



January 2008.

Pay 2007.

Unite very narrowly voted to accept the 2007 pay offer (48% voted to reject the offer).

MRC advised the TUS this will be paid in the February salary with adjustments being made to take account of the interim payment made in November (£200 for band 7, £300 for all other bands) and any deductions that are payable on the increase (e.g. pension contributions where relevant).

All members are strongly advised to check their Feb pay slips to make sure that they are correct and to contact their local unit administrator if they suspect an error had occurred in the first instance.

Unite conducted an indicative poll in early December to ascertain the strength of feeling for some form action in support of the 2007 pay claim. There was over-whelming support for taking some action.

Unite has already written to MRC stating its position regarding the 2008 pay negotiations; these have to be meaningful and address the issues raised by our members.

Pay – For the future.

In brief they are:

- The uplift of the MRC pay scales should realistically reflect the increases in cost of living. The 1% increase generally made to scales does not provide this and means that members' pay is decreasing in real terms.
- The salary ranges for MRC pay scales should better reflect the market position.
- A positive career structure and proper career management should be introduced for those employees we represent and indeed all employees for whom this does not currently exist.

Along with members of the NNC, I shall be preparing Unite's proposals for the 2008 pay claim for presentation to the TUS on 5th February.

We will seek the support of other unions for a claim to MRC that will address the difference in cost of living increases paid by MRC and those of other employers, notably universities and NHS where a cost of living increase is paid in addition to any performance/increment awards.

Career structure & management for research support employees in MRC.

Research Support, Technical Services and Infrastructure encompass a large professional group within MRC covering many disciplines. There have been inconclusive calls for these titles to be changed and better job titles introduced in the past.

As MRC's business evolves to meet new strategies, there is a need to ensure that MRC is able to recruit and retain employees that best meet its needs.

I shall be preparing some proposals for a more formal career structure for the employees we represent. This will be available for discussion at the Feb/March Reps Area meetings.

Job Evaluation, (JE).

MRC is changing the JE system it uses from Hay to JEGS (Job Evaluation & Grading Support). It is also devolving responsibility for all JE to MRC's regional centres (London, Oxford, Cambridge and Scotland), rather than it being a corporate function as it is at present. Additionally, it has agreed greater trade union participation in the process, thus making it more transparent.

While unions were not very comfortable with the introduction of JEGS without sufficient benchmarking being conducted first, we have an agreement that further batches of jobs will be used for benchmarking and training reinforcement and that JE results will be monitored regularly to identify any possible areas where the scheme does not adequately capture MRC jobs and therefore meet MRC needs. However, there are still issues about how job evaluation processes will be managed in the regions and the application of JEGS to MRC, as the documentation relies heavily on civil service descriptors that are not very relevant to MRC.

No-one's current band will be affected by this exercise.

It is intended that a short talk on job evaluation will be included in the Feb/March Area meetings.

Dignity at Work.

The Dignity at Work Partnership is an initiative funded jointly by BERR and Unite the Union to encourage employee representatives and employers to build cultures in which respect for individuals is regarded as an essential part of the conduct of all those who work in the organization.

The project also increases awareness and knowledge of 'dignity at work' issues, and encourages the development of partnership working in the workplace through the promotion of joint working on dignity at work.

The NNC has asked Unite to include MRC in this training initiative and I hope that our reps will take up this opportunity to improve our members' working environment. An application form, giving dates of seminars in Unite regions is attached. These are 2 day events and if travel each day is a problem over night accommodation can be arranged. Please return your form to Karen as requested and also let me know if you intend to attend one of the seminars.

The course aims to enable reps to:

- Understand what dignity at work means
- Explain the meaning of harassment and bullying
- Recognise the impact harassment and bullying has on individuals; employers and the wider community
- Identify their own role in supporting the overall objective
- Identify and contribute towards best practice
- Seek out further sources of information

UNITE AREA Meetings.

These are due to be held in Feb/March and I will be contacting reps to arrange suitable dates.

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