



## **Implementation of Single Status in Derbyshire Schools**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

The implementation of single status in schools has led to many questions. Below are answers to the most frequently asked questions.

If you require further information or advice and support please contact the GMB office in Chesterfield on 01246 234383

#### **What is Single Status?**

The term 'single status' refers to the harmonization of pay and conditions within the Local Authority – Derbyshire County Council for comparable posts, including all support staff posts in schools. The agreed terms include:

- a single pay spine for all Local Authority employees
- a standard working week of 37 hours for full time employees
- job evaluation using a single agreed scheme, for Derbyshire this is the HAY job evaluation scheme

#### **Why have we got to implement Single Status in Schools?**

When the Single Status Agreement was signed in 1997 there was no agreed implementation date. Derbyshire is one of the last Local Authorities to implement single status. Single status was implemented for centrally employed staff, i.e. non-school staff in 2010. For all school support staff implementation will be 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014. The Local Authority has an obligation to reduce its equal pay liability by ensuring all employees have equitable terms and conditions of employment. All staff working within the Authority will therefore have to be included in single status. In aided, foundation and academy schools where the Governors are the employer the Governing body may have chosen to opt into the single status process.

#### **What is the Derbyshire Package?**

The Derbyshire Package is the term used to describe the complete package of your new terms and conditions of employment after the implementation of single status in schools. It gives details about annual leave and Bank Holidays, pay, sickness absence, special leave, employee benefits and the policies and procedures that apply to your working life. All Local Authorities policies are available to schools for them to adopt but they may have agreed their own policy. Reference is therefore made to the policies in the Derbyshire Package and you should ask to see the actual policies adopted by your school.

## **What is Job Evaluation?**

Job evaluation is a systematic approach to determining the value of a job (not a person) within an organization. Jobs are evaluated against specific criteria – the knowledge required to do the job including specialist knowledge, the level of responsibility that goes with the post, the impact on the organization of the post and the scope the post holder has within which they can act. These factors determine the value of all roles within the organization and therefore the level of pay that it attracts. Derbyshire County Council uses the HAY Job Evaluation Scheme to evaluate their jobs. Not all jobs have been evaluated as part of this exercise – a range of jobs and unique jobs have been evaluated from each job family to provide a representative sample across all grades and all education settings from small rural schools to large secondary schools.

## **Which jobs have been evaluated as part of this process?**

As part of this exercise a representative number of people were asked to complete a job description questionnaire (JDQ). There were approximately 250 requests for JDQs to be completed sent to employees and in response to these requests we received approximately 150 returns. These JDQs were then evaluated by a joint panel of Local Authority officers and Trade Union representatives, all trained in the HAY job evaluation scheme. Each job was evaluated using the methodology as set out in HAY and a level (or grade) agreed for each job. In addition to the individual roles that were evaluated groups of TAs and Mid-Day Supervisors were invited to complete collective job description questionnaires for their roles at all levels. The TA JDQs were also used to develop a new TA Framework to be used going forward in the new structure.

This evaluation exercise formed the basis of the job family rationales as the JDQs were used to inform the rationales in the job families that were given to schools for them to use to slot and match the jobs within their organization.

## **Who has evaluated jobs within Derbyshire County Council?**

All jobs that have been evaluated as part of this process have been completed by a joint panel made up of Local Authority officers and Trade Union representatives. Jobs have been evaluated using the HAY job evaluation process informed by job description questionnaires, person specifications and any additional information provided by the school or requested by the job evaluation panel.

## **What is Slotting and Matching?**

All jobs within schools have been slotted into one of the six job families used within schools. Each job family is made up of job profiles that typically describe the requirements of jobs at different grades, i.e. the level of responsibility the job holder will have and the skills required for the job etc. and jobs will be matched to the appropriate level within the job family they have been identified as belonging to.

Slotting and matching has been completed by a panel of three school Governors with the Head-teacher providing contextual information as required. Schools were asked to ensure that all job descriptions and person specifications were up to date in preparation for the slotting and matching exercise.

Training was provided and all schools were invited to participate in this training and 1600 Governors, Head-teachers and school Business Managers took advantage of this opportunity.

Where the school have been unable to make a match the Local Authority has reviewed the job description, person specification and any other information provided and slotted and matched the role to the appropriate job family and grade based on this information. If it has not been possible to achieve a match on the information provided a full job evaluation has been done on the role.

## **What is a Job Family?**

A job family is the collective term for a group of jobs of a similar type and purpose. Each job family has a rationale – role profiles or descriptions for each level, of jobs within the family. Job families are made up of a number of levels reflecting different job outputs, skills, knowledge and experience. The number of levels varies for each job family depending on the scope and range of roles undertaken. Each level has a grade and a profile.

There are many job families within the Local Authority but only six within schools:

- Business and public services and finance, e.g. business manager, senior clerk, secretary
- Catering, e.g. cook, caterer, catering assistant
- Construction and maintenance, e.g. caretaker, site supervisors, cleaners
- Social care and inclusion, e.g. nurse, head of care, student support assistant
- Support for teaching and learning, e.g. cover supervisor, teaching assistants
- Student support services, e.g. technicians, mid-day and senior mid-day supervisors

## **When will I know where my job sits in the new structure?**

Everyone affected by the implementation of single status in schools will be sent an offer letter week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013. This will give details on the following:

- the job you will have in the new structure
- your pay and grade together with details of the pay you have been assimilated to in the new structure
- a copy of the Derbyshire Package For Schools
- details of the standardization of the working week
- annual Leave and Bank Holidays
- allowances, including lettings
- details about Protection of Basic Pay
- appeals

## **What is assimilation of pay?**

Assimilation is the process by which an employee's existing pay is moved onto the new Pay and Grade Structure. The rules that the Local Authority have applied are as follows:

- if current basic pay is below the first point of the new grade, employees will be placed on the first point of the new grade
- if current basic pay falls within the new grade, employees will move to the next incremental point above their existing salary
- if current basic pay is more than the new grade, employees will receive pay protection for up to two years, and be placed on the top point of the new grade following this

### **Will there be incremental progression?**

Yes. The new pay and grading structure incorporates incremental progression and also extends it to those employees who are currently on single pay points. Increments will be payable annually on the anniversary of service in post until the top pay point in the grade is reached. For employees who accept the new contracts being offered under Single Status this will be 1<sup>st</sup> March annually.

### **Will there be back pay if my salary has increased?**

No. If your salary increases as a result of the Single Status slotting and matching exercise your new salary will take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014. Any salary reductions will also be applied from this date.

### **What about pay protection?**

Pay protection only applies to the basic hourly rate of pay. It will only apply to you if your new basic salary is less than your current basic salary. Pay protection will be for two years from the date of implementation. Details of any pay protection that apply to you will be given in the offer letter you will receive from the Local Authority. There will be no pay protection due to the standardization of the working week or to changes in the number of weeks worked per year. Neither does pay protection apply to the removal of retainer allowances.

### **What do I do if I disagree with my 'slot'?**

If you disagree with the slot you have in the new structure you will have the right to appeal. If you believe you have not been slotted into the correct grade for your job you will be able to reserve the right to appeal using a pro-forma available from your Head-teacher or the shared services centre.

### **What will the appeals process be?**

We have not yet agreed the terms of the appeals process with the Local Authority. Details of the process will be published as soon as we have an agreed process in place.

The Local Authority has indicated that the grounds for appeal will be as follows:

- the post holder believes they have been slotted and matched to an inappropriate benchmark job
- the evaluation does not fully reflect the requirements of the job

If you wish to appeal against your grading you will have until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 to register your intention to do so. You will need to complete an appeal registration form which can be obtained from the Shared Services Centre or your Head-teacher/line manager.

When the appeals process has been agreed, the Local Authority will write to all employees who have registered their intention to appeal providing details of the procedure to be followed, what information they will need to provide and the date by which the formal appeal will need to be submitted.

### **Who will deal with my appeal?**

All appeals will be heard by a joint panel made up of Local Authority officers and representatives from the trade unions.

### **Is there a further right of appeal if I disagree with the panel decision?**

No. The appeal panel is the final stage of the process. Both the appeal's process and the appeal panel will be jointly agreed between the Local Authority and the trade unions.

### **Can I still appeal if I accept my new contract?**

Yes. Accepting your new contract does not prejudice your right to appeal. You will still have to register your intention to appeal by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

### **I've heard I can't appeal if I'm in the GMB. Is this true?**

No it is not. Everyone will have the right to appeal against their grading in the new structure regardless of which union they belong to or if they do not belong to a union.

### **Changes to TA Contracts**

TA contracts will change on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014. Most, though not all TAs are currently contracted for 52 weeks, working 32.5 hours full-time or pro rata part time hours with a requirement to work term time only, i.e. 39 weeks.

#### **Example**

Currently, if you work full time at County Hall you will be paid for 37 hours for 52 weeks per annum. You will have to work 37 hours each week for all weeks except where annual leave and Bank Holidays are applicable. You will receive the full time rate of pay for the job you are doing

At the moment if you are a full time TA you will work 32.5 hours for 39 weeks. You will not work during school holidays and you will receive the full time, i.e. 52 week, rate of pay for the job you are doing.

This represents an equal pay liability for the Local Authority and going forward they will not pay for hours and weeks that are not worked. In future payment will only be made

for those weeks and hours that are worked, plus annual leave and Bank Holiday entitlements.

In recognition of the fact that most TAs already work beyond their contractual hours you will be offered an increase in your contractual hours from 32.5 hours to 37 hours or pro rata if you work part time. In addition to working 39 weeks (38 weeks term time and 5 INSET days) you will also be paid for annual leave and Bank Holidays pro rata to the number of weeks that you work. This will do much to mitigate the potential loss of pay that TAs were facing.

The additional hours will be non-contact time – this has been confirmed by the Local Authority.

### **Do I have to accept the additional hours?**

No you don't. However, if you choose not to accept the additional hours being offered you will lose the pay associated with those hours on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014. You will need to discuss this with your Head-teacher.

### **What is the new TA Framework?**

The new TA framework has been developed using information from the joint JDQs completed by TAs earlier this year. The information was collated and a new, comprehensive framework has been written. We don't have a firm date for when the new framework will be made available but it will 'go live' on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

### **My contract is for 52 weeks and I work 52 weeks – will this change?**

No. If you currently have a 52 week contract and work 52 weeks less holidays etc. this should be recognized and you should retain this contract in the new structure.

### **Will I be able to take my annual leave during term time?**

At the moment the majority of employees in schools are not able to take annual leave during term time. As an agreed principle annual leave should be taken at times when the school is not open to students. Any exceptions to this will have to be agreed by the schools Governing Body in accordance with the schools agreed policy.

### **Will my pension be affected by the implementation of single status?**

As a union we are unable to give pensions advice.

However we have the following information from the Local Authority:

- the Local Government Pension Scheme will change on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to a career average scheme based on 1/49<sup>th</sup> of pensionable pay for each contributory year
- protection arrangements have not yet been agreed for the new scheme
- the changes will affect all Local Government employees

- Single Status for school support staff will have different effects and implications depending on individual circumstances including length of service, age and the outcome of job evaluation
- there is pay protection for pensions in the current scheme but not in the Regulations in the new scheme as they stand from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014

The general implications for school staff employee's pension benefits accrued before 1<sup>st</sup> April are:

- if an employee has a **reduction in their pensionable pay before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014** and they complete a pension protection form **and** they leave within 10 years of the reduction they do qualify for pay protection for pensions. This allows pensions to use the best average 3 year's salary in the last 13 years of service
- if an employee has a **reduction in pensionable pay after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014** they do **not** qualify for pay protection for pensions. Employees who will have salary protection until March 2016 because their grade is less than before will not qualify for pay protection for pensions after that date. From 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 their pre 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 pension benefits will be based on their final salary during their last year of service
- if an employee has no change in pensionable pay following the implementation of single status their pre April 2014 pension benefits will be based on their final salary during their last year of service

The Local Authority will make sure that all appropriate employees have and are advised to complete a protection form before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 when the scheme changes. The arrangements for this will be confirmed once they are agreed.

If you are a member of the pension scheme and want to preserve your final pay for pension purposes within the current scheme you will need to confirm this to the Pension Section between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014 (when your pay changes) and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, the last day before the new Pension Scheme is introduced.

## What happens next?

We will be balloting all of our members on the offer package received from DCC. The timetable for ballots will be as follows:

- ballot papers and a covering letter will be dispatched on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November to members home addresses
- the ballot will be a straight 'yes' for acceptance of the package or 'no' for non-acceptance
- GMB officers will be visiting schools to answer questions 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November
- the ballot ends close of play on 29<sup>th</sup> November
- week beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> December the result of the ballot will shared with DCC and GMB members

- if GMB members vote to accept the offer package we will inform the Local Authority that we have a Collective Agreement in respect of the Implementation of Single Status in Schools

## Key Dates

Key Date	Action
<b>July 2013</b>	A formal offer of terms and conditions was made to the trade unions, this is known as the Offer Package
<b>16<sup>th</sup> October</b>	The Local Authority has requested a formal reply on the Offer package from the Trade Unions
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> October</b>	The Local Authority will notify schools of the financial outcome of their slotting and matching of jobs
<b>1<sup>st</sup> November 2013</b>	Initial offer letters will be sent to all affected employees by the Local Authority
<b>25<sup>th</sup> November 2013</b>	Last date for employees to voluntarily accept the job offer from the Local Authority
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013</b>	If employees have not voluntarily accepted the offer made to them a further letter giving 90 days' notice of dismissal and an offer of re-engagement will be sent
<b>31<sup>st</sup> December 2013</b>	Last day for employees to give notification of the intention to appeal against their Single Status grading
<b>10<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>	The last day for employee acceptance of the re-engagement offer sent on 2 <sup>nd</sup> December – the 90 day notice period continues
<b>28<sup>th</sup> February 2014</b>	Last day of service for employees who have not accepted the offer made by the Local Authority
<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2014</b>	Implementation of Single Status in Schools

## Where can I get further advice and information?

You can visit us in person at the GMB office at 34 Glumangate Chesterfield, telephone us on 01246 234383 or e-mail us on [gmbsinglestatus@gmail.com](mailto:gmbsinglestatus@gmail.com)

If you would like a visit to your school please contact us on the number above and we will arrange to come and see you.