All Civil Service Noticeboard

Last update: **18 Jul 2023**

Latest Bulletins

Pay Review Body

Posted on: 18 July 2023

The Government has confirmed that it accepts in full the Prison Service Pay Review Body recommendations for 2023.

The recommendations apply to all HMPPS staff working in Prisons.

The recommendations are:

An increase of at least 5% for operational staff on F&S terms and conditions of employment;

A £2000 pay increase (10%) for band 2 staff

A 7% increase for staff in bands 3 to 5

Progress up the pay band by one point for eligible staff in band 3 and 5 below the band maximum

Band 7 – 12 pay points to increase by 5%

Band 7 to become a single rate of pay at the current band maximum

Progression for band 8 –11 managers below the maxima will be 4%

Inner and Outer London pay differentials to increase by 7%

The award will be paid in September 2023 and back dated to 1 April.

There is no separate award for staff in closed grades, as there is now a benefit for most to opt into F&S terms, however for those for whom there is no benefit, they will receive a £1500 lump sum payment.

GMB view

After a decade of pay increases across the public sector being less than inflation, the increases recommended and agreed by Government might be welcomes by many. However, the past year has seen galloping inflation, energy and food cost remain stubbornly high and show little sign of falling.

However, a payment of £1500 is being made to staff in the wider civil service to take account of the impact of the cost of living crisis, which is denied to staff covered by the Pay Review Body.

This increase does not restore the real take home pay of staff in the prison service to the levels it was a decade ago.

GMB has demanded pay increases for public servants to restore the standard of living to what it was before the Government imposed pay restraint. This continues to be our aim.

Unlike many in the wider economy, many Prison staff did not have the option of working from home during the pandemic. Prison staff were daily exposed to Covid 19 with outbreak after outbreak causing illness and deaths of inmates and staff. Overcrowding in prisons undoubtedly had an impact.

Now that the pandemic is behind us, UK Prisons are once again at bursting point, with very few places, a clogged justice system, and overworked staff throughout the prison estate. Given all of that the Pay Review Body recommendations still do not recognise the hard work that UK prison staff continue to undertake in buildings that have seen better days and were never designed for the size of the prison population in 2023.

GMB National Government Sector June 2023 £1500 Payment Announced For All Civil Servants

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Posted on: 19 June 2023

On 2 June the Cabinet Office announced a non consolidated one off payment for all civil servants and those covered by the civil service pay remit. It is a cost of living payment similar to those awarded to staff elsewhere in the public services. It appears the Cabinet Office announcement took some departments and employers by surprise. Since then unions have been meeting with employers about the payment and it is obvious there is a lot of confusion. The basic criteria are that to qualify you must have been in post on 31 March 2023, and you must still be employed on the date of payment.GMB has been quite clear about a number of points: The payment of £1500 should be paid to all staff regardless of working hours – the Cabinet Office proposed it was pro rata'd, but our position is that as this is a cost of living everyone should get the full amount, as your working hours do not determine the cost of food, rent, energy so all should be paid the same. We need to ensure that those on in work benefits and those who have student loans suffer no detriment by receiving lump sum payments and are asking employers to explore alternatives. As a cost of living payment it should not be restricted by performance marking, disciplinary position, absence on maternity absence on sick leave or other criteria. Cabinet Office delegated the payment to Secretaries of State, but some arms length bodies do not have the cash to pay it and are consulting their Departments. The GMB position is that Departments or the Treasury should fund this. In addition to these questions GMB is clear that: Acceptance of the payment does not mean GMB accept the pay remit of 4.5% + 0.5% for the lowest paid. GMB still wants to see a mechanism for progression within pay bands based on skills, qualifications etc; Action needs to be taken to resolve the pay anomalies amongst the lowest paid where supervisors and staff are on the same rate of pay as a result of the increase in the National Living Wage. Action needs to be taken to end the discrimination between skill zone (industrial) staff and non industrial staff, where non industrials have better terms and conditions of employment. And last of all, GMB wants the current policy of delegating pay and negotiations on other terms and conditions of employment to be brought to an end.

GMB Pay Objectives In The Civil Service 2023/24

Posted on: 29 March 2023

Introduction

The key priorities for GMB in the 2023/24 pay round are:

- A consolidated increase in pay which at least matches the level of inflation in April 2023.
- Additional funding from Treasury to enable Departments, Executives Agencies and other Non-Departmental Public Bodies to increase pay without the need to make cuts elsewhere to fund the increases needed.
- Action to restore the pay relativities in the lower grades in the civil service following in the 9.2% increase in the National Living Wage with effect from 1 April.
- Action to overcome the discrimination against skill zone and other staff in Government Departments, Agencies and NDPBs currently on a 37-hour week.

- The introduction of a means whereby civil service workers can be paid for the acquisition of additional skills, qualifications, responsibilities etc without the need to seek promotion to a higher grade
- The introduction of Fair Wages for those employed on contracts outsourced by Government Departments to private companies.
- A fast track of any flexible business cases

Where are GMB Members and What Do They Do

GMB has members throughout the civil service, though many are concentrated in the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Justice. GMB also has members employed on outsourced contracts by large private companies such as SERCO, Sodexo and Amey and a range of SMEs at a more local level.

There are complicated factors around GMB members terms and conditions of the employment. Particularly in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice, these terms and conditions of employment derive from the Industrial Civil Service which involved a single bargaining structure across Government Departments and Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

GMB members in the MoD can be responsible for a wide range of roles, from the building of missiles and handling munitions to cleaning roads, and a host of roles in between.

The introduction of delegated pay bargaining broke up a cohesive and coherent body of industrial workers across the civil service, which has now been overtaken by a hodge podge of Departmental arrangements, which has been damaged further by the continued use of outsourcing.

- **A consolidated increase in pay which at least matches the level of inflation in April 2023.**

Over the past year, the real wages of civil service workers have fallen by more than 10%, simply in terms of inflation. This follows a decade of pay “restraint” in which the living standards, particularly those loyal civil service workers with a decade of employment, fell by at least 20%, and the leap in living costs means thousands of civil service workers now have to make choices between heating their homes and feeding their families, and many find it really expensive simply to get to work.

Recruitment and retention in Departments is getting even more difficult given that pay Is not keeping up with the rates offered by the private sector.

- **Additional funding from Treasury to enable Departments, Executives Agencies and other Non-Departmental Public Bodies to increase pay without the need to make cuts elsewhere to fund the increases needed.**

The three-year spending plans put in place by Treasury were set in a different economic era and have not stood the test of even a short time. Departments do not have sufficient resources to pay increases anywhere near the rate of inflation, and even seek to do so, will be faced with seeking to find resources either by seeking to reduce terms and conditions of employment (e.g., overtime or shift working payments) to release funds.

We have prepared this paper setting out why we believe that the lack of pay progression is one of the most pressing issues in the pay and reward structure and setting out what criteria we believe we need to see in any system for capability-based pay.

Prospect and FDA are eager to work with Civil Service HR in partnership to give civil service employers guidance about introducing capability-based pay.

We believe we should work with a shared objective that the vast majority of civil service employers will introduce capability-based pay for delegated grades as soon as practicable (we understand that capability-based pay will be introduced for the SCS in 2023 which gives added urgency to this matter).

- **Action to restore the pay relativities in the lower grades in the civil service following in the 9.2% increase in the National Living Wage with effect from 1 April.**

The announcement of an increase in the National Living Wage by 9.2% with effect from 1 April 2023 has had impacts in the civil service which should have been foreseen, but which demonstrate the absurdity of current pay remit arrangements. While Departments can increase pay for those employees receiving the increase, they are not able to address issue around differentials. The result being that in the Ministry of Defence there is no pay differential between Skill Zone 1 and 2, despite the different job evaluation grading of the roles, because of the skill required to undertake the role. The knock effect of the increase is that differentials have now been compressed between skill zones 3 and 4 and skill zones 1 and 2.

Elsewhere GMB has members employed as AOs who supervise the work of AAs, but ae now on the same rate of pay as those they supervise. Because of existing rules on Responsibility payments, they are denied the opportunity of being paid more than those they supervise.

The discard of the increase in the National Living Wage for pay remit purposes is a hollow sham as Departments need to take these increases into account when planning for pay 2023/24, but in the knowledge that the National Living Wage will rise by a substantial amount in April 2024, given the current levels of inflation.

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Relying on the OBR forecasts of inflation for the next 12 months appear to be problematic, given that the rise in inflation recently announced took them by surprise.

If the implications of the increase in the National Living Wage requires action by Departments to restore differentials or restructure, the limited pay remit will simply mean there is less for resolving other issues which require action and others will be comparatively worse off.

Some steps need to be taken to square the circle so that the impact of increases in the National Living Wage does not result in supervisors or those with higher skills etc are not placed at a comparative disadvantage.

- **Action to overcome the discrimination against skill zone and other staff in Government Departments, Agencies and NDPBs currently on a 37-hour week.**

Skill zone staff in Government Departments are paid on the basis of a 37-hour week, whereas most nonindustrial grade civils service workers are paid on the bases of a 42-hour working week. As a result of this, an industrial grade paid the National Minimum Wage would have an annual salary of £20,125, whereas a non-industrial civil service worker on an equivalently job evaluated role would be paid £22,845, simply because the latter get paid for lunch breaks.

GMB members regard this as unfair, iniquitous and potentially sex discrimination given that the vast majority of skill zone staff are male, and this is not the case for AOs AAs.

- **The introduction of a means whereby civil service workers can be paid for the acquisition of additional skills, qualifications, responsibilities etc without the need to seek promotion to a higher grade**

Some of our members have the opportunity to receive “progression” within their pay bands through consolidated increases based of performance ratings. Others are on spot pay where there is a single rate of pay for the same evaluated job.

However, members know that pay progression in private companies it still a feature of external pay systems and that it is possible to accumulate skills and knowledge and get a financial reward. They also understand that the additional payment is also an incentive to undertake training and acquire qualifications and therefore become better skilled and more productive. This benefits both the member and the employer. The lack of incentive demotivates staff and leads them to seek employment elsewhere. The Ministry of Defence already recognises that retaining skilled staff is difficult with pay falling significantly behind companies such as BAE Systems, Babcock etc, and the inability to reward those to take the time to grow in the job simply adds to the problem.

GMB advocates for a system of progression based on the acquisition of skills and qualifications, responsibility and also takes into account the greater ability to work more effectively and efficiently through experience. GMB would advocate for a simple system of three or four steps in a pay band, with an annual review to assess how staff have developed in the role, which is not simply based on "time served", which we understand can be discriminatory. It needs to be simple for members to understand, operate fairly – this is not the perception of PRP nor "in year rewards", and available to all without imposed quotas.

Many of our AO/AA members have become increasingly despondent at their inability to make progress within their grade and is a huge demotivator. However, the fracturing of civil service pay bargaining has also led to a merry go round of staff moving from one Department to another in the same evaluated grade for increases in pay without the need to seek a promotion and take on additional responsibility. Those Departments not paying the perceived "rate for the job" suffer significant problems with recruitment and retention.

- **The introduction of Fair Wages for those employed on contracts outsourced by Government Departments to private companies.**

Many years of outsourcing of civil service roles to the private sector has seen a significant reduction in the civil service workforce. However, the work is still being undertaken albeit by employees of private companies. A declining number of these are covered by TUPE regulations, which has implications for the majority of staff now on non-TUPE terms and conditions of employment. This is having different impacts.

For roles formerly undertaken by many skills zone staff, the National Living Wage has become the standard rate of pay, which lagged behind civil service pay until this year. However, the rate of pay covers up the conditions of employment apart from pay (e.g., a civil service pension, different and better redundancy terms). So even with the same rate of pay these staff are worse off than they would have been if still employed by the civil service. Catering and cleaning roles, admin workers, maintenance workers and security fall into this category

At the other end of the spectrum private sector employers may pay more skilled or responsible roles at higher rates than equivalent staff in the civil service, but the absence of a need to pay a civil service equivalent pension means the cost of employing staff is still lower than the comparable civil service worker. Senior roles in IT, specialist professions and highly skilled industrial staff all fall into this category.

The system makes no sense and policies based on outsourcing to reduce the cost to the taxpayer and thereby shrink the numbers of staff directly employed in the civil service compound the inequalities between those employed directly and those employed externally, mainly because the motive of the private sector employer is to make a profit whereas the public sector ethos is one of providing a good service (or should be).

Some form of fair wages resolution would help to stabilise rates of pay, or bring employment packages broadly in line, reduce overt competition based on employment costs – they should be broadly similar, and the Resolution should be across the entire civil service, Departments, Agencies and NDPBs and private sector employers alike.

- **A fast track of any flexible business case**

The current means for addressing issue around pay is through some sort of business case developed by a Department, Executive Agency or NDPB. In all cases the business case needs to be approved by the Secretary of State. The additional step seems to be an extra hurdle which they need to overcome in the process, rather than a step to improve the likelihood of a case being accepted and approved as a way forwards.

Irrespective of that issue, pay flex business cases need to be considered and approved in a much timelier way. The deadline in the past, of January in the year following the date of implementation, for the submission of cases can and has led to members not seeing an increase in pay for a year or more. In times of lower inflation, members were unhappy but understood the “reward” would come with the implementation of the award backdated to the date it should have been introduced. This is not acceptable at a time when the cost-of-living crisis is having such an enormous strain on our members’ financial situations.

Departments have known for some time that business cases can be put forwards for fundamental change, but they wait for the pay remit to be released **before** commencing work on the business case, mainly because the remit pay impact on the case they want to put forward. It takes months to develop a case based around the remit, to consult with trade unions, to submit the case, address any Treasury/Cabinet Office concerns, undertake further consultation with unions and then begin a formal negotiating process with trade unions prior to a ballot of members. If Departments know the case, they want to put forward they should commence discussions with trade unions long before the release of the remit to prevent any delays in the process and then its implementation.

There may be a case for interim pay awards to be made be made in the event that a case has been developed jointly with trade unions, to avoid a situation where our members are denied timely increases in pay simply because of the bureaucracy associated with the business case.

Kevin Brandstatter
National Officer
GMB

CIVIL SERVICE PAY 2023 +

GMB UNION

Posted on: 15 March 2023

Earlier this year GMB General Secretary Gary Smith, met Jeremy Quinn MP Cabinet Office Minister, to discuss the cost of living crisis, and to point out very firmly that the cost of living crisis was not the fault of already low paid civil servants.

GMB National Officer Kevin Brandstatter and colleagues from other Trade Unions in the Civil Service will be meeting with Cabinet Office/Civil Service HR to discuss 2023 pay.

The Cabinet Office have already drafted a pay remit for 2023 which will be discussed on 16 March, (and it is no coincidence that the Budget is today, 15th March, where the Chancellor sets spending plans) and this will be followed by two further meetings on 21 and 23 March.

At the last meeting the Cabinet Office may share their proposals for pay increases in 2023. Trade Unions have been forceful about the need for pay to increase at least in line with inflation and needs to be higher to make up for over a decade of pay suppression.

It is clear to everyone that Government pay policy is in a shambles as we can see with the NHS and Ambulance, Railways, Royal Mail and the Universities.

GMB will fight in every Government Department for an inflation matching pay rise which recognises the value of our members work and the impact of the cost of living crisis.

Pay surveys are on their way to members in the civil service, so that you can decide what is important to you and to have your say.

Further bulletins will follow.

Please bring this to the attention of colleagues and encourage them to join GMB using the following link.

www.gmb.org.uk/join

Any feedback to kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

Civil Service Pay 2022

Posted on: 8 April 2022

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The Government has announced its policy for civil service pay in the coming year.

The policy applies to all Government Departments, Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies. This will affect over 400,000 public servants where unions are about to enter into pay negotiations.

What is the policy?

Employers will be limited to average pay increases of 2%.

Employers could offer a further 1%, but this would need to be based on a business case, which needs to be approved by the Secretary of State. It would likely involve trading some terms and conditions of employment (e.g. Overtime premium payments) for the extra 1%.

3% is the absolute maximum average increased allowed under this policy.

The Government has been very clear that no extra funding will be provide to any employer to implement any change benefiting employees. Everything must be funded from budgets drawn up before the dramatic increases in inflation.

Inflation is currently **8% and rising**. Energy costs, fuel costs, food costs are all rising but Government pay policy will see a big reduction in living standards for its own workers.

In theory, there are opportunities for employers to agree use some flexibilities to introduce **pay progression within pay ranges recruitment and retention** but all involve business cases, which must be supported by the relevant Secretary of State and agreed by Treasury.

These business cases do not have to be submitted until **December 2022**, and if supported by Treasury will be followed by negotiations between employers and unions. It could be April 2023 before any pay increase is agreed and implemented.

In response to the cost of living crisis, GMB will issue pay claims to civil service employers which take account of:

Rising inflation;

The impact of a decade of Government pay policy which has reduced real take home pay by up to 20%;

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The serious impact on the lower paid of rising energy costs, rising fuel costs and rising food costs.

Pay claims have already been submitted in some civil service employers and others will follow.

GMB has challenged a number of employers in the public and private sector successfully, with pay increases secured between 7% and 20%. This has been achieved by members undertaking successful industrial action winning disputes.

Bulletins

Cost-Of-Living Crisis

Posted on: 20 January 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Last Wednesday, along with other union leaders representing civil service staff, I met Jeremy Quinn MP, the government's Cabinet Secretary, to discuss the cost-of-living crisis and how it is impacting on members in Government Departments, Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

We told Mr Quinn that the economic crisis, including inflation, isn't the fault of low paid public servants. The point was also made, very firmly, that threats around anti-union and anti-worker legislation are inflaming an already difficult situation. I informed the minister that our union was here long before this government, and we will be here after they have departed. GMB will not be intimidated.

We also made it clear that, because of the government's view that pay increases need to be self-funding, industrial workers in many departments are getting the worst outcomes on pay.

There was no new money offered and whilst the Cabinet Secretary has offered follow up meetings, it's clear the government are in a real mess on the whole subject of public sector pay.

We will continue to attend meetings in good faith with the Cabinet Secretary to discuss pay and conditions but to win better deals on pay from this government, we need to keep campaigning and organising.

Previous Bulletins

Posted on: 22 October 2020

Today GMB met on line with Cabinet Office to discuss the pandemic and the Governments response to it.

Unions were united in demanding that the Cabinet Office and Government Departments become proactive in their response to the pandemic, rather than sitting back and waiting for Government/Public Health England and other guidance to emerge.

On behalf of GMB, I said unions would have more confidence in guidance if the Government bothered to follow the scientific advice. The responsibility for the spread of the virus sits with the Government. They opened the schools, encouraged a million young people to move across the UK to Universities and encouraged workers to return to the workplace.

In particular unions called for a return to a policy of "work from home", wherever possible and called for an investment in technology to allow this to take place.

Unions also called for wearing masks to be made mandatory in the workplace, with some exceptions, to help prevent the spread of the virus. Some Government Departments and private sector employers have already introduced this.

Unions also called for better advice to Departments around the issue of ventilation and air conditioning - given the evidence that the virus is spreading by aerosol infection, with aerosols not respecting 2m social distancing let alone 1m.

Unions also challenged different approaches being taken by Departments in shared workplaces, where some give out masks to staff for free and others insist staff pay for their own.

New guidelines on dealing with the pandemic were received by unions just before the meeting and unions are reviewing them and will seek improvement to make workplaces safer.

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