

Ministry of Justice

Last update: 23 Jan 2025

Latest Bulletins

Overpayments In The Ministry Of Justice

Posted on: 23 January 2025

The Ministry of Justice has recently set up an Overpayments Recovery Team following the “discovery” that many current and former staff had been paid more than they were entitled to. This potentially affects staff employed by the MoJ itself, its arm’s length bodies and those employed in the Prison and Probation Services. The MoJ are seeking to recover **£35m** in overpayments from existing and former staff.

MoJ payroll is managed by the external provider SSCL. SSCL acts on the instructions it receives from MoJ and its Arm’s Length Bodies.

GMB believes that overpayments were the result of administrative error, which may be the result of inaccurate instructions to SSCL, or incorrect application of the instructions by SSCL.

What seems to be clear is that those receiving these overpayments had no way of identifying them and will have accepted the payments in good faith.

It has also become apparent that some of the sums the employer wishes to recover could cause financial hardship.

GMB has asked the MoJ to reconsider the recovery of these overpayments entirely, however, GMB understands that letters may be issued to those affected shortly, effectively demanding repayment.

If you receive a demand for repayment of money the MoJ believes you were not entitled to please contact GMB immediately at publicservices@gmb.org.uk



GMB will support any individual member faced with a demand to recover overpayments and will continue to urge the MoJ to recognise its (or SSCL's) responsibility for this unfortunate mess.

Please share this with your colleagues and encourage them to join GMB at www.gmb.org.uk/join

GMB In Prisons – December 2024



Posted on: 17 December 2024

Trade unions met with HMPPS management on 2 December and discussed the following topics.

Prison Overcrowding

Management and the trade unions agreed that 2024 had been challenging. Prison overcrowding was the most difficult issue in 2024, not helped by the widespread disorder this summer, the reduced capacity of some establishments owing to crumbling concrete, and the discovery of high levels of radon at Dartmoor.

Band 2 Review

A Job Evaluation Scheme FAQ document is on the intranet. In early 2025 there are likely to be some awareness sessions for staff. Please get involved if you are in band 2. There are already issues about band 2 staff undertaking some work normally assigned to a band 3, or sometimes a band 4.

Grievance and Disciplinary hearings

Before the covid-19 pandemic normal practice was for hearings to be in-person events, and during the pandemic, for good reason, many were undertaken online. Existing policies were agreed before online meetings became the norm, and trade unions want to review policies and practices to ensure they are fit for purpose. We want to ensure that members get the choice of whether to attend in-person or online.

If you have been involved in a grievance, conduct or disciplinary hearing in the last two years, either online or in-person and have any views on how the hearing was conducted, and/or whether you prefer in-person or online meetings please email: kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

All responses will remain confidential and any information you can share will be well received.

Supporting Attendance



The Supporting Attendance policies were reviewed in consultation with trade unions and new template letters for managers and staff were developed. However, it emerged that SSCL, who send out these letters, continued to use the previous versions rather than the new agreed versions. This caused confusion which the unions raised with management.

HMPPS agreed to work with SSCL to update all the agreed letters etc.

HR Policy work

HR are currently working on the introduction of Synergy to deliver HR processes including pay. There is a Professional Standards Review for HMPPS, although we don't know the date for its implementation. The Government's changes to employment law in 2025 include the Employment Rights Bill currently making its way through Parliament. The Government is consulting with trade unions before implementing the bill.

HMPPS had begun offering operational courses for non-operational staff, but staff have found it difficult to undertake the training due to the lack of spaces on the courses. HMPPS were also trying to deal with the turnover among instructor roles, with resignations and retirements rising but not enough new recruits joining. HMPPS were looking at better ways to recruit.

Pay

The fundamental problem for members in HMPPS, whether operational or non-operational staff or contractors, is pay.

Pay in HMPPS, irrespective of whether covered by the Pay Review Body or not, is too low and needs a substantial increase. It appears that the new Government's opening gambit is that pay increases across the public sector should be restricted to 2.8%. That **will not** fix any of the problems caused by the previous governments' policies over the last fourteen years.

GMB

GMB is always seeking to recruit new members. You can help by sharing this bulletin with members and encouraging them to join online: www.gmb.org.uk/join

If you would like someone from GMB to visit your prison, contact your Regional Office. If you are not sure where this is, email kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk and your request will be forwarded to the right office.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our members!

Amey Prisons Facilities Management Pay Survey 2025

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Posted on: 5 December 2024

Dear Members,

Trade Unions representing members working for Amey in Prisons on the Facilities Management contract are preparing for pay negotiations for 2025.

The first step is to find out from you what you actually want to see in the union pay claim.

This link will take you to a short pay survey, please complete it to tell us what you want to be included in the pay claim: <https://forms.office.com/e/w0t...>

Kevin Brandstatter

National Officer, GMB

Violence In Prisons



Posted on: 22 November 2024

On 7 November 2024, GMB and other unions with members in the Prison Service met with senior Prison Service management to review the latest information about "safety in prisons". Statistics discussed related to the 12-month period to June 2024.

On 31 October the Ministry of Justice published some shocking statistics about the levels of violence in Prisons during that period. The statistics show that:

The rate of assault on staff in Prisons was:

118 assaults on staff per 1000 prisoners

Up by 23% on the previous year

10,281 incidents

The rate of **serious** assaults on staff in Prisons was:

11 serious assaults per 1000 prisoners



Up by 24% on the previous year

974 incidents

There was a lot of discussion about the why the level of violence has risen. An obvious factor is prison overcrowding. These figures cover the period before the new Government took the decision to release some prisoners early, but according to others in the meeting the situation has not improved. The Prison estate is dilapidated and clearly not fit for purpose.

There were reports from others that the level of sexual assaults in Prisons had increased but it appears that this information is not collected.

The safety of GMB members working in Prisons, whether directly for HMPPS or indirectly by private contractors is important.

GMB will raise the safety of our members at the highest level, including with Ministers. We have written a survey to gather your views and experiences of safety and assault in prisons. Please complete the survey to help us fully represent your experiences. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymised. No individual personal information will be shared outside of GMB, and all will be kept confidential from your employer.

Follow this link to complete the survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/bSW...>

Please let your colleagues know about the survey and if they would like to join GMB, they can join online at www.gmb.org.uk/join.

MoJ Pay 2024/25 - Offer Accepted



Posted on: 29 October 2024

Dear Members,

The MoJ pay offer 2024 was accepted by 92% of members and the employer has been informed.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE PAY 2024/25



Posted on: 2 October 2024

You will have seen the final offer from the employer for pay 2024/25. The offer covers all employees of the MoJ, **excluding** those employed in the Probation Service, the Prison Service and the growing membership among judges and tribunal members.

The offer was subject to negotiation and your national reps, Emma Craig, David Hall and Clare Meldrum all played an important and active role in the negotiations.

Trade Unions have had to be very patient. The Civil Service pay remit was supposed to have been in place around the end of March at the latest. However, the process was delayed and then the General Election was called, delaying the process even further.

As soon as the Treasury and Cabinet Office approved the remit and the Secretary of State also approved the remit for the formal negotiations process, meetings took place between the MoJ and its recognised trade unions.

A series of meetings saw a formal offer emerge, also subject to approval of the Secretary of State and the offer was considered by Trade Unions.

GMB reps discussed the outcome of the offer and agreed to conduct a ballot of the membership. We understand this is not the case with other trade unions, but GMB will always give members the final say over pay.

The ballot starts today and ends on 21 October 2024. Your GMB reps strongly recommend this offer as being the best that can be achieved by negotiations and one which stretched the Civil Service and MoJ remits to their fullest extent.

The ballot will be sent to you from your GMB Region by SMS or text which will include a link to the online ballot. Please check your mobile phone and email (in-boxes, spam and trash) for your ballot.

Membership of GMB is open to anyone in the Ministry of Justice and its Arms Length Bodies, and anyone joining GMB before the deadline will be entitled to vote.

GMB Member Survey - Ministry Of Justice - April 24



Posted on: 22 April 2024



Dear Members,

Please click the link below to read the latest bulletin with the latest Ministry of Justice Shared Services survey details and how to complete the survey.

[moj-bulletin-april-2024-\(1\).pdf](#)

Ministry Of Justice Bulletin September 2023



Posted on: 20 September 2023

Pay Core MoJ

62% of GMB members voted to accept the 2023 Pay offer to the core MoJ including its Agencies. Management has been informed and the offer will be implemented at the end of September. Towards the end of 2023 or early 2024, GMB will provide links to electronic surveys to determine members priorities in the 2024 Pay round.

Pay HMPPS

The Pay Review Body's recommendations were accepted and implemented. GMB were not happy that the increase of the lowest paid was partly due to the increase in the National Living Wage, and while a £2000 increase for the lowest paid was welcome, over £700 of it was a result of the increase in the National Living Wage.

GMB intends to get involved in the Pay Review process to advance the issues important to members. While it is many months before implementation, we want to survey members in October about pay and terms and conditions of employment to ensure we have the evidence to advance members interests.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

The safety of public buildings and the use of RAAC has been in the press this month. We are aware that it has been identified in some MoJ buildings and in Prisons.

Evaluation of the risk is continuing and further buildings are being inspected. In 2021 and 2022 the issue of RAAC was drawn to the attention public sector employers and they were asked to survey buildings. The process has been based on paper records, then inspection and in the event of any suspicions physical testing of the concrete.



The Government has not updated the list of schools affected since 6 September, nor is there a comprehensive list of public buildings affected by RAAC. However, the building industry believes that many public buildings are affected, and this includes some courts and prisons.

The Government has not been open with the information it has gathered and seems not to want to admit how bad things are.

Civil service employers have proposed using previous protocols for Covid and school closures allowing parents and carers to have flexibility if a school is impacted by a partial or complete closure.

GMB Political activity

As workers in the MoJ and the Legal Aid Agency, you provide a valuable service to the public and as your union we will always fight for you to get the recognition that you deserve for your work.

That's why, as part of the Labour Party's process for planning the policies it will put to voters across the country at an election, we fought for commitments to make your work better if Labour win the next general election.

The Conservatives have decimated access to justice leaving thousands without legal advice and support.

In response to a GMB representation Labour have committed to transforming our justice system and improving access to justice.

You've been badly let down by the Conservative Government the last few years. We won't stop fighting for better, for you.

Recent Departures

Two of our long serving reps have stood down. **Gina Skelly** from Cardiff has retired from her role at the Legal Aid Agency and we wish her a very happy retirement. Gina was a hard working and stalwart union activist and she will be missed. Georgio Bugnatelli has stood down for family reasons and we wish him well for the future. Georgio has been a great Chair of many of our meetings and has been a solid and pragmatic Chair, keeping us all in order. Our best wishes to Georgio and to both of them my thanks as GMB National Officer for their advice and support over the years.

New activists

GMB is always looking for new union activists to help develop the union and to get involved in Negotiations, Representation of individuals, Equality, Health and Safety, and a wide range of workplace



issues. If you would like to know more about how to get involved please contact me:

kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

Kevin Brandstatter
National Officer
GMB Union

Ministry Of Justice / Legal Aid Agency Pay



Posted on: 1 August 2023

The ballot for MoJ/LAA pay is now open.

You will already know what the “offer” from the employer is and how it will affect you.

To put this offer in context:

Trade Unions met with the Cabinet Office towards the end of March 2023 to discuss the pay remit for 2023/4.

The Treasury set the remit at 4.5% of pay bill overall, plus 0.5% for the lower paid. The latter was proposed as a way of dealing with the impact of the 9.7% increase in the National Living Wage which in many civil service employers effectively merged grades.

Treasury also announced that civil service employers would make a cost of living payment to all staff of £1500, on a pro rata basis for part time staff, and only payable to staff in post on 31 March and the date of payment.

GMB opposed the reduction for part time staff on the clear grounds that the impact of inflation has nothing to do with the hours worked.

The £1500 payment is not part of 2023/4 pay.

The payment is from existing resources and was not funded by the Treasury. Treasury also keep the tax paid by individuals, which is akin to taking money back from Departments.

Pay negotiations resulted in the final offer which went to unions at the end of July. GMB has standing policy that members **must** be consulted on pay, and the employer was informed that a ballot would take place, ending on 8 September to allow for implementation of the offer at the end of the month.



GMB is aware of a few civil service employers implementing in August, though many are implementing in September, and others have yet to begin formal negotiations and/or have business cases with Treasury for more flexibility in 2023 to allow for an offer higher than the core offer.

GMB Representatives are not making a recommendation this year, wish to make it clear that a vote to reject is effectively a vote for industrial action to secure a better offer.

Please take the opportunity to **have your say on your pay**.

The ballot closes at noon on 8 September 2023.

Previous Bulletins

GMB Challenge Management Dithering And Delay In 2020 Pay Negotiations



Posted on: 4 May 2020

Kevin Brandstatter, GMB's Officer for the Civil Service, has written to the Ministry of Justice following a meeting of GMB Reps in the ministry, to state plainly their objections over the delays to the 2020 pay negotiations which at time of writing ***have yet to begin***.

Staff at the MoJ have not had any increase in pay since 2019.

Delays to the start of talks adversely impact members in the MoJ as the backpayments on any pay increase accrues substantially over time.

When eventually paid, any increase could adversely impact members with Student Debt, on Universal Credit or means-tested benefits, and could also have tax implications for members temporarily in a higher PAYE tax bracket.

“Morale is not good in the MoJ, and these delays have only worsened the situation...

“Members need their pay uplifting now, not later. Their rent and bills have to be paid every month, and are going up, they can't just defer these payments for 2 years until their employer gets round the table.”



The reps have been told that the delay is partially due to challenges and queries made by the Cabinet Office or Treasury, as well as from within the MoJ and devolved administrations.

The MoJ faces a long term recruiting and retention crisis, as MoJ staff seek advancement outside of the organisation.

This comes ahead of a looming crisis for the organisation in addressing the backlog of courts casework after MoJ facilities and proceeding were closed due to Covid 19.

GMB reaffirmed our members' commitment to entering negotiations with the employer in good faith, and urge the government to come to the table with the union and negotiate.

Read the full correspondence raising GMB's concerns [here](#).

GMB Members Directly Employed And Contractors In Prisons: IS YOUR WORKPLACE SAFE?



Posted on: 18 March 2021

Last week we had a meeting of the HMPPS National Whitley Council. The meeting opened with a sober reflection of the damage done by the Covid 19 Virus to staff and residents.

The third wave of infection from December onwards has been the worst, with a relatively high level of deaths among directly employed, contractors and residents.

Outbreaks in Prisons can only have been caused by community transmission among staff and visitors, or by prisoner transfers from other prison or courts.

As members will know a vaccination programme is underway, which should improve the situation, however, working adults will not have completed their 2 jabs until July, and 10% may not be immune.

Public Health England has forecast that the opening of schools will lead to increased cases, so health and safety in prisons remains important.



Hence, you should ask the question – **IS MY WORKPLACE SAFE?**

Further information and guidance on this will follow shortly, but the GMB website has comprehensive information, especially the guidance which has come from the Cabinet Office, produced after extensive consultation with GMB and sister unions.

Other issues from the meeting:

Unions and management have yet to agree changes to the Job Evaluation System – especially around factor 9 – relating the emotional demands of roles in the prison service. The union view is that the HMPPS proposal could lead to downgrading of existing posts, or would make regrading more difficult.

Facilities Management

HMPPS has undertaken a review of Prisons FM. This is currently undertaken primarily by the private company Amey, in the North of England and Wales, and a wholly owned company, Government Facilities Services Ltd, in the South of England.

GMB and sister unions will be meeting HMPPS regard these contracts. If you have any information thoughts, advice, suggestions or ideas about the FM operation in your Prison, please e-mail me (See below)

Do you want to be a GMB Rep?

GMB is the third largest union in the UK with over 600,000 members. We are currently seeking new workplace organisers in HMPPS and individual prisons.

If you want to become a GMB Rep, or just want some information about the role please e mail: kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk (preferably from a private email address)

Any communication will remain confidential.

BY ALL MEANS PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO COLLEAGUES AT WORK.

Ask your colleagues to join GMB – They should go online: gmb.org.uk/join

