsletter early next week about these and other issues.

Support for individual members

Over the past few months, we have achieved successful outcomes for members in disciplinary, capability and ill health hearings: one member had his termination notice withdrawn with the help of his Unite representative. We are currently supporting a number of members with claims for change of standby compensation, hearings and appeals.

We still hear of members attending investigatory hearings without union representation when, at a time of extreme pressure, they might benefit from the support of a local rep who can clarify what has been said, particularly if the member is asked to sign a statement at the end. If you are called to any meeting more serious than a 1-to-1, we advise you to take a Unite rep with you.

RTS

Unite shop stewards continue to raise your RTS concerns and welcome any suggestions that would benefit or improve working practices for RTS members. If you have any general issues to raise, please contact your RTS rep who will take them to the next meeting. We hope the existence of our new website will greatly improve communications with our RTS colleagues, who have traditionally been more isolated, and look forward to a better exchange of ideas in future.

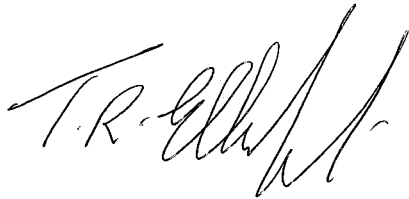
Enterprise House

Membership within Enterprise House is growing at a tremendous rate, largely due to the availability of active local reps who are assisting members with individual issues.

The reps are also involved in local health and safety and consultation issues such as the recently introduced Code of Practice. We believe this document contains errors and are in discussions with HR to re-issue the Code with appropriate corrections.

Welfare facilities and mess rooms

Unite is working with the other unions to map out welfare and mess room facilities at AWS, with a view to improving the availability and cleanliness of these areas. Check the website and notice boards for progress updates on this project!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. R. Ellingford', written in a cursive style.

Tony Ellingford
Unite Regional Officer