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Mick Stevens - Industrial Officer - Rail



## WEST MIDLANDS REGION

Amicus Section

Ref: MAS/MJC  
Date: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2008

To All members of Network Rail

Dear Colleague

### **Harmonisation**

Sub group meetings have been ongoing since the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008 and are due to be completed around 12<sup>th</sup> November. This is a very fluid situation and dates may change.

Important subjects have been debated including, home start, site start, overlapping skills and recently introduced new technology, team size by tasks and reallocation and retraining of employees.

It is hoped that the above process will produce outcomes that will find their way into the Company's final offer document. This final offer will of course be put to you for approval or otherwise via a ballot. At this time in the absence of a completed final offer, Unite negotiators are not in a position to indicate a recommendation.

The crunch elements for Unite negotiators are:

### **Pay Protection**

Our aim is to come to a position where pay protection is applied to as few of our members as possible. Not because we want potential losses to be ignored rather we want salary ranges that lift our members above current earnings to reflect existing and future flexibility.

This it has to be said, is going to be very difficult because there is a total lack of trust between the Company and the Trade Unions, all of which creates the wrong environment for reaching an agreement. Unite have called on several occasions for the Employer and Sister Unions to separate harmonisation and working practice changes.

Of course you should know that this method is not being employed and we are in negotiations which in my view are a '2 for the price of 1' bargain for your Employer. Consequently Unite have concerns that pay protection may be applied to a significant number of members.

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### **On Call**

The rates are still being debated with Unite calling for on call payments to reflect a percentage of salary. We are also asking for disturbance to be monitored and adequately managed. You will no doubt have had experience of several phone calls disturbing your sleep whilst you sort an issue without actually having to go on-site to deal with the problem. How does pay adequately reflect this unmeasured activity?

### **Recognition of Current Flexibility and Allowances**

Recent proposals have seen your employer talk about allowances only relating to London and South East (cost of living allowances). Unite has raised with your Employer the issue of our members already working flexibility and overlapping skills and receiving payments for this activity. This must be recognised into the new salary structure going forward.

### **Job Evaluation**

Job Evaluation is an extremely important part of this process that is receiving too little attention. I understand that before my arrival, my predecessors along with the other Unions did put together a draft Job Evaluation scheme and carried out a dummy run. Since then nothing has been said about this topic. Your Employer has stated that job descriptions are still being produced for the new scheme, without these it is difficult to progress Job Evaluation. This is an area which needs closer attention as it may ultimately decide where each individual member fits in the single spine structure, this in turn has a direct impact upon your earnings and pay protection.

As the process draws nearer to a conclusion I will keep you informed and when the final offer is known to Unite negotiators, then of course you will be balloted.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Local Representative.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M A Stevens".

M A STEVENS  
INDUSTRIAL OFFICER - RAILWAYS