

PRISON SERVICES NEWSLETTER

Introduction by: **Dave Fleming**

Prison Service Industrial Grade 3 &

National Prison Service Joint Industrial Committee Lead

I am pleased to introduce the second of our Newsletters, designed to advise and inform members of latest developments in the Prison Service Joint Industrial Council and to encourage non members to join the growing ranks of Unite.

This issue highlights developments, amongst other things, in Pay and the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

In the current media debate about Public Sector restraint it is only your Union that can battle to get the facts across. Our members are not 'Fat Cats'. In fact they are paid less than the average for the jobs they do and skills they possess and our Pension Scheme is our safety net. It is our compensation for low wages and years of dedicated public service. It should be protected and our pay should be increased. Only through strong organisation via Unite will this message be constantly made. Help us put this message across by joining us, if you are not a member, or phoning one of the representatives to let them know how we could build our organisation in your Prison.

REPORT FROM PSJIC (PRISON SERVICE JOINT INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE)

ASSET MANAGEMENT REVIEW:

A report was given on the estimated £1.4bn backlog of Maintenance in the Prison estate and the current Pilot Study conducted at Preston and Kirkham which indicates this may be an under-estimate. The idea is to create greater interaction between Centre and local works in the organisation of budget and to bring in possible new estates (in probation).

Trade Unions indicated they have a unique understanding of maintenance and it was agreed that we be advised and consulted.

APPRENTICES:

Currently pleased to announce 16 new apprentices in total. The T U and Service are working closely to see if additional funding is available to increase this.

CATERING MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:

Indications are that a DP for Catering Managers is now to be pursued.

DIRTY PROTEST:

Issues surrounding the payment of enhanced rates for cleaning up after Dirty Protests were aired in order to achieve agreement and a service order. This is to be finalised at the next PSJIC and work on wording to be completed in the interim.

CIVIL SERVICE COMPENSATION SCHEME:

The Cabinet Office has announced plans to abolish all existing terms of the CSCS (which relate to Compensation in the case of redundancy and early retirement of many public servants).

The new arrangements would cap payments at two years' pay with no access to early payment of unreduced pension unless the cash lump sum is surrendered to buy out the actuarial reduction. In a compulsory redundancy situation, existing terms will disappear, other than limited protection. For further details, contact:

www.civilservice.gov.uk/news/2009/july/cscs.aspx

Consultation on the Proposals closes on 5 October 2009 and your reps made a strong intervention at the PSJIC indicating our anger that in a time of pay restraint and cut backs, the Government wishes to add insult to injury by reducing our terms and conditions.

A campaign by all Civil Service Unions has been mounted including responding to the Cabinet Proposals

and the effect they will have on you. Meetings have been held with the Minister Tessa Jowell and other Ministers including Maria Eagle. Make sure you contact your MP and keep up with progress on the Unite web Site: www.uniteunion.com (under Campaigns – “Fairness for All”).

PAY:

Following the PJIC, a meeting to discuss pay was held. Unite is seeking a reduction in the working week and a pay increase. We were advised that the Treasury has indicated it will not sanction pay increases above 1.5%. We indicated that this is unfair and unjust since the Prison Officers have been awarded 1.8% by the Independent Pay Review Body. We believe we have an equally strong case based on historical low pay. A short discussion was held about industrials being encompassed by the PRB which would, at least, allow us to make the case. This to be continued. We are, of course, acutely aware that various reports commissioned by the Government have pointed to Industrial prison workers as the Cinderella of the service. We continue to lobby ministers about this injustice, believe this imbalance should be redressed, and that our members should be made a special case.

Management indicated that they were prepared to consider a reduction in the working week (a possible mechanism would reduce the week progressively by ½ hour this year and next year) It was felt, however that, in the current climate, that this would have to be self financing – that is, no consolidated pay rise – at the same time and there could be no corresponding increase in overtime.

The conclusion of the Unions was that a reduction of the working week should only be achieved through no loss of pay and that an absence of a consolidated increase this year would have the result of onward pay reduction in future years.

Reluctantly, therefore, we have pressed for an across the board consolidated increase (without reference to a reduced working week) for this year. We await the Treasury Remit on what this may be and for the discussion once we know.

FIRST EVER SHOP STEWARDS’ MEETING:

The first ever Unite Shop Stewards’ meeting was held on 20th-21st July at the Union’s Training College at Esher Place.

Shop Stewards from up and down the country attended, from all departments, works, catering and farms and gardens.

It was an excellent meeting and enabled shop stewards to meet and start a strong networking process.

The Agenda for the two-day meeting unfolded issues that mirrored all Prisons. This included pay, 37-hour week and annual leave. Annual leave has been resolved through a meeting of PSJIC. Notice to Staff 21/2009, which can be found on the intranet.

It was highlighted that there were not enough shop stewards or reps and Unite is determined to improve this. (If you are interested in finding out more about these roles please make contact.) To resolve this, all reps are to organise and recruit members and reps from Prisons in their area, within a six month time scale. This will then give us a strong united front of shop stewards and members.

We will commence this activity in farms, gardens and catering.

The overall outcome from this meeting was so positive that there are talks of the possibility of a National Shop Stewards’ Committee.

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH

Senior Reps:

DAVE FLEMING:

National Lay Rep

Tel: 0191 332 3201

NEIL WIGHTMAN:

PJIC Rep

Tel: 01302 523000

CLIFF BROMILOW:

PSJIC Secretary

Tel: 0151 5304019

If you want to Campaign for better pay and conditions and a shorter working week [and you are not a member of a union] join Unite. Please contact:

Kevin Coyne, National Officer

Unite, Unite House

128 Theobald’s Road

Holborn, London WC1X 8TN

TEL: 0207 611 2527/ 2609