

Dear Colleagues

I hope you had a well deserved summer break. This communication will update UCU members on the current position regarding;

- Pay 2010
- Pay and Grading Review
- MRC Redundancy and Compulsory Retirement Scheme

### **Pay 2010**

Unlike previous years negotiations, this year's pay round has been shaped by a series of unique, and significantly influential, factors. Typically, talks take shape in April with a view to submitting a pay claim and negotiating over the next few weeks with a view to concluding the process before the summer. However in April this year, the (outgoing) government effectively derailed the process and failed to provide the MRC with a mandate or budget to negotiate with the trade union side (TUS). This was followed by the incoming coalition's review of public sector pay and then subsequent announcement of a 2 year pay freeze for public sector workers earning more than £21000. An exception, of £250, has been made for public sector staff earning less than £21000.

The MRC has decided to adopt this approach to pay 2010 and 2011 and in addition it has proposed to suspend Additional Salary Reward payments, which total 0.3% of the payroll.

This is clearly disappointing news. The UCU negotiators have registered our deep concerns, yet again, about the organisations approach to pay generally and, the impact that pay stagnation will have on the delivery of UCU members living standards, scientific excellence, career development and the organisations reputation. UCU have made the MRC fully aware of the real and growing pay disparity between the organisation and HE and other bodies, however, the management say they are unable to move due to government retrenchment and the MRC need to share in the pain.

### **Pay and Grading Review**

This informal review has been ongoing for a few months, however there is now an added impetus given the absolute restrictions on pay. Both sides have been exploring the possibility of what a new pay and grading structure could look like, and what advantages, in respect of scope for pay headroom and career development such a system may create. At this stage there are no formal proposals and there is still a considerable amount of scoping and data gathering that needs to take place in advance of any meaningful negotiations. As or when all the associated matters take greater shape, members will be fully advised and consulted.

## **MRC Redundancy and Compulsory Retirement Scheme**

In May, the TUS sent out an all members communication updating on the fact that, as a result of the PCS successful judicial review on the wider Civil Service Compensation Scheme changes, the MRC would not be proposing changes to your existing schemes.

Since then, the government introduced the Superannuation Bill 2010-11 to Parliament. This Bill is scheduled to become law on the 22nd October. The Bill makes provision for limiting the value of the benefits paid for compulsory redundancy under the Civil Service Compensation Scheme to 12 months pay and to withdraw the option for early retirement. The Government has made it clear that Civil Servants will need to be served notice before the 22nd October 2010 and have left employment by the 31st of March 2011 to receive compulsory redundancy compensation under current terms. The bill also contains a 'sunset clause' which means its impact is time bound for 12 months, after which time, it has to be reconfirmed, amended further or withdrawn.

Exactly how this legislation will impact on the MRC is unclear, and the TUS are pressing for the earliest possible indications from the MRC as to what their thinking is on this matter. The TUS has made it absolutely clear that the existing schemes are contractual terms and conditions and that any proposed changes will need to be exhaustively negotiated with the unions. Additionally, the TUS are pressing for clarification as to how members under threat of redundancy or who are in the Green Book (but not yet served notice) will be protected.

Member feedback is essential to ensuring that we are reflecting and representing your views. To this end, please contact the committee secretary, Paul Bridge, national official [pbridge@ucu.org.uk](mailto:pbridge@ucu.org.uk). The members of the committee are:

### **MRC committee 2010-11**

- Kelvin Cain, chair, MRC Toxicology Unit, Leicester
- Oliver de Peyer, vice-chair, National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill
- Roger Buxton, National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill
- Marion MacFarlane, MRC Toxicology Unit, Leicester
- Marion Henderson, MRC Social & Public Health Sciences Unit, Glasgow
- Terry Spinks, GE Healthcare (Imanet), Hammersmith
- Barry Walker, NIBSC, South Mimms
- Christina McGuire, National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill (co-opted)

In addition, the following officers and members of the union's national executive council can attend:

- Alan Whitaker, president
- Terry Hoad, NEC, president-elect
- Philip Burgess, NEC
- Dave Guppy, NEC,
- Sally Hunt, general secretary

Paul Bridge  
National Official Higher Education  
0207 756 2500  
[pbridge@ucu.org.uk](mailto:pbridge@ucu.org.uk)