

## **Single Status Frequently Asked Questions**

The information below is intended to provide guidance on how the Single Status Agreement will affect different groups staff. Reference should be made to the full version of the agreement to clarify the impact it will have on terms and conditions of employment.

### **General**

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#### **What is the Single Status Agreement?**

Single Status is the name given to the introduction of common pay and conditions for former manual workers and officers. All local authorities are required to do this as part of a national agreement between employers and trade unions. One of the reasons this was necessary is to ensure that all staff receive equal pay for doing jobs rated the same under a job evaluation scheme. It affects pay scales and the terms and conditions staff are employed on.

#### **Which staff does the agreement apply to?**

The agreement applies to all staff in what are referred to as former manual workers jobs and those referred to as 'officers'. Former manual workers include Home Carers in Adult Services and the majority of staff working in Contract Services in Children's Services, such as those in Meals on Wheels, those who work in school kitchens and Cleaners. These staff are all employed under conditions of service known as the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, which is also referred to as the Green Book. Staff employed under other conditions of service are not affected e.g. Craft Workers, Youth and Community Workers, Soulbury conditions, Teachers and Chief Officers. Those staff who used to work for the GLC and whose conditions are protected are also not affected by the agreement.

#### **What date is it effective from?**

There are different parts of the Single Status Agreement which are effective from different dates. New pay and grading arrangements will be effective from 1 April 2007. Changes to the working week and working hours will be introduced from 1 May 2008. New overtime rates will also be introduced from 1 May 2008. There are further details on each of these parts of the agreement below.

#### **What changes will there be for part-time staff?**

The pay and working week aspects of the Single Status Agreement will be introduced on a pro rata basis for staff that work part-time. For example, part-time staff whose pay is calculated based on a full-time equivalent (FTE) employee that works 36 hours will continue to work the same number of hours stated in their contract but their salary will be calculate based on a FTE of 35 hours. Other parts of the agreement will be applied in the same way as for full-time staff, for example, overtime rates, the requirement to work within what are known as ordinary hours and pay protection. If you have more than one contract of employment, each one will be considered separately in

relation to eligibility for a lump sum payment and overtime buy out – see below for further details.

### **How can staff who are not trade union members vote in favour of or against the agreement?**

The Council's formal consultation process only recognises Trade Unions. The Council recognises UNISON, GMB and UNITE (formerly TGWU) for this purpose. This means that only members of these trade unions can vote in the ballot that will decide whether the agreement is accepted.

## **New pay and grading arrangements**

### **How have new grades and salaries been worked out?**

All former manual workers roles have been evaluated using the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) job evaluation scheme to determine which grade they should be on the GLPC Inner London pay scale. New salaries were determined by looking at each individual's salary in comparison with the salary range for their new grade. Some staff whose current salary was equal to a spinal column point on their new grade will continue to receive the same salary. Those whose salary was lower will move to the salary at the spinal column point that is closest to their current pay. Anyone whose current salary was higher than the salary range for their new grade will receive pay protection for a period of two years (see below).

### **Who is eligible for back pay?**

Only former manual workers in jobs that have not previously been put on to the officers pay scale are eligible, provided their new pay is higher. Staff in jobs that used to be classed as manual workers e.g. housing caretakers and building attendants, will not be eligible as they moved on to the officers pay scale some years ago.

### **When will back pay for eligible staff be paid?**

This should be received in June 2008 by staff whose pay has increased following their move on to the new pay scale. The back pay will be the difference between the new and old salary since 1 April 2007.

### **What difference will the agreement have on staff already in 'officer' grades?**

There will be no immediate pay or grading changes for staff who are already in jobs that have been graded on what have been referred to as 'officers' pay scales e.g. Scales 1 to 6, S01 or S02, PO1 to PO6 grades. These grades are already on The GLPC Inner London pay scale. Grades for these jobs may change as a result of the implementation of the GLPC job evaluation scheme – please see below. However, they may be affected by the new arrangements for what are classed as 'ordinary hours' and changes to overtime rates.

**Will the 2008 pay settlement be applied to new salaries?**

Yes. The nationally agreed pay settlement will be applied to all salaries on the GLPC Inner London pay scale.

**Working hours and allowances**

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**What difference will a standard working week of 35 hours make?**

This means that the standard working week for full-time staff will be 35 hours. There are some staff that currently work full-time hours that are longer than this so, for example 36 hours, in which case it will mean they will need to work 1 hour less each week at their new grade/salary.

Pay and benefits for part-time time that are currently calculated pro rata to a 36 hour week will be recalculated so they are pro rata to a 35 hour week. Further information on how part-time staff are affected is detailed above.

**What difference will the ordinary hours make?**

Ordinary hours provides the Council with flexibility of when staff can be scheduled to work to meet the needs of service users. Ordinary hours are between 7am and 8pm, Monday to Sunday. These hours are already reflected in the flexi-time procedure. This does not automatically mean that staff will have their current hours changed. Staff can discuss the hours that they want to work with their manager if they want to change their existing contractual hours. However, any requests will be considered along side the needs of the service. Where managers want to change existing working hours the agreement still requires that they consult with staff and their trade union representatives in advance. Managers will still be able to set 'core hours' under the flexi-time scheme for their service within the hours of 7am to 8pm.

**How does the agreement affect shift workers?**

The working hours for staff that work shifts will not change as a result of the agreement. They will however be entitled to have 2 consecutive days off in a 7 day period.

**What are the changes to allowances and premium payments?**

There are no changes to existing allowances and premium payments for staff currently in grades Scale 1 to 6, PO1 to PO6, LPO7 and LPO8. However, these payments will not be payable for the same hours overtime is claimed. The allowances currently paid to staff in former manual worker grades will be reviewed with the Trade Unions to ensure they are consistent with the principles of the Single Status Agreement.

## **Lump sums**

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### **Which former manual workers are entitled to receive a lump sum payment?**

Only former manual workers who receive a pay increase as a result of their move onto the GLPC Inner London pay scale will be eligible to receive a lump sum payment.

### **Why are lump sums being paid?**

The payment has been agreed in negotiations between the Council and the trade unions. It is recognised that there is a risk of equal pay claims being brought against the Council from former manual workers whose pay has increased as a result of moving into their new grades. To receive a lump sum eligible staff will be required to sign a compromise agreement.

### **What is a compromise agreement?**

A compromise agreement is a legal document eligible staff will be required to sign which means that in return for the lump sum payment the Council receives protection from equal pay claims being made in the future. This will only apply to any potential claims prior to the introduction of the Single Status Agreement. Any member of staff that is asked to sign one will receive legal advice so they are fully aware of what is involved.

### **How much are the lump sums worth?**

The lump sum payment will be up to a maximum of 3 times the difference between the old and new salaries depending on length of service i.e. if a member of staff has been in their job for 3 years as at 31 March 2007 they will be offered 3 times the difference, if they have been in post for 2 years then it will be 2 times the difference. To ensure payments are calculated accurately they will be based on completed months of service. The date of 31 March 2007 is used as the cut off date because eligible staff will receive any back pay they are due from 1 April 2007 onwards.

### **When will lump sum payments be received?**

This will depend on the timescales for the Trade Union ballot, deadlines for including payments in monthly payroll transactions and the signing of compromise agreements. Staff who are asked to sign a compromise agreement will be advised of this date.

### **Is the lump sum taxable?**

The Council has agreed with HM Revenue and Customs a specific rate at which tax and national insurance will be deducted from lump sum payments. Payments will not be subject to deductions in respect of pensions.

### **How will lump sums be calculated for staff with more than one job?**

Payments will be calculated separately for each job that is eligible. Please see above for eligibility requirements; the length of service in each job will be used to calculate the relevant period of service to determine how much of a lump sum should be offered.

## **Overtime**

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### **How are overtime rates being changed?**

Overtime rates are being changed for all staff up to and including grade PO6. Overtime rates for staff up to Scale 6 will reduce from time and half Monday to Saturday to time and a third. The overtime rate for Sunday will reduce from double time to time and a half. Overtime rates for staff in grades SO1 and above are currently paid at one of 3 hourly rates. These are known as planned overtime rates. These are being reduced by 13.3% for staff graded SO1 to PO2 and up to 14.7% for staff graded PO3 to PO6. This means staff graded above PO3 will have overtime rates that are based on their actual spinal column point. This will ensure that after the reductions in planned overtime the rates paid will be above the normal hourly rate.

### **Who is eligible to receive an overtime buy out?**

Staff who are estimated to lose more than £100 a year as a result of the reductions in overtime rates will be offered a buy out i.e. a cash payment, to compensate for the changes. To determine which staff are eligible, the Council will agree a reference period with the Trade Unions and analyse overtime records to establish an annual average amount of overtime worked. Potential losses will then be identified by comparing how much overtime would have been paid based on the new reduced rates. Eligible staff must still be employed by the Council on 1 May 2008 in order to receive the buy out payment. This is the date from which the reduced rates will be introduced so staff that leave before this date will not suffer any loss in overtime payments.

### **When will overtime buy out payments be made?**

Buy out payments will be made in May 2008. This is because the new arrangements will not be introduced until 1 May 2008.

### **What about staff who received a letter in 2005 about a buy out of overtime but were not sent one this time?**

This will be confirmed following discussions between the Council and the Trade Unions.

### **What changes are being made to contractual overtime?**

Staff who currently work contractual overtime will be compensated as outlined above. From 1 May 2008 there will no longer be contractual overtime. This is to ensure that managers offer all members of their teams the opportunity to work overtime.

## **Job Evaluation**

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### **What is the GLPC job evaluation scheme and why is it being used?**

The Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) is the scheme introduced by London Councils (formerly the Association of London Government) which the Council and trade unions have agreed to use. The use of a job evaluation scheme means that the Council, with the trade unions, can determine the

correct grade for a post so staff in comparable jobs receive equal pay for work of equal value. One of the main reasons the GLPC scheme was selected is because it is equality proofed. This means that it values work that may traditionally have been carried out by groups of female staff at the same level as those jobs that may tend to be carried out by groups of male staff.

### **Why are all officer jobs being evaluated?**

The Single Status Agreement means that all staff will be treated equally. In the same way that former manual worker jobs have been evaluated, all other jobs that are paid on the GLPC Inner London pay scale must be evaluated using the GLPC scheme to ensure that the grades for each job are correct. This process will commence in 2008. The majority of jobs are expected to remain at the current grade. A small numbers of jobs are expected to either increase or decrease. It is not possible to tell which jobs will be affected by changes in grades until they have been evaluated.

### **What happens if my current officer grade increases?**

For staff whose jobs increase in grade, the increase will be backdated to 1 April 2007 or the date they started work in the job if it was after this date.

### **What happens if my current officer grade decreases?**

Staff whose job decreases in grade will receive a period of pay protection. Pay protection for evaluations carried out as part of the Single Status Agreement will be entitled to pay protection until either 31 March 2009 or for a minimum period of one year from receiving notification of their job being downgraded.

### **What is pay protection?**

Pay protection is where pay remains fixed at the salary of the spinal column point an employee was paid at prior to their job being downgraded. This means they will continue to receive cost of living increases until the period of protection ends.

### **What will happen if I already have pay protection?**

The new period of pay protection will run concurrently with an existing one. This means that staff will continue to receive their current protection until it runs out. At this point they would then receive protection based on the grade of their job before it was evaluated until the longest period of either 31 March 2009 or for a minimum period of one year from receiving notification of their job being downgraded.

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