

## Single Status Action News #3



### Employer's Letter : 28 December 2007

Birmingham Council's New Year message to its loyal workforce came in the form of a letter imposing the New Single Status Contract from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. This happened despite reports from the Birmingham Mail that 16,000 employees have not accepted the contract, out of 23,000 who received the documentation in November.

The letter is only what we expected. They said they would give 12 weeks notice to those who did not accept the contract. The term dismissal and re-engagement is just a legal technical one. You will not lose your job or your continuity of service.

The new contract will take effect in April. But by rejecting it, you have not given your consent to the new contract and can still challenge it legally. We are still taking legal advice alongside all the other unions. Watch this space.

**What do you need to do now ?    Nothing, if you have already rejected the contract.**

**Or send back the form rejecting the contract, if you have not already done so.**

**Don't worry and don't let them frighten you.**

The battle is now just beginning. Our industrial action ballot is now out, with a return date of 25 January 2008. We need a massive YES vote for industrial action.

## VOTE YES For Industrial Action

### Rally

#### Against the New Contracts

**Saturday 12 January**

**12 – 1.30 pm**

**Victoria Square, Birmingham**

The Joint Trade Unions invite you and your family to join us at the rally to protest at the imposition of the new contracts

Speakers include :

Keith Sonnet      Deputy General Secretary  
UNISON

Peter Allinson ,    National Secretary,  
TGWU/Unite

Tony Pye            General Secretary  
Amicus/Unite

#### 'Heartless Employers'

The Birmingham Post editorial on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008, stated 'Council leaders must look at amending the new grading system, or run the risk of being portrayed as heartless employers'. We couldn't agree more.

The editorial called the pay cuts 'simply shocking' and 'cuts on a vicious scale which would certainly throw most families in Birmingham into a spiral of debt and dismay.'

It concludes that :

"It is clear that a decision to squeeze the new pay system into seven grades has in part been responsible for the huge losses being suffered by some employees. The cost of extending the framework by a further five grades would be an additional £12million a year to the public purse, but would significantly reduce the number of people whose wages are to be cut."

## Appeal Guidance

The Council has buckled to pressure from thousands of Freedom of Information requests and recognised that they have to provide information on the job evaluation for those considering appealing. They now say they will provide information on the JE process for appeals. We believe that you should formally request :

- Details of all posts which have been matched to the same post your job has been matched to. This should include the post title and work location. This is needed to enable you to join together to form collective appeals if you wish.
- The questionnaires, JE records, scores and factor levels for all posts which were job evaluated for your matched posts. The common or 'benchmark' jobs will have had several (around 5% of post holders) sample posts job evaluated. The council has selected from these different scores a representative or 'average' one for your job. You need to see all the JE scores and questionnaires to be certain this 'average' is a reasonable one.

Let us know if this information is being refused.

## Did You Know – The Winners ???

Here is a table of the Top Ten winning jobs in the city council. In all, there are just under 19,000 employees who are gainers – or 'green circles'. The Top Ten jobs make up around 80% of all winners. But a closer look reveals that all is not as it seems.

Job ID	Job Title	Green Circles (People)	Score	Proposed Grade	Cumulative Total
OE0075B	LUNCHTIME SUPERVISOR	4,893			26%
CE0333BV	TEACHING ASSISTANT	3,540			44%
OE0005B	GENERAL ASSISTANT	1,704	309	GR1	53%
OE0189B	CLEANER	1,594	286	GR1	62%
CS0079B	HOME CARE ASSISTANT	1,091	381	GR2	68%
CS0088B	CARE ASSISTANT	873	381	GR2	72%
OE0095B	CLEANER IN CHARGE	450	367	GR2	75%
OL0188B	SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL WARDEN	331	342	GR2	76%
OL0892BV	REFUSE COLLECTION LOADER QUALIFIED	305			78%
OL0165B	STREET CLEANSING - BEATSWEeper	255			79%

The first two winners are school based staff. The Council have not released the scores and grade yet, so we are required to maintain the confidentiality. We doubt that the increases will be significant.

The General Assistants (in kitchens) and Cleaners are not really winners. They are being put on Grade 1, so how can they be winners ? We understand they are just moving by a few pounds a year from pay level below the national pay spine on to a spine point. That should happen anyway.

Home Carers and Care Assistants might be gaining but only a small part of what they should. As low paid manual workers, they go onto the bottom point of grade 2, not at the top where the points they earn should put them. They are being denied an increase of around £3,000 per year. Similarly Cleaners in Charge are short-changed by around £1,500 per year.

The Refuse Collector Loaders and Street Cleansing – Beatsweeper scores and grades have also been held back by the city council. No contracts have been offered at present as the council is awaiting the outcome of some legal cases expected in February. Nevertheless, they are shown as 'green circles' by the council as their basic pay is expected to go up. They will however lose their bonus payments making them heavy losers over all.

Now you know the Council is reluctant to release information about the so-called winners?.

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