

[Letter to schools support staff]

Dear Colleague,

Equal pay review

I am writing to update you on the progress of the equal pay review (EPR).

We are close to finishing the job evaluation exercise that covers the majority of staff on "green book" conditions. In schools, this includes people in posts such as: teaching assistants, site supervisors, welfare assistants, catering and cleaning staff and some administrative jobs.

Some other posts, such as school managers, bursars and technicians, still need to be evaluated. But the government has announced that it will soon be introducing a new body that will need to be involved in this (the Schools Support Staff Negotiating Body). So we have decided to delay the evaluation of these posts until September 2010. By that time we will understand what the new body requires us to do.

We have also now reviewed the pay as well as terms and conditions of employment for the majority of council staff. This includes school support staff. The review was required by the 2004 Pay Agreement with the purpose of making sure the council complies with equalities legislation and has one set of terms and conditions of employment for all.

Before we implement our proposals, however, it is important that we consult you and the trades unions. We are committed to making this a meaningful process and hope that the result of the consultation is that the changes can be introduced by agreement.

To meet our legal responsibilities, we must consult with the trades unions for a minimum of 90 days. We will be holding our first meeting with them on 1 December and wanted to share with you the areas we will be talking about over the next three months. Our meetings will cover:

- an affordable and clear grade structure
- standardisation of the working week and holidays
- the removal of outdated or unequal allowances or payments
- new arrangements and rates of pay for:
 - additional hours
 - weekend working
 - night work
 - sleeping in duty
 - public and extra statutory holidays
 - shift working
 - stand-by and call-out
 - winter gritting
- payments for:

- specifically required allowances (e.g. tool, first aid)
 - car mileage
 - travel expenses and subsistence
- entitlement to, or arrangements for:
 - back pay
 - pay protection
 - pay progression
 - career and link grades
 - promotion
 - acting up allowances/honoraria
 - long service awards
 - annual leave including the timing of extra statutory and concessionary days
 - sick pay
 - flexitime and time off in lieu
 - car parking charges
 - excess travel.

As the discussions take place, we will let you have the details of our proposals through postings on the schools portal. We have also established a secure internet site where you can access the same information about the equal pay review as will be available on the council's intranet.

To access this site, please go to this address:

<https://lccsecure.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/eso/epr/>, or go to EPR on the A – Z on www.lancashire.gov.uk.

Once there you will need to enter your pay reference number and national insurance number (both available on your pay slip) and your date of birth. This is simply to make sure the information is only available to staff. Your details won't be held anywhere, and you will need to enter them each time you visit the site.

I will write to you again in due course to let you know how things are progressing. In the meantime, if you have any questions please raise these with your Headteacher/school manager in the first instance. They can then be forwarded on to us for a response, which we will support through a regularly updated series of Frequently Asked Questions. We will make these available to schools on the portal and new internet site. This should help with answering many of the typical questions you will have. Unfortunately, what we are not able to do at this stage is respond to very specific questions relating to your own personal circumstances.

I will write to you again once I have further information to share with you.

Regards,

Carol Mills

Carol Mills
Director of Human Resources