



Single Status Special

Branch Contact Details for Single Status

single.status@trafford.gov.uk

Tel: 0161 877 9840 (several lines)

Fax: 0161 877 4821

Between 9am and 5pm each week day

Branch Office:
Unit 2A, Warwick
House
17 Warwick Road
Old Trafford
Manchester

At the beginning of October the Council will announce its new pay structure. All workers covered by single status will receive a letter from the employer notifying them of the new structure effective from the 1st January 2009.

The Council's review of pay and grading has been conducted largely in line with the requirements of the National Agreement. This Agreement underlined the need to introduce Single Status into all councils. One of the main aims of the Single Status Agreement was to deliver equal pay throughout all local authorities.

Our aim was to try to ensure that the review was

Throughout this lengthy review period your UNISON branch officers have worked as closely as possible with the employer.

conducted in an open and transparent way: ensuring the proper application of the National Job Evaluation System. Unfortunately, as you probably know, the evaluation process was changed part way through review - face-to-face interviews with post holders were dropped in favour of paper based questionnaires.

Despite this change (which we believe has led to less accurate job evaluations) Trafford UNISON along with GMB took the view that we still

needed to be closely involved in the process to ensure it was still as open and transparent as possible.

You may have read horror stories from other Councils in the local area but UNISON has worked hard to ensure that the interests of all our members have been protected. Nevertheless in a situation where central Government has not put in a penny extra, it is inevitable that there will be losers as well as winners.

We know this is going to be a difficult time for our members and this branch will ensure that we have as many communication channels as possible to provide advice and support through this process.

UNISON has arranged a series of meetings to consult you on the proposals for which the Council has agreed to paid time off. There will also be a dedicated e-mail address and extra telephone lines. For those workplaces without a UNISON steward Branch Officers will attempt to visit your workplace or arrange for you to attend the UNISON office (where there are issues which cannot be resolved over the phone). **Please see the back page for more details....**

School Based Members

Members in Schools are faced with particular problems as the Job Evaluations have been based on the standard working week of 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours and all year round working. In order to inform and consult school based members we will be holding separate meetings: one for Teaching Assistants and one for all other school based support staff.

What is Single Status & Why is UNISON Involved?

In 1996 the national employers proposed that all conditions of service for local government workers on NJC (National Joint Council) conditions of service be harmonised and that a fair pay and grading structure (Job Evaluation is part of this) be introduced to address equal pay.

In a national ballot of UNISON members in 1997 this proposal was overwhelmingly accepted. It became known as the Single Status Agreement. The joint agreement which also included GMB and T&G (now UNITE) required local authorities to work jointly with trade unions to harmonise the pay and working conditions of all manual and white collar workers. Councils were also required to introduce a fair pay and grading structure.

Since 1997 the employers have made very slow progress in implementing Single Status -not just in Trafford but throughout the country. It has only been since 2004 that any real momentum has built up to introduce a fair pay and grading structure. This has largely been as a result of pressure from trade unions including legal support for members to lodge equal pay claims in appropriate circumstances.

Get the Facts, Not the Fiction

UNISON is very anxious that members receive accurate information at a time when rumours will be rife. We are advising all our members to use the communication mechanisms we have put in place to respond to queries and concerns. Please see the back page for contact details.

The Benefits of Negotiation

It is Inevitable that some members will ask why UNISON is involved in a process which leads to members losing money? Both UNISON and the GMB are very clear that the benefits of being involved far outweigh the disadvantages.

The council would have gone ahead with or without our involvement. Whilst we do not set the pay bill we have been able to influence the process and to scrutinise the data. We are clear more money has been made available as a result of our participation. This has resulted in a better balance between winners and losers.

Throughout the negotiations we have held to a consistent position with an aim to harmonise to the best conditions, to introduce a new pay structure which is transparent and fair, and fundamentally based on a commitment to equal pay for work of equal value.

We believe we have worked largely to that mandate but with the ever changing economic climate and with an ever shifting legal background these negotiations have been difficult and complex.

UNISON has been very clear in terms of its strategy for implementation of Single Status—we have sought to involve as many members as possible.

We have worked hard to keep members informed of the progress. Whilst a lot of the detail has been discussed at committee meetings there have been open meetings for members to attend from the beginning of the process. In addition each edition of Trumpet for the last two years has updated members on the latest position. Single Status/PARIS has been on the Agenda of the AGM for the last three years with the opportunity for members to ask questions. In preparation for Job Evaluation most branch officers and stewards have received training on the NJC scheme and it is planned further training will be available for stewards in order to ensure they can represent members from a position of knowledge during the appeals process.

Why do Some Workers Lose Money?

To answer that AT ITS SIMPLEST LEVEL THERE IS NOT ENOUGH MONEY IN THE POT. And whilst Trafford is not as bad as some authorities who have tried to introduce Single Status at nil cost, UNISON 's position is that a small increase in council tax over the 10 years it has taken the council to implement the scheme would have provided additional money for the pay bill.

The Government is also to blame as despite intense lobbying they refuse to provide additional funding for the implementation of Single Status. And sadly after 30 years of the Equal Pay Act introduced by a Labour Government, the reality is women workers are paying the price.

Member Involvement

The Timetable for Consultation

6 th October	Trafford Council will send letters to all workers with notification of the new pay
7 th October	UNISON help lines will open
9 th October	UNISON consultation meetings for members will start (see below for all dates, times and locations)
20 th October	Results of the UNISON consultation will be notified to members this week

All members are entitled to a say on the proposal and I would urge all members to attend and comment at the arranged meeting, you can also use the dedicated e-mail address to comment or write to the branch office all views are important to us.

School Support Staff—Teaching Assistants

Sale High School	Thursday	9th October	4.30pm to 6.30pm
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All Other School Support Staff

Sale High School	Thursday	16th October	4.30pm to 6.30pm
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All Other Trafford Staff

Sale Waterside	Monday	13th October	4.30pm to 6.30pm
Sale Waterside	Friday	17th October	12.00pm to 2pm
Trafford Town Hall	Wednesday	15th October	12.00pm to 2pm
Trafford Town Hall	Wednesday	15th October	4.30pm to 6pm
George Carnall Leisure Centre	Tuesday	14th October	7.00pm to 9.00pm

Please note that all the above meetings are for UNISON members only. Trafford Council has agreed that all members can take time-off to attend one

Members should note that our position throughout negotiations has been that unless everything was agreed nothing would be agreed. Any deal would also be subject to advice from the union solicitors. UNISON must ensure that the proposal is equality assessed.