

P/3/14
21 February 2014

PAY TALKS UPDATE

Following the national employer representatives cancelling last week's pay negotiations and the acrimonious exchange of correspondence that followed, GMB and Unison officials met with the employers today to try to find a way forward.

We were told that the employer representatives have a 1% pay remit. We were also told that any increase to the National Minimum Wage would be deducted from that 1% pay remit meaning that the offer would be less than 1%. This much we had already worked out for ourselves but today the employers also said that their position was not negotiable. So when we asked for a formal negotiating meeting they said there was no point. Instead they intend to wait until the government announces the new National Minimum Wage level, deduct that from their 1% pot, then use the balance to make a national pay offer which will be take it or leave it.

The joint trade unions are meeting next Wednesday to decide our response to the employers position. My own opinion is that councils, council leaders and their representatives who negotiate on their behalf have completely lost the plot. They have forgotten that their staff have taken the brunt of all the cuts through job losses, pay freezes and attacks on pensions and conditions. They have forgotten that it is the staff, not them, who face and support local communities every day. They have forgotten that being fair to their staff should be equally as important as being fair to those communities and, indeed, staff are part of those communities!

So I hope that at the meeting on Wednesday the joint unions will agree a very strong line to show the employers that we are not prepared to see staff being used as numbers to balance the budget, but to be valued and respected for the difficult job you all do day in and day out.

I will keep you informed.

Brian Strutton

Brian Strutton
National Secretary - Public Services Section

GMB at www.gmb.org.uk/join