

From: Kevin Brandstatter
Sent: 30 April 2021 09:48
To: Pamela Rogers, Mark Adam (MoJ)
Subject: Ministry of Justice pay

Dear Pamela and Mark

Following yet another cancellation of a meeting to consider pay for 2020 onwards, I met with GMB reps in the MoJ.

I have now lost count of the number of meetings that have been cancelled during this process as a result of the Cabinet Office/Treasury/devolved administration asking questions or challenging MoJ over its plans.

This became frustrating some time ago, but the frustration has continued to grow. Personally I have prioritised our proposed meetings and turned down meetings with other employers in order to attend pay meetings with MoJ.

However, my personal frustrations with the lack of progress pale into insignificance along side those employed by the MoJ who have now not had any increase in pay since 2019.

As you may be aware there are implications for staff about the implementation of any new pay structure leading to levels of back payment. As examples, those required to pay back student loans will be adversely affected if there is a sudden increase in income; those on benefits, including any universal credit or means tested benefit will also suffer; and in addition there will be an impact where some of the better paid MoJ staff find themselves in a higher tax band as a result.

If there is any positive outcome from our pay discussions these three groups may not feel the wait was worth it and efforts to portray this in a positive light will fall on deaf ears.

We also need to remember that all this delay has taken place before we get the opportunity to begin negotiations. The business case has yet to be agreed by Cabinet Office/Treasury, and until then we cannot negotiate.

The process may be quite complicated given the amount of restructuring likely to deliver anything meaningful, it will take some time to conclude and at the end of the process GMB will undertake a consultation process with our members. This will not be a speedy process either, given that we will face questions of principle and details along the way.

GMB will need a minimum period of 3-4 weeks to undertake a ballot of members.

GMB reps, GMB Regions and myself as National Officer have all had questions about what is happening about 2020 pay negotiations and what are the reasons for the delays, especially as members have become acutely aware that HMRC recently concluded negotiations.

I think we will need to be quite candid about the reasons for delay and set them before members so they understand why it has taken so long to get to the bargaining table. At least we can then start the negotiations process with a clean sheet. As we have been told, questions and challenges have been made by Cabinet Office or Treasury, and some have apparently come from within MoJ, and now from a devolved nation. The current status of the business case was not obvious as it appeared that it needed to be signed off by the Lord Chancellor (again!) before being submitted once more. Some clarity would be useful.

Anecdotally, members and colleagues of members have continued to look outside the MoJ for career progression, both in terms of a role with more responsibility and therefore more pay, or even roles with the same or less responsibility but still with more pay.

Morale is not good in the MoJ, and these delays have only worsened the situation, and probably led to staff questioning their loyalty to their employer, and as a result looking to move elsewhere.

Please bring our concerns to the attention of the appropriate people in the MoJ, Cabinet Office and Treasury.

I look forward to a formal presentation of the MoJ proposals so that negotiations can finally commence.

Regards
Kevin Brandstatter
GMB National Officer