



NORTHUMBERLAND JOINT TRADE UNIONS BULLETIN No 2

Dear Colleague

16th January 2009

REDUNDANCIES AND VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE SCHEME DEVELOPMENTS

The Joint Trade Unions involved in the LGR process have recently been made aware that some District Councils have contacted their staff, who have recently applied for voluntary redundancy, and advised them that the severance payments are now subject to a cap of £100,000 and a 2 year claw back, and have, in some cases, issued revised figures and set a deadline for acceptance.

The Joint Trades Unions would recommend to members that they should not, at this moment in time, accept any revised offer that has been made as this proposal has not been agreed, or been fully consulted upon at this moment in time. In some cases members have received revised offers before the Trades Unions were written to on this matter.

Our position is that we cannot accept any capping, particularly of Districts' Schemes when the consultation process on this matter has not been concluded. Reducing entitlements under the current schemes will result in many volunteers rejecting the offer and make the likelihood of large scale compulsory redundancies more inevitable. We cannot accept this position from the Council, when this cap has not been applied to the recent Senior Management and Personal Assistants redundancy packages. We also believe that implementation of this cap may give rise to sex and age discrimination claims, which would also potentially increase the costs to the new Unitary Council.

We would therefore advise members to respond to the revised offers by saying that you are aware that this capping process is being challenged by the Trades Unions, and still under consultation, and wish to await the outcomes of those consultations before any final decision is made to accept the voluntary offer, or not. If you have already accepted the offer you may wish to contact your HR department to ask them to halt the process until the outcome of consultations is clear.

It therefore follows that as a consequence of this reduction in volunteers for redundancy the numbers that will be at risk of compulsory redundancy will be significantly increased. This is an unacceptable position to the members of the joint trade unions.

We have made it clear to the employer in letters sent to them by the Regional Organisers of GMB, UNISON and Unite (the union) on 16th January 2009 that their present course of action will leave us with no alternative but to consult our members with a view to taking industrial action of this issue. The stated position of the Joint Trade Unions is NO COMPULSORY REDUNDANCIES. Where it is necessary the Joint Trade Unions are and will take legal advice in support of collective and individual LGR employment related issues.

We will update you on the outcomes of our consultations at the end of the month, but if you have any further questions on this matter please contact your local branch office or branch official for further guidance.

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