

Our Ref: PD/LS

16 January 2013

SCC Increment freeze proposal 2013

Dear Colleague,

We have refused to enter into a collective agreement with the Authority on this issue as a significant majority of our members have raised their concerns over the constant onslaught of real cuts to their salary (as a result of the previous incremental freeze), the lack of pay awards and spiralling inflation costs of essentials such as food and utilities.

This has resulted in a real loss of approximately 15 to 20% of your income over the last 4 to 5 years. We have been told by our members that enough is enough and that we are not to agree any further cuts to income.

I have enclosed the GMB response that was sent to the Council yesterday with regard to their increment freeze proposals for 2013. You may recall that we wrote to members in November 2012 offering consultation meetings and we carried out 2 mass meetings when the proposals first came out. We have carried out various consultation meetings with members and debated the Council proposals at length at Branch meetings and with the other recognised trade unions. The message that we got from our membership was clear and my response to the Council is based on that feedback.

I have also taken legal advice on the Council proposals and again I have reflected the GMB's position based on that advice.

I thought it best to deal with the issues that we believe arise out of the proposal in legal terms.

First when notice is sent in writing, notice starts from the date of receipt of the letter, not the date it was sent.

Second the letter to members simply asks them to agree to a voluntary increment freeze. The next stage, if you do not sign the voluntary letter you will be sent a notice of dismissal and offered re-engagement on new terms, which do not include an increment. Therefore notice has not yet been given of dismissal. All that has happened is that notice has been given of potential dismissal and re-engagement at a later stage. This letter will probably be sent at the beginning of February.

Third the GMB advice is not to sign this letter but to wait until you get the next letter. At this stage we will advise you further with regard to what you need to do. I must stress the importance of members sticking together on this issue because this will strengthen the union's bargaining position. We are working with Unison and Unite and the approach that the GMB is taking is a joint position.

Fourth given the timescales involved, the Council has not given enough time to give sufficient notice about the increment freeze to staff entitled to 6 to 8 weeks notice or more (the exact amount will become clear once we know the date that the dismissal and re-engagement letters are received). I will of course issue further advice once we know what the Council have done, and when.

And finally; the Council have stated in their letter to you that if you sign and/or agree to their changes, continuity of service will not be affected. This in turn implies that if you do not sign, continuity of service could therefore be affected. **That is not the case** and the only way that your service with the Council could be broken is if you leave your job. You do not have to sign to agree with these proposals in order to keep your job. All you need to do is turn up for work as normal on April 1st.

Our main issue of concern over the proposed increment freeze is that, as well as the immediate potential detriment in your pay, it has an impact on your pension, redundancy, or voluntary severance.

If you wish to request meetings in your workplace on this issue please contact your portfolio convenor or our Sheffield office on 01142768017.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Davies', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Davies
Organiser
peter.davies@gmb.org.uk

**REMEMBER IT IS IMPERATIVE YOU DO
NOT SIGN**