

Pay and grading rejected as totally unacceptable

Members will have seen press stories about staff losing pay under the new Pay and Grading scheme in Edinburgh.

What the stories do not make clear is that the unions have rejected the latest proposals from the Council as totally unacceptable.

One of the main problems is that the council has set the 'pay line' too low and not allowed enough money for the implementation. This would result in losses for many members.

UNISON has demanded the Council increases the 3% funding it is putting into the scheme. The Council has now gone off to think again and talks are expected to re-start at the end of June.

To further push its point, the Branch has called for talks with the new political groups on the Council to brief them and find out where they stand on the pay and grading scheme. Dates have been set for the next couple of weeks.

● Job evaluation - check your points!

Stewards have been issued with details of the job evaluation results. These show scores for jobs and proposed grades.

If you believe the points given to your job are out of line with comparable posts, get on to your steward right away.

● How will members be consulted?

There will eventually have to be a ballot on the final proposals but before that a number of things have to happen:

- We need to get back round the table and agree improvements to the current proposals
- Once a final proposal has been tabled it must be equality assessed and approved by UNISON HQ.
- If it passes the test then the branch will ballot members.

● What if we cannot agree?

If we cannot agree an acceptable scheme and the Council tries to impose it, we have to consider on industrial action.

There is no doubt this would be a tough fight. That is why the branch is considering a small added levy on your subs to top up strike pay for members who may be asked to take action for us all.

This levy would be modest and you will be balloted before it could be put in place.

● What about changes to conditions?

The negotiators' position is that conditions and job evaluation must be dealt with separately and they are taking advice on the possibility of separate ballots.

● What about equal pay claims?

Due to the council dragging its heels, more and more women are taking tribunal cases. Edinburgh UNISON has hundreds listed (our members who refused the council's 'strings-attached' compensation offer) and is working with headquarters on them.

People who accepted the compensation offer will have a case for more compensation as time drags on and inequality persists.

● Why do we need to keep negotiating?

Job evaluation is part of the deal signed in 1999. In addition, the council must come up with a scheme to meet the legislation.

It is better that the union and its members are part of that process.

The union cannot associate itself with standing in the way of an equal pay system and will not do so. Equality and fairness is what we have long campaigned for.