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# PRISON SERVICES NEWSLETTER NO 4

## **Introduction: Dave Fleming, Unite Prison Service National Rep for Industrial Grades (Prison Service Industrial Grade 3):**

Now that the dust has settled on the election result, it is a good time to take stock and, maybe, take the duster to some of the reports written about us over the last decade.

Take the review of Terms and Conditions 1999-2000 it said:

*"When we agreed to undertake the review of industrial staff, it was clear that to address pay problems, additional resources may be necessary. There is strong evidence that additional resources will need to be committed simply to preserve the status quo for industrial staff as present rates and terms of employment have fallen behind current industry levels."*

It concludes:

*"The pay and conditions of service for Industrial Staff need improving and modernising."*

There are few industries where a decade-old report will have such resonance to the present day. The wage offer for 2010-11 bore no recommendation from this Union. This is because it didn't even begin to address this historical anomaly.

Indeed, a 1% rise when the consumer price index is running about 2.7% will add further to a wage structure that penalises skilled men and women and makes them the Cinderellas of the Prison Service. Nonetheless, it was above the Government's target figure and it was 'more or less' agreed on time. Small advancements – but due entirely to the pressure of the Industrial Unions,

Having been involved in these negotiations, I know how frustrating they are. We consistently make the case for improvements in pay to address the historical position and, on the whole, this is accepted but resources are not currently available. We need to make the point that we are a priority case in this Service and that we are essential to its efficient running.

Let's now set this pay deal aside and start organising for next year. I want every industrial grade member to join us in 12 months of campaigning for improved pay. We need site meetings at every Prison to discuss pay and what we are seeking – but let me warn – we will be in the same position as this year if we fail to wield more influence. Every industrial grade should be a member of the Union; the time for fine words is over – we now need organisation and, above all, a determination that our voice will be heard. We need to bang even louder on the door of this coalition Government and ensure that all MPs are well briefed on the issues facing you daily.

This Newsletter has now reached you at your home address, if we have it. Some have gone directly to Prisons. If the address we have for you is wrong, please advise us. Above all, let us have your home email address.

Finally, if there is no rep on your site, call us and the National Officer will attend a meeting to explain what is going on and how we, together, can change it. Above all else: elect a rep and get organised!

## **Review of Estates:**

Having identified a £1.1bn outstanding repairs that are required upon the fabric of the Prison and Probation estate, nothing will be done until a further report is concluded at the end of 2010.

This will cover the whole of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) estate. The MoJ are desirous that Noms thus engage in this review.

We would urge all our reps to discover when consultation on the Review will commence in your Prison and to make a simple message.

The estate is in a perilous state; we know what is required, there is no need for another study. Invest the money now.

## **Chief Executive of Prison Service:**

Robin Wilkinson announced at the PJIC that the key performance targets have been met and that... "the business is doing well!"

Members know, however, that they are not getting the recognition they deserve for achieving these targets.

'Doing well' should be a two-way street and our members who run some of the services and maintain the fabric of the Prisons know that they are paid below the market average. Let us set a key performance target of our own: Call union meetings – recruit a friend.

## Unite in the Prison Services

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## Prison Service Pay Award: 1 April 2010 – Industrial & Agricultural Grades Ballot

The Pay Deal was, of course, set against a background of severe restraint within the Public Sector due to the general state of the British economy and the widely forecast limit of Public Sector pay of around 0.7%.

During negotiations, Unite were robust in calling for recognition of the historical low pay of industrial and agricultural grades and an acknowledgment that this does need to be remedied. Accordingly, we called for a pay offer on time (i.e. 1st April 2010) and above the forecast pay restraint 0.7%.

We were successful in achieving both of these objectives, but gain no satisfaction, however, from the ongoing pay differential experienced by our members in these grades when compared to other public or private sector comparators and our long term aim remains to bridge this gap.

The pay offer was put to members on May 7 via postal ballot and resulted in acceptance. The details are set out below:

### Staff on the maxima of the Industrial and Agricultural Grades 1 - 5 pay ranges

- A consolidated increase by means of a two additional spine points above the current maximum rate. As this group of staff will then be below the new maximum, under the progression rules they will be eligible for a six spine point increase for staff moving up the pay range. They will therefore receive a two spine point consolidated increase equal to just over 1% plus a non-consolidated additional 2% to total just over 3%.
- To maintain current range lengths, the Prison Service will also be moving the minima of pay ranges up by two spine points.

### Staff moving through the Industrial and Agricultural Grades 1 - 5 pay ranges

- A normal progression increase of just over 3%.

This award therefore gives all Industrial and Agricultural staff an increase in pay of just over 3%.

### Pattern B and C enhanced pay elements

Due to the introduction of cover payments and the requirement to be able to calculate these increases on a base pay rate, the Pattern B and C enhanced pay elements are now paid as a separate 15% and 30% pensionable and overtimeable payment. These payments are on top of the equivalent Pattern A level. Due to the split in February 2010, individuals may have found themselves a few pence worse off. It is proposed to rectify this by increasing all Pattern A rates by £1 so that total pay for staff on Pattern B and C is not affected by the change.

For any staff needing to supply proof of annual salary for loan applications, NOMS will, on request, provide a letter confirming that the Pattern B/C pay elements are a fixed part of pay.

The full document and details are available from Shop Stewards or on the Prison Service Website.

### Job Evaluation Scheme:

The Prison Service has at last entered into serious discussion with us on the implementation of a Job Evaluation Scheme. Theoretically this should show that our grades are treated less favourably than other skills and jobs requiring knowledge in the Service as a whole.

Currently we are working with the employers and attempting to convince them of special emphasis that should be given to our job roles.

Of particular concern is the physical effort expended in the executing of jobs. This is not currently included in the 'factor plan'.

This is unusual in comparison with Job Evaluation Schemes and we are trying to ensure physical effort is a factor.

Job Evaluation is complex – training is required. Do not enter dialogue on these matters if you have not been briefed by your rep or shop steward.

If you do not have a rep – call a meeting and elect one.

## PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH:

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