

## **Workforce Board – report by Cllr Jim McMahon (Chair)**

### **Pensions**

1. The LGA is currently awaiting publication of the final version of transitional regulations which provide protection to existing benefits for scheme members. In view of this delay, work is on-going to ensure that any impact resulting from this later than expected publication is minimised, to ensure effective implementation of the scheme from 1 April 2014.
2. LGA staff have been touring the country providing information and training to employers as well as finalising five member communication work streams in the run up to the introduction of the new scheme.
3. One key area of work for the Shadow Scheme Advisory Board at present is the analysis of the evidence provided as part of the recent Call for Evidence by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the LGA. This recently culminated with the production of a report to the Minister outlining the recommendations of the Board following this analysis

### **Local Government Services**

4. At a meeting on 5 November the Trade Union Side formally tabled their pay claim for 2014 for “*A minimum increase of £1 an hour on scale point 5 to achieve the Living Wage and the same flat rate increase on all other scale points*”.
5. Meeting the pay claim in full would cost £1.23 billion (an increase to the paybill of 8.3%).
6. The National Employers have consulted councils through a series of regional pay consultation briefings that concluded on 30 January.
7. The National Employers are meeting on 13 February to consider feedback from the regional events and their next steps.

#### *The Living Wage*

8. In the light of all the recent national debate about the lower paid and the cost of living, the Workforce team has launched a podcast which looks at how various councils have responded to the Living Wage politically and technically and outlines the latest national information. In addition, the Workforce team is currently gathering information from authorities that have introduced the Living Wage with regard to some of the practical issues relating to implementation. It is hoped to share the results with authorities during February.

### **Fire**

#### *Fire Service Pension Scheme*

9. Much of the industrial relations focus at present remains on the eight-point dispute between the Fire Brigades Union and Government Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales in connection with pension scheme reform. There have been nine periods of

strike action since 25 September 2013 in England and Wales ranging from two to six hours. The position remains that strike action has not taken place in Scotland as negotiations are at a different stage and before the first action was taken FBU members decided that sufficient progress had been made to avoid strike action.

10. In addition to discontinuous strike action, the FBU has since secured a yes vote in a ballot of its members to commence action short of a strike. There have been two periods of action short of a strike in England, Scotland and Wales (not volunteering for overtime), one of five hours duration and one of twenty-four hours.
11. The LGA continues to work closely with the parties to the dispute both separately and jointly where it is appropriate to do so. For example, there is a matter relating to capability that falls out of the proposals on pension scheme reform. We have consulted fire authorities on a potential way forward and now have broad agreement with the FBU on the majority of points. At the time of writing, no further industrial action is scheduled. We understand this is to allow time for renewed discussion between DCLG and the FBU on various issues in dispute.
12. The LGA has issued guidance to fire authorities on pay issues connected to industrial action as they relate specifically to employees covered by the National Joint Council's Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) as well as matters such as sickness absence, annual leave, employer discretion around pension contributions (in the context of the counting of strike time as pensionable service), dealing with pickets etc.

*NJC for brigade managers of local authority Fire and Rescue Services*

13. This NJC covers uniformed senior managers – chief fire officers, deputy chief fire officers and assistant chief fire officers. They are represented by the Association of Principal Fire Officers (APFO).
14. A formal pay claim for 2013 was received towards the end of last year and the National Employers have now written to APFO to confirm that they will not be making a pay offer for 2013.

**School Teachers**

15. The School Teachers' Review Body has submitted its 23rd Report to the Secretary of State, containing recommendations on changes to school leadership pay, allowances, other pay flexibilities and pay safeguarding and non-pay conditions of service. Once the recommendations and the Government's response have been published NEOST will submit a response to the subsequent consultation. The consequent changes to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document are likely to be implemented in September 2014.
16. NEOST has submitted written evidence to the STRB to inform its recommendations in its 24th Report on the 2014/15 pay award.

*Residential Special Schools*

17. Joint advice with the Trade Unions has been produced for residential special schools and social service establishments on the implications of the changes to school teachers' pay arrangements set out in the 2013 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions

Document (STPCD). This includes guidance on pay scales, pay portability, pay progression and on recruitment and retention payments.

### **Youth and Community**

18. The National Employers made a pay offer of 1% on all pay points and allowances to the Youth and Community Trade Unions last year. This decision was reached following a consultation of authorities (via regions) which showed a clear majority in favour for a pay offer. The Trade Unions have now accepted this and a pay settlement has been reached for 2013.

### **Strategy Team**

#### *Public Health*

19. As public health teams bed-in to local government a lot of questions remain about specialist recruitment and managing the terms and conditions of medical consultants. The LGA has agreed to work with Public Health England, the Faculty of Public Health and the Association of Directors of Public Health to prepare guidance on the appointment and role of multi-disciplinary public health teams. More information will be provided in due course.

#### *Layers and spans*

20. Stanton Marris have developed an approach to organisational re-design looking at layers and spans of control, called Decision Making Accountability (DMA). The LGA has bought access to the tool and training to deliver it in authorities. LGA staff have now been trained in the DMA approach to organisational design and are currently working to deliver DMA in the Isle of Wight, Buckinghamshire County Council and Maldon District Council. There are expressions of interest from six other councils, including the Tri-Borough councils in London.

#### *Mediation*

21. The LGA, in partnership with Total Conflict Management (TCM), has undertaken a survey on the use of mediation on the workplace. The findings show a continued trend by local authorities to use this process for resolving conflict in the workplace. This avoids more formal grievance and disciplinary procedures that can often prove time consuming, disruptive and costly.

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