

**To: The Chair of the Probation Board
The Chief Officer of the Probation Board
(Copy enclosed for the Head of Human Resources)
The Secretary of the Probation Board
Members of the NNC**

10th October 2006

NNC CIRCULAR NO.10/2006

Dear Colleague

UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH JOB EVALUATION AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE MODERNISATION AGREEMENT

The Joint Secretaries to the NNC have agreed that it is now opportune to give an update to Areas on progress with Job Evaluation and the implementation of the Pay and Conditions of Service Modernisation Agreement. In addition, this Circular provides advice and guidance on a number of issues which have come to light during the implementation process.

The Implementation Process

In accordance with Section 2.5 of the Agreement, the NNC has set up a joint Pay Modernisation Implementation Steering Group. This group has met a number of times in the months since agreement was reached. It is responsible for agreeing guidance documents on aspects of the new pay system; for overseeing the national validation of individual areas' job evaluation outcomes; and for authorizing areas to proceed to implementation once their data has been given a clean bill of health by the validation team. Its overriding purpose is to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the agreement and to ensure consistent application of the job evaluation arrangements.

The Validation Process

The validation process is carried out by a small team at NPD who report regularly to the Implementation Steering Group, via the joint Validation Sub-Group. The documents **attached** at **Appendices 1 and 2** outline the protocol under which this work takes place and also indicate the flow of data.

To date 15 areas have implemented or are in the process of implementing the new pay and reward system. The data from a further ten areas is likely to be scrutinised in the period up to 11 October when the next meeting of the Implementation Steering Group takes place. A further three meetings of the group have been arranged for October and November, by which time it is hoped that the vast majority of areas will have completed the job evaluation process and will have been given authority to implement. It is imperative that data is submitted on the template which has been provided. Failure to use this is likely to cause delays in the approval process.

The Joint Secretaries recognise that the Agreement anticipated that the operational date for the new system should be no later than 1 October 2006, but they understand that where this has not been possible, both employers and trade union colleagues are using their best endeavours to complete the process as quickly as possible. All Areas are encouraged to bring the process locally to a speedy conclusion, in the interests of all parties.

Authority to Implement

Once the Implementation Steering Group is advised by the Validation Sub-Group that an area's data is satisfactory and that the area may be authorized to implement, a formal letter is issued in the name of the Chair of the Steering Group. Areas are then expected to implement the results as contained in the spreadsheet submitted for validation, unless explicitly advised otherwise. In addition areas are expected to implement the results for all employees in the area at the same time, as soon as is practicable after receiving the notification.

If in an Area, the employer or the trade unions are concerned about the process to be followed for Job Evaluation or are concerned about the outcome of Job Evaluation at any stage, including concerns that an error may have been made in the process, then the Joint Secretaries, acting through the Pay Modernisation Implementation Steering Group are available to advise on how to proceed. Local employers and unions are encouraged to make joint referrals on matters of concern where possible.

Approved Premises

The NNC Implementation Steering Group is concerned to ensure consistency in the matching and evaluation of approved premises roles, due to the diversity of roles which are being shown to exist around the service. The Joint Secretaries have therefore called for more data on Approved Premises jobs to be submitted to the Validation team from those areas who have had their data validated and been given authority to proceed to implementation. This should not be taken to mean that there should be any delay in implementing the results for colleagues in Approved Premises. At the end of the implementation process, the NNC Implementation Steering Group will carry out a desktop consistency check on the matching and evaluation results for all approved premises roles to ensure consistency.

Offender Manager Roles

Further to NNC Circular No.8/2006, pending the adoption of the benchmark role profiles for the two Offender Manager jobs, areas should evaluate jobs as they currently exist, submit the data in the normal way and implement accordingly, once authorisation has been received.

Appeals

The process for employees to appeal against the banding assigned to their jobs is contained in the National Job Evaluation Scheme User Guide, at Section 11. These arrangements are to be followed strictly. Employers and employees are reminded that appeals may not be made against an employee's position on the spine within a Pay Band, only against the evaluation to the banding itself. This has been a cause of confusion in some areas. Details of the number of appeals and outcomes will be requested from areas in due course.

Positioning within Pay Bands

With regard to an employee's position within a Band, this must be determined by reference to the jointly agreed Guidance on the Implementation of the new Pay and Grading Structure, issued with NNC Circular 7/2006. Areas do **not** have flexibility to use the spine to accelerate progression beyond the points determined by the assimilation process, for example in recognition of perceived "weight" of one job over another, when both have been evaluated in the same Pay Band. This would compromise the integrity of the pay spine and leave areas open to equal pay claims.

Secondees

The recent survey of secondees, covering both NNC and Standing Committee for Chief Officer Grades employees, has identified a wide variety of practice across the service. The Joint Secretaries will be examining the findings closely during the next two weeks, with the intention of issuing guidance to areas on how to deal with secondees in terms of job evaluation and the implementation of the wider pay and reward provisions. The principle underpinning the joint work is that all employees should be dealt with fairly and that no one should suffer any overall detriment as a result of being on secondment at a time of significant change to the system of pay and conditions.

Disclosure of Job Evaluation Results

The Joint Secretaries have given much consideration to the issue of disclosure of the results of job evaluation within areas. It has been agreed that in the interests of transparency, as a minimum, Boards should make a schedule of the results of job evaluation within an area available to all members of staff, **on request**. This need only consist of a list of jobs showing job title, total job evaluation score and pay banding.

Pre-existing Regrading Claims

Joint Secretaries have considered how regrading claims which pre-date the introduction of the new Pay and Reward Agreement should be handled. Areas are advised to review any stayed claims in the light of the outcome of the Job Evaluation process. Where the job evaluation outcome validates a pre-existing regrading claim, Areas should seek to reach local agreement on how to proceed. The Joint Secretaries will be available to assist in resolving problem cases should they arise.

Further Guidance on Technical Matters

A number of questions of a technical nature have arisen during the course of implementation. A list of frequently asked questions is being compiled. It is hoped that this will be ready for issue in the near future.

Any further issues in respect of the Job Evaluation process or implementation of the Pay and Conditions of Service Modernisation Agreement may be referred to the Joint Secretaries as necessary.

Yours faithfully

Martin Wargent
Judy McKnight

Joint Secretaries