

15th August 2016

To: Jean Lindsay FCIPD
Director Central Services
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Trade Union Office

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Sam Telford
FCTU Secretary

Dear Jean

FORESTRY COMMISSION TRADE UNIONS 2016 PAY CLAIM

On behalf of FDA, GMB, PCS, Prospect and Unite and subject to their national pay policies I would like to submit our joint trade unions' pay claim for 2016.

Pay is currently a source of real anger and frustration for staff in the Forestry Commission, as was particularly evident in 2015 with the imposed pay deal and the furore this generated. This was further conveyed in the results of the 2015 FC Staff Survey, where Pay & Reward was the single biggest issue affecting people. The strength of feeling on pay has been heard further at the recent and ongoing joint union members' meetings about pay.

With a two year pay freeze and derisory increases since, many of our members are now earning substantially less net pay than they did four years ago. This erosion in living standards is not a situation which can continue and FCTU seek an urgent resolution to properly pay staff for the work they do and their dedication to the Forestry Commission and Civil Service.

Senior management continue to communicate to staff that they are valued; commending their loyalty and commitment to achieving the organisation's objectives. However, with many staff now leaving and moving onto better paid employment within the private sector, we do not believe the FC can continue to benefit from this loyalty and commitment for much longer. A fair and proper pay rise is therefore urgently needed and long overdue.

FCTU recognise the maximum of the pay scale as the rate for the job. All of our members should attain the rate for the job once they have completed their probationary period. In meeting the demands set out in this claim, we believe this can be achieved in the FC through a review of the current pay system and scales.

The current pay system is unfair, unequal and we believe open to legal challenge. Equality concerns should be the central principle on which pay systems are based and the current system fails to deliver this. It is therefore not fit for purpose and we would wish to enter negotiations on pay restructuring to eradicate the inequalities within the current system.

We continue to seek that the FC takes steps to reduce working hours and increase leave entitlements. These are valid steps as British workers have among the longest working hours and lowest holiday entitlement in Europe. In meeting this demand it will significantly benefit members and their families, helping with the competing pressures of work and family life.

Forestry Commission staff are thousands of pounds a year worse off than they should be as a result of:

- The cumulative effect of a 2 year pay freeze coupled with the continuing 1% pay caps.
- A devalued pension and increased pension contributions.
- The rise in National Insurance payments
- Non-consolidated rises for over half of staff in 2015.
- Pay progression not being honoured for many years before formally removing it in 2015. This has left many staff stuck further down the pay ranges and seeing no way of reaching the rate for the job.

Our claim in 2016 seeks the following:

1. A *fully consolidated* increase in pay rates of 5%; or £1200 if the percentage increase is less than this sum.
2. All staff to attain the rate for the job (maximum of Pay Band) after a satisfactory completion of probation.
3. Equal Pay: address pay anomalies and prevent instances of leapfrogging, *funded separately from the pay pot*.
4. No compulsory redundancies.
5. A phased reduction in working hours toward a 35 hour week for all staff.
6. 30 days Annual Leave on appointment.
7. Allowances to retain their relative value to pay and therefore be increased in line with the 5% rise.
8. Overtime to be calculated based on actual hours worked (37 rather than a 42 hour week).
9. The positive adoption of the Scottish Living Wage in all procurement and tendering of contracted-out services.

FCTU anticipate that we can secure agreement on these aspects this year and that the Executive Board will endorse the reasonable and realistic claims made in

this claim; thereby ensuring that our hardworking and dedicated members are adequately rewarded for the work they do at the proper rate for the job.

We hope that this year's negotiations can be completed in order that an agreed settlement can be paid to members as close to the operative date for pay as possible. We believe that all of the above are fair requests and we can furnish sustainable arguments for each element of our claim. On that basis we are prepared to meet with you to begin formal pay talks for 2016.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Telford', written in a cursive style.

Sam Telford
FCTU Secretary