



Consortium Tribune



The Official Newsletter of the Remploy Trade Union.

Consortium



Consultation Edition 4

Representatives of the Consortium have met with Liam Byrne the Shadow Works and Pensions Minister and Anne McGuire the Shadow Minister for Disabled People on the 5th of March. The meeting as I understand it was a very positive one with Liam Byrne taking a great interest in how the Consortium sees the future of Supported Employment in a next Labour Government.

Anne McGuire also committed to asking questions of the DWP on our behalf they are:

Mrs Anne McGuire: What the average redundancy settlement paid to former Remploy workers has been. [Department for Work and Pensions] [147381] (For answer 11/03/2013)

Mrs Anne McGuire: How many former Remploy workers who wish to establish a social enterprise have received working capital from his Department as part of the transitional support arrangements. [Department for Work and Pensions] [147382] (For answer 11/03/2013)

Mrs Anne McGuire: What arrangements have been made for the disposal of any specialised equipment in Remploy factories. [Department for Work and Pensions] [147383] (For answer 11/03/2013)

Mrs Anne McGuire: How many bids were received for the Remploy factory in Wigan; and what rent is now being paid by the Red Rock document scanning company. [Department for Work and Pensions] [147384] (For answer 11/03/2013)

Mrs Anne McGuire: How many former Remploy workers are currently (a) in training, (b) in employment and (c) unemployed. [Department for Work and Pensions] [147385] (For answer 11/03/2013)

Mrs Anne McGuire: How many former Remploy workers have received more than £10,000 to assist with the business planning for a new social enterprise. [Department for Work and Pensions] [147386] (For answer 11/03/2013)

Mrs Anne McGuire: How many premises have been transferred to new social enterprises established by former Remploy workers. [Department for Work and Pensions] [147387] (For answer 11/03/2013)

Mrs Anne McGuire: How many former Remploy staff have been transferred to

other businesses under transfer of undertaking regulations to date.
[Department for Work and Pensions] [147388] (For answer 11/03/2013)

We will publish the answers as soon as we receive them from Anne McGuire's Office. Unfortunately I have had to miss these meetings due to being off on the sick. I will publish more details as and when I receive them. What I can say however is that Liam Byrne and Anne McGuire are both keen to maintain a dialogue with the Consortium and further meetings will be scheduled for later in the year.

The Consortium also met with the Company on the 6th March in two forums, the first was to hear the grievance on the validity of Compulsory redundancy made by the Company on Phase 1 but will also affect Phase 2 employees. The hearing was heard by Colin Scott under stage 4 of the procedure. In typical Remploy fashion, however this will be a "one stage" appeal and the outcome will be deemed as final. Comrades will be aware that there is a Tribunal case being taken by the GMB and Unite Unions and no doubt the final outcome will be decided at litigation. The feeling from the Consortium members is that Colin Scott will find in favour of the Company (now there's a surprise!)

The Second Forum was Meeting 5 of the Consultation process. During this meeting the Consortium verbally presented their Pay Claim for 2013/14. Whilst this may seem to some as a futile gesture, it is in fact important to settle this claim as any increases will be reflected in Redundancy Payments or Terms and Conditions in the cases of TUPE Transfers. The pay claim was as follows;

Remploy Consortium of Trade Unions

Pay Claim 2013/2014 as presented to Remploy management on 6th March 2013

The pay claim was presented verbally to Remploy management during a meeting held on 6th March 2013. The meeting was held at the GMB Euston Offices, 22 Stephenson Way, Euston, London NW1 2HD. A list of those present at the meeting is given in Appendix 1

The Consortium of Trade Unions' pay claim for 2013/14 is:-

- 1. The Pay Claim anniversary date be moved to 1st April of each year ie any changes implemented as a result of the pay review are backdated to 1st April of the year of the claim.*
- 2. An increase on base pay of 3.6%*
- 3. In line with an earlier agreement, complete consolidation of the bonus. The amount of bonus that is outstanding is £1.25*
- 4. The Leading Hand payment to be increased by £2.00.*
- 5. After 2013/14 Leading Hand increases to be linked to ie at the same % rate as the increase applied to base pay.*

6. *Progression payments to be unblocked and allowed to continue in the future. This applies across Remploy, so progression payments in ES and in other parts of Remploy are made.*
7. *The right to be reimbursed for, or for payment to be made directly by the Company for, SIA Certification for CCTV operatives to be included within the Accord so it becomes a contractual term for those who require such certification. Currently SIA certification has to be renewed every three years.*
8. *The redundancy payment to be amended in the Accord so every employee receives a minimum payment that is equivalent to 12 months' wages or salary with an additional lump sum of £5,000.00*

The Consortium also presented the plans to mitigate job losses:

Remploy Consortium of Trade Unions

Alternative plan to mitigate job losses as presented to Remploy management on 6th March 2013

The alternative plan was presented verbally to Remploy management during a meeting held on 6th March 2013. The meeting was held at the GMB Euston Offices, 22 Stephenson Way, Euston, London NW1 2HD. A list of those present at the meeting is given in Appendix 1

The Consortium of Trade Unions' alternative plan is:-

9. To mitigate job losses is beyond the control of the Unions and beyond the control of the Company, because without funding there is nothing that can be done apart from bumping and setting up social enterprises.
10. The opportunity for volunteers is reduced this time because potentially all the factories will close. There may be a potential for bumping if some of the factories are taken over and have people who want to leave. The proposal is that Remploy enters in to discussions with any prospective bidder with the aim of reaching an agreement regarding the reassignment of people between sites. This would allow the people who wanted to, to leave, and for other people to move to those sites, that would meet more employees' preferred outcomes.
 - a. As an example (and the example is not based on any actual figures or situations), there are two factories that are close to each other. Those factories are based in Neath and in Port Talbot. In the example scenario, only one of the factories – Neath – is to be taken over and the 40 employees at the Neath site are in a TUPE transfer situation. For the example, the prospective new owner of the Neath site wants 40 employees to run their future business. But only 30 people from the Neath site want to stay in employment; 10 people want to leave. The prospective new employer could come to an agreement with Remploy that 10 people from Port

Talbot (or other nearby factories if there were more nearby) would change roles with the 10 people in Neath who wanted to leave. With the prospective new employers agreement, and with the agreement of the Unions and the employees, Remploy would make the changes in employees at the Neath site before the business was taken over. Remploy would have to make sure that the 10 people who moved in to the available jobs were people who could do those jobs with the necessary retraining. It would let 10 people go who would want to go and keep 10 people in employment who want to stay.

11. The Unions believe that there are still people around Remploy sites who with special training could slot in to ES. We ask again for Remploy to look at voluntary redundancy within ES provided there are people elsewhere in Remploy who – with reasonable training - could take up the roles.
 - a. Voluntary redundancy means letting people come forward from ES to say that they would like to leave and receive a redundancy package on the same terms as the factory people are getting.
 - b. A decision on how much training would be reasonable would have to be made on a case by case basis because the skills would have to be acquired within a very short time so ES performance was not affected.
 - c. A framework could be developed to help people decide what might be considered reasonable or not.
 - d. The Company should make more information available about the type of roles available within ES, and the skills needed to undertake those roles. This could be written or it could be through ES employees visiting Stage 2 factories.
 - e. The Company should establish how many EB employees are interested in ES roles before it asks ES employees if any wish to volunteer for redundancy.

12. The Company and DWP should relax the working capital requirements for employee led bids including:-
 - a. Providing premises at a pepper-corn rent
 - b. Gifting or transferring ownership of assets at a very low price
 - c. Providing support to employee led bids without the requirement to engage expensive consultants
 - d. £10K on pay as go type release system to 'explore' possibilities.
 - e. Help employees identify potential parts of the businesses for development into a social enterprise/ mutual. i.e Huddersfield sewing opportunities separate to Remploy.
 - f. Possible usage of Community Support Fund to 'start up' the social Enterprise

5 Setting up Social Enterprises, Workers Co-operatives & Mutuals

As described by Liz Sayce, discussions were held with Liam Byrne & Anne McGuire on the potential of setting up employee owned and ran Social Enterprises. Although this would not mitigate job redundancies from Remploy, it has the

potential to create jobs and therefore lessen the tax payer burden and reliance upon benefits.

Examples : –

Enabled Works Ltd – Leeds (13 ex-remploy employees)

Ability Tec – Bolton (7 ex-employees*)

Redrock Scanning Services – Wigan (12 ex-remploy employees*)

4D Enterprises – Oldham (3 ex-remploy employees)

Aberdeen Social Enterprise (6 ex-remploy employees*)

During that meeting the Company also informed the Consortium that the 90 day consultation will formally end on the 27th March. This means that the Consultation has lasted 98 days.

If and when I get more information or more detail then I will disseminate it as soon as possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Woodward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

National Convenor