



**The Professional Trades Union for Prison,  
Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers**

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## **POA Circular 059/2022**

**For information: England & Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Special Hospitals,  
Private Sector, IRCs**

27<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Dear Colleagues

### **PAY AWARD 2022/23 ENGLAND AND WALES**

The National Executive Committee have now had time to examine and fully understand what is contained within the PSPRB report on the remit group that the POA represent. For many years the POA NEC believed as did our annual conference that the review body simply wasn't fit for purpose and effectively did everything that Government told it to do. There was absolute merit in that assessment at that time due to the fact the Pay Review Body was supposed to be a compensatory mechanism for not having the right to strike and simply did not deliver full stop.

Year on Year POA members were treated with disdain until fresh personnel were appointed to the review body and a new Chair was appointed namely Mr Tim Flesher. Mr Flesher and indeed the other individuals currently on the committee have demonstrated over the last couple of years that they are prepared to challenge Government on their recommendations.

This does not mean that the NEC are satisfied with the recommendations that the Review Body have made this year as it does not in any way shape or form make up for the pay cuts since 2010 that our members have endured. A section of our members has been treated appallingly since Fair and Sustainable was introduced and that is the closed grades. We do not intend to rehearse all the arguments about their treatment or indeed the low wages that were endorsed by previous review bodies as they are well documented for all grades that the POA represent.

The Executive will never accept that Prison Officer grades and Operational Support Grades are paid fairly for the jobs that they do, and we still believe even with this increase it does not make up for the pay cuts of the last decade and we do not believe that it will stop individuals from all grades leaving HMPPS. The NEC believe it will take years to reduce the damage of the past for the service to recover.

Incidentally it appears this Review Body also agrees with us as they quite openly state that pay is still below the median in comparable occupations.

Inflation is currently running at double figures and if predictions are correct inflation could rise to 12% by the end of 2022 with energy price caps also rising significantly in October 2022 and again probably in January 2023. The cost-of-living crisis shows no abatement with rises to petrol, diesel and food stuff in supermarkets running out of control. Interest rates are predicted to rise throughout 2022/23 by the Bank of England and all this will mean that POA members of all grades will continue to suffer financially in this crisis. It will take years of significant pay rises to recover for our members. Had Government, Employer and previous review bodies listened to the POA we would not be in this position but attack after attack came on all public sector workers through pay cuts since 2010.

The POA NEC take no pleasure in stating the above, but had we not given evidence to the Pay Review Body over the last 2 years things would be even worse financially for our members. That is why we were pleased that Annual Conference endorsed our view to give written and oral evidence to the PSPRB going forward. On the whole they ignored Government and Employer evidence as inadequate and although we didn't get everything that we wanted there was at least movement for our members in lower paid grades. A snapshot of what it means for our members is as follows.

- **Band 2 Operational Support Grades on F&S conditions received an increase of £1500 which for many equated to a 12.5% increase. This was offset by market supplements where they were paid.** The Executive intend to consult with our OSG members as to whether this is acceptable or not in a ballot. If it is not acceptable then we will move to a statutory ballot in due course for industrial action up to and including strike action. Let us be absolutely clear the only reason that Government gave our OSG members an increase of double figures is because the POA NEC left the Secretary of State Dominic Raab MP in no doubt that we would move to a statutory ballot if necessary as they did not come under the anti-trade union legislation which of course is the Criminal Justice Public Order Act 1994 section 127 which restricts Prison Officer Grades. Ultimately, we will engage in a ballot of those members to determine what they wish to do. It is crucial if they reject this offer as not good enough that for a statutory ballot to be successful for action then there are thresholds of over 40 per cent to be met for any action to take place.
- **Band 3 F&S were awarded 4% back dated to April 2022 and a £2500 increase (equivalent to £3000 when factoring in the additional unsocial allowance of 3%) effective from 1st September 2022. This is offset by market supplements where they are paid. This means that the amount is consolidated and pensionable. For many this equates to an 18.5% pay rise. There is also restructuring of this grade which delivers an uplift to the starting salary which means many will receive a pay rise equal to 18.5%.** As you know the NEC sanctioned legal action after the Government failed to implement this recommendation in 2019. In our evidence to the

review body, we insisted this was made another recommendation this year. Again, it was the POA NEC that applied pressure on Government to get this rise for our members. We will continue to liaise with our legal team on our legal strategy in relation to the outstanding element of Judicial Review on the equality impact assessment and our application to the European Court of Human Rights.

- **Band 4 and Band 5 F&S grades have also seen a restructuring which will deliver an uplift to the starting salary which equates to a 7.5% rise.**
- **Closed Grades receive a 4% consolidated uplift in pay.** Whilst this is wholly inadequate the NEC believe had we not given evidence to the Review Body then it would have been less.

The NEC could never state these pay rise were adequate for the simple reason your wages have stagnated for years and we will continue to work with the Review Body to increase our members wages and campaign with the employer and Government to get justice for our members. The NEC remain concerned that the erosion of Market Supplements into basic pay will fail to address the issues of recruitment and retention at difficult to recruit and retain sites. Warm words and praise do not put food on the table or pay bills. The NEC would like to make clear that had we the right to strike in England and Wales in relation to Prison Officer Grades then we would be moving to a statutory ballot for strike action but unfortunately, we are shackled by legislation and must work within the framework in which we have, and rest assured we will continue to use all necessary avenues to get pay justice for our hard-working members. Only the POA can achieve that for you as the recognised trade union for the remit group.

**Signed by the NEC members (Attached)**



Mark Fairhurst – National Chair



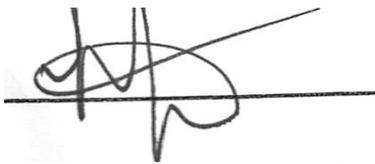
Steve Gillan – General Secretary



Dave Todd – National Vice Chair



Joe Simpson – Deputy General Secretary



Ian Carson - NEC



Jackie Marshall - NEC



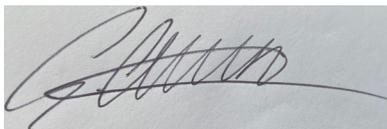
Dave Cook - NEC



Sarah Rigby - NEC



Terry McCarthy – NEC



Geoff Willetts