

Information Released under Freedom of Information Act

Subject: Companies House information regarding Unions and labour related pay / benefits

Date Released: 26 March 2009

Summary of request: Request for information on unions and labour related pay / benefits

Information released:

The response to the questions raised is attached:

1. Name of unions which are signatories to main collective agreement covering pay and conditions.

Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)

160 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN.

2. Number of employees covered by the agreements.

Financial Year 2007/08 – 1175 employees equating to 1074 full time equivalent of which nearly 300, work reduced hours.

3. Types of staff covered.

Posts are graded using a job evaluation methodology developed for the Civil Service. We operate within a formal grading structure across multi disciplinary functions such as:

- Clerical - generalist
- Management - generalist
- IT
- Legal
- Procurement
- Finance
- Internal Audit
- Marketing
- HR
- Health & Safety
- Building and Environment

4. Copy of latest pay settlement.

See Pay Settlement document.

5. Lists of trades and current pay rates.

See Pay Settlement document.

6. Arrangements for progression through grading structure.

All Bands have 4 pay points, excepting Band A which has 3. Progression from minimum to maximum is based on a single step progression each August, if performance is satisfactory.

7. Number of hours worked per week/year.

Full time employees work the following hours:

- National: Conditioned hours of employment = 42 hours, includes paid lunch break.
- London: Conditioned hours of employment = 41 hours, includes paid lunch break.

As briefly mentioned in Point 2 – we have around 300 employees who work reduced hours covering over 100 working patterns.

8. Holiday entitlements, including service related holidays.

Annual leave entitlement is 30 days on entry. There is also an additional entitlement of a 'one-off' 5 days annual leave on completion of 20 and 40 years service. Up to 10 days can be carried forward.

Additional Public/Privilege holidays account for a further 10 ½ days entitlement.

9. Maternity leave and pay entitlement.

An employee is entitled to take a maximum of 52 weeks maternity leave in total. There are three different types of maternity leave:

- **Ordinary Maternity Leave (Statutory maternity leave)**

All pregnant employees are entitled to a period of 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave. This right to maternity leave applies regardless of an employee's length of service.

- **Compulsory Maternity Leave**

This is a period of two weeks immediately after giving birth during which the woman is not permitted to work. This is part of the ordinary maternity leave period, not additional to it.

- **Additional Maternity Leave**

Employees who have completed 26 weeks continuous employment by the beginning of the 14th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) are entitled to 13 weeks additional maternity leave paid at the rate of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). They are also entitled to an extra 13 weeks leave which is unpaid.

If an employee does not qualify for SMP they can have a maximum of 26 weeks unpaid leave. Please note additional maternity leave begins at the end of ordinary maternity leave.

There are three different types of maternity pay these are dependant on an employees qualifying length of service:

- **Companies House Contractual Maternity Pay** - Companies House contractual maternity pay is a Civil Service Provision, and is paid at your full rate of pay for the 26 weeks of Ordinary Maternity Leave. During this period you will continue to benefit from all your terms and conditions of employment as if you were still at work. To qualify for contractual Maternity pay you will need to: Have worked for a continuous period of 1 year within Companies House or the civil service ending with the qualifying week (this is the 5th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) when you start your maternity leave. If you qualify for Companies House Contractual Maternity Pay you will also qualify for an extra 13 weeks SMP paid at a rate of £117.18. A further 13 weeks leave is also available which is unpaid.

When can I take Paid Maternity Leave? You can choose to begin your paid maternity leave at any time from 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth (EWC).

- **Statutory Maternity Pay** - is a legal provision applying to working women who meet the eligibility criteria. Statutory Maternity Pay is paid for the full 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave, and a further 13 weeks will be paid at additional maternity leave

Statutory Maternity Pay is paid for 39 weeks:

- First 6 weeks – 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings
- Remaining 33 weeks – £117.18 a week or 90% of the woman's weekly earnings if this is less than £117.18 per week.

How do I qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay? To qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay you must:

- Have been employed as a Civil Servant for 26 weeks by the end 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) – the qualifying week
- Have average weekly earnings in the qualifying period (which is the period of eight weeks running into the qualifying week).
- Give at least 28 days written notice of the date you intend to stop work
- Have provided written confirmation of your pregnancy by the time you start your maternity leave.

Annual Leave is accrued for the period of both ordinary and additional maternity leave. Annual leave earned, if you qualify for Companies House Contractual Maternity Pay, may be anticipated and taken before you begin your maternity leave together with any annual leave you may have already earned. You might, for example, wish to use your annual leave to delay the actual start of your paid maternity leave. However, you should be aware that if you subsequently resign and do not return for a minimum of one calendar month following your maternity leave, Companies House may recover the cash of any anticipated leave. Alternatively, you may take outstanding annual leave after your maternity leave. It must directly follow a period of Paid Maternity, Statutory Maternity Pay or Unpaid Maternity whichever is the latter. It cannot be taken between any of these categories. Once you have started a period of annual leave then you are considered to have returned to work and your maternity leave is finished.

10. Maternity support leave and pay entitlement.

Time off for antenatal care is a statutory right.

All pregnant employees are entitled to reasonable time off for antenatal care. All time off for antenatal care is paid at the employee's normal rate of pay.

Antenatal care may include relaxation and parent craft classes, as well as medical examinations. These rights apply regardless of the employee's length of service and type of contract.

11. Parental leave and pay entitlement.

To qualify for parental leave, an employee must have at least one year's continuous service with Companies House from the date parental leave is due to commence and must:

- Be the parent (named on the birth certificate) of a child who is under the age of 5, or a disabled child under the age of 18
- Has adopted, a child under the age of 18
- Has acquired formal parental responsibility (as stated in the children's act 1989) for a child who is under five years old
- Parents of a disabled child will be able to use their leave up until the child's 18th birthday, under the legislation whether a child is disabled or not, is determined by whether a child is entitled to disability living allowance.

An employee who qualifies for parental leave is entitled to take a total of 13 weeks unpaid leave in respect of each individual child. Therefore where an employee has more than one child they will be entitled to 13 weeks in respect of each child. (Who fall within the eligibility criteria stated above).

Anyone wishing to take a period of parental leave will need to give at least 21 days notice to their line manager stating the dates on which the period of parental leave is to begin and end.

Taking leave

- Leave can be taken in blocks of a week
- More than one week at a time can be taken up to a limit of four weeks in a year
- Those working part time are entitled to parental leave on the same basis but adjusted where necessary to reflect their working pattern. For example an employee who works Monday to Wednesday should note that these three days will class as one weeks leave.

Partners enjoy a limited paid statutory right to paternity. The eligibility factors are: Continuous employment for 26 weeks ending with 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC).

Partners are entitled to take 10 days paid paternity leave. This need not necessarily be taken at the time of birth but may be taken during the weeks following the birth or adoption of the child if this is more helpful to the family. The line manager should give authorisation inform Human Resources and make a record on the annual leave card.

Need to notify your line manager of the expected date of childbirth at least 28 days prior to the event.

Paternity leave can start from:

- The date of the baby's birth or any day of the week following the birth.
- Either – 56 days from actual birth, or if the child is born early, within the period starting from the birth up to 56 days after the first day of the week in which the child was expected.

Paternity Pay - Providing the eligibility criteria are met you will receive full pay for the 10 days you are on Paternity Leave.

12. Adoption leave and pay entitlement.

To qualify for adoption leave an employee must:

- Be newly-matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency, and
- Have worked continuously for Companies House for 26 weeks leading into the week in which they are notified of the match with a child for adoption.

There are two types of adoption leave:

- Ordinary Adoption Leave (26 weeks paid leave), and
- Additional Adoption Leave (26 weeks unpaid leave).

Employees who meet the eligibility criteria above may take 26 weeks Ordinary Adoption Leave, immediately followed by 26 weeks Additional Adoption Leave, giving a maximum of 52 weeks leave. There is no change to entitlement for additional adoption leave since currently adopters who qualify for ordinary adoption leave also qualify for additional adoption leave.

During ordinary adoption leave adopters will either be entitled to Companies House contractual adoption pay or statutory adoption pay depending on your length of service.

Companies House Contractual Adoption Pay - This is a Civil Service provision and it consists of 26 weeks adoption leave at your full rate of pay. To qualify for this provision you will need to have worked for Companies House/ as a Civil Servant for a continuous period of 1 year.

Statutory Adoption Pay - The statutory adoption pay rate is currently £117.18 per week or 90% of the person's average weekly earnings if this is less than £117.18 a week.

To qualify for statutory adoption pay you will need to:

- Have been continually employed by Companies House/ as a Civil Servant for 26 weeks
- You must have normal weekly earnings that are at least equivalent to the lower earnings limit for National Insurance purposes, which is currently £90 per week.

13. Sickness absence entitlement

The following provides information on Companies House's absence trigger points.

Trigger Points for full-time staff working 5 days (Mon-Fri)/shifts per week.

- (a) More than 14 days self-certified absence in any period of 12 months

- (b) More than 22 days in total absence (medical certified and self-certified)
- (c) More than 6 occasions in the preceding 12 months
- (d) More than 42 days total absence in the preceding 24 months
- (e) More than 60 days total absence in the preceding 36 months

Trigger Points for part-time staff working less than 5 days/shifts per week. NB. Verbal warnings should be considered before trigger points are reached though written warnings should not be issued until the trigger points have been exceeded.

Number of Days/Shifts Worked	Number of occasions in preceding months	Number of days self-certified sick absence in any 12 month period	Number of days medically certified and self-certified absence in preceding period of:		
			12 months	24 months	36 months
4	5	12	18	34	48
3	4	9	14	26	36
2	3	6	9	17	24
1	3	3	5	9	12

Probationary period trigger points

Trigger Points for full-time staff working 5 days (Mon-Fri)/shifts per week

- 6 days self-certified or 10 days combined self and medically certified absence at any stage during the first 24 weeks of the probationary period.
- 12 days self-certified or 20 days combined self and medically certified absence at any stage during the first 48 weeks of the probationary period.
- 14 days self-certified or 22 days combined self and medically certified absence during the probationary period.
- 6 occasions in any 12 month period.

It should be noted that during a probationary period absence records can become excessive on a pro rata basis.

Absences which exceed (pro rata'd for part time staff):

- a total of 14 days self certified sickness absence in any 12 month period
- 6 occasions in any period of 12 months
- a combination of self certified and/or medically certified sickness absence of 22 days in the previous 12 month period
- 42 days during the previous 24 months
- 60 days in the during the previous 36 months

Please note that Weekends, Bank Holidays and Privilege Days occurring within the absence are included in the calculation of sickness.

COMPANIES HOUSE

PAY OFFER

1 August 2008



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Introduction

This document sets out the details of the Companies House pay offer for the period – 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2009 for employees on Companies House terms and conditions and below the Senior Civil Service.

Pay Offer - Summary

What it means to you

The offer results in an increase to our pay bill of 3.68%, but if we also take into account the monies accumulated from previous years, used to fund the Performance Award Scheme (0.9%) and the Corporate Bonus (5% for achievement of targets and a further 5% if we achieve maximum efficiency savings) then there is scope for payment of a higher percentage figure.

Under this offer around 88% of staff would see a consolidated increase in their salary of 2%, the basic award, and the remainder, as they are still progressing up the pay scales, having higher variable consolidated increases.

Additionally, if the award, following the 2% basic increase is less than £350 for a full time employee, then there will be a 'top up' one-off non consolidated payment to make up the difference. This payment will only impact on Band A National employees on target rate (maximum).

Pro rate'd means that if you do not work full time then your award will reflect the hours that you work.

A further £271 one-off non-consolidated flat rate pro rate'd payment will be made to employees who are on or above the target rate (maximum).

The overall pay offer we believe represents a good offer in the current financial climate.

Pay Offer - Detail

The main elements of the pay offer are as follows:

Basic Award

Pay points SR2, SR3 and Target Rate (TR) – the maximum have been increased by 2%.

Minimums (SR1s)

The Band A National minimum rate has been increased by 4.68% and a step removed. This increase ensures that we remain well ahead of the National Minimum Wage of £5.73 per hour.

Band A London minimum has been increased by 4.04% and as with National Band A, a step has been removed.

Variable increases, as well as some reductions, to minimums have been applied to the other grade Bands as a direct result of closing the gap between pay bands.

IT and London Premiums

In both cases the previous premiums for the IT and London pay scales with a fixed differential above the National pay scales of £4,450 and £4,000 have now been incorporated into respective pay scales.

Progression

The current arrangements for pay progression e.g. from SR2 to SR3 have been maintained. By retaining this method of progression the expectations of those employees who are still progressing up the pay scales are met.

Progression increases for those still moving towards target rate (maximum) will result in variable consolidated increases greater than the basic award increase.

Minimum Award

As previously mentioned this payment should only impact on Band A National employees on or above target rate (maximum).

For example, in the case of a full time Band A National employee on target rate (maximum) the basic consolidated 2% award is worth £285. As this is less than the full time minimum award, the £65 difference (£350 - £285), will be paid as a one-off non consolidated payment, making a total award of £350.

If you do not work full time then your award will be less to reflect the hours you work.

Additional Non Consolidated Payment

The pay offer also includes an additional one-off non consolidated pro rate'd payment of £271 for those who are on or above the target rate (maximum) because we could not provide consolidated increases to those on or over the target rate (maximum) of more than 2%.

The rationale for only making payment to those at or above target rate (maximum) is that all those who are still progressing will receive greater consolidated awards than those on or above target rate (maximum).

If you do not work full time then your award will be less to reflect the hours you work.

Increase in IT On-Call Allowance

This payment will be increased by 2.0% from 1 August 2008 so that:

- Weekday rate increases from £44.26 to £45.15; and
- Weekend rate increases from £88.52 to £90.30

Pay Band Salary Structure

Retention of 4 pay points for each grade Band excepting Band A that will be reduced to 3 pay points effective from 1 August 2008.

This means that movement from minimum to target rate (maximum) can be achieved in 3 years and only 2 years for Band A employees.

Pay on Promotion

On promotion to the next higher Band an employee would move to whichever is the greater of the minimum of the higher Band or a 10% flat rate increase and also from 1 August they would move to the next higher pay point level.

If promotion occurs following continuous temporary cover then the date that the temporary cover commenced will be deemed the 'date of promotion'.

Annual Leave

No increase in the current level of annual leave of 30 days on entry.

Retirement Award

Increase in retirement award on completion of 10 or more years' service from £400 to £500 effective from 1 August 2008.

Long service award

No change in the current arrangements which are:

- One-off additional week's paid leave to remain at 20 years service.
- Additional one-off additional week's paid leave for 40 years service.

The additional award will take full account of 'working patterns' throughout the period of service.

The additional leave must be taken within 3 years of eligibility and cannot be redeemed for a pay equivalent.

Incentives and Performance Rewards

Companies House will continue to operate a comprehensive incentive scheme for its employees. The incentive scheme is made up of the following components:

- CH Corporate Bonus; and
- Performance Award Scheme – made up of the;
 - Exemplar Award (EA)
 - Directorate/Group Award
 - CH Values Unsung Heroes
 - Chief Executive Award

The value of the incentive scheme will remain at the same percentage levels as currently operated. In this way the value reflects the pay bill. The payments for both will continue to be non-pensionable and non-consolidated.

Additional Issues that fall outside of the scope of pay negotiations

In negotiations with the trade union Companies House has agreed to review its:

- Carers Policy; and
- Temporary Cover Policy

Although not included in the pay negotiations we intend to commence a comprehensive review of our 'Travel and Subsistence' policies.

Q & As to provide further clarification

The following provides answers to some common questions that we think employees might ask.

Why does the pay award only cover 1 year?

Companies House has consecutively implemented 3 multiyear deals for 2, 3 and 3 year periods. This has enabled us to restructure our pay scales to ensure that all grade Bands have an equal opportunity, in a reasonable time frame, to move from minimum to target rate, the maximum.

We now need to reassess our systems and pay and reward structures to ensure that they meet the needs of our business. For this reason it was not possible to review all the elements within a short timeframe and to fully consult with stakeholders; so it was agreed that we would seek to secure a one year deal.

We intend to undertake a full review and use the information to help us develop our future systems and pay and reward strategy.

Why is the pay award late?

The pay awards for 2006 and 2007 were paid on time; but regrettably the 2008 pay award is late, despite our best efforts, and for reasons outside of our control. Whilst detailed planning work is undertaken so that a pay award can be made on time, circumstances can prevent this. This year there were some delays in getting approval of our pay remit. We recognise that this is not a satisfactory situation and we will be working to implement a more timely process in the future.

Why haven't the target rates been increased to reflect inflation?

We were unable to increase our target rates (maximums) above the basic award as defined within the pay remit guidelines.

However, the main drivers for the pay award are still to enable us to recruit, retain and motivate staff whilst taking account of the wider financial environment and the Departments budgetary pressures. We have compared our pay scales in relation to wider employment markets and we are well placed and this is supported by our extremely low turnover rate. Our pay progression structure provides for rapid progression across all Bands, unlike other comparators where progression can take many more years, and might still only get you to an interim point below the maximum.

Annex A – Examples of what this offer means to you

The following provides some examples of full time employee movement on the National pay scale to help in understanding what this pay offer means to you. If you work part time then your award will be less to reflect the hours that you work.

- Band A currently on £12,937 (SR2) would move to £13,870 (SR3) – a £933 consolidated increase equivalent to a 7.21% rise.
- Band A currently on £14,260 (TR) would move to £14,545 (TR) – a £285 consolidated increase equivalent to 2.0%, the basic award. As the amount is less than the £350 minimum award, a further £65 one-off non consolidated amount will be paid. On top of this an additional £271 one-off non consolidated amount is payable as the employee is on the target rate (maximum).
The overall value of the award is £621 which is equivalent to a 4.36% increase.
- Band B currently on £16,482 (SR3) would move to £18,323 (TR) – a £1,841 increase equivalent to a 11.17% rise.
- Band B currently on £17,964 (TR) would move to £18,323 (TR) – a £359 consolidated increase equivalent to 2.0%, the basic award. On top of this an additional £271 one-off non consolidated amount is payable as the employee is on the target rate (maximum).
The overall value of the award is £630 which is equivalent to a 3.51% increase.
- Band C currently on £18,053 (SR1) would move to £19,371 (SR2) – a £1,318 consolidated increase equivalent to a 7.3% rise.
- Band D currently on £30,313 (TR) would move to £30,919 (TR) – a £606 increase equivalent to 2.0%, the basic award. On top of this an additional £271 one-off non consolidated amount is payable as the employee is on the target rate (maximum).
The overall value of the award is £877 which is equivalent to a 2.89% increase.

Annex B – CH 2008 Pay Scales

National

National	Pay Point		2007	2008
Band A	Minimum	SR1	£12,606	
		SR2	£12,937	£13,196
		SR3	£13,598	£13,870
	Maximum	TR	£14,260	£14,545
Band B	Minimum	SR1	£14,260	£14,545
		SR2	£15,001	£15,301
		SR3	£16,482	£16,812
	Maximum	TR	£17,964	£18,323
Band C	Minimum	SR1	£18,053	£18,323
		SR2	£18,991	£19,371
		SR3	£20,866	£21,283
	Maximum	TR	£22,742	£23,197
Band D	Minimum	SR1	£24,063	£23,197
		SR2	£25,313	£25,819
		SR3	£27,813	£28,369
	Maximum	TR	£30,313	£30,919
Band E	Minimum	SR1	£30,313	£30,919
		SR2	£31,888	£32,526
		SR3	£35,037	£35,738
	Maximum	TR	£38,186	£38,950
Band F	Minimum	SR1	£38,186	£38,950
		SR2	£40,317	£41,123
		SR3	£44,579	£45,471
	Maximum	TR	£48,842	£49,819
Band G	Minimum	SR1	£48,103	£49,819
		SR2	£50,602	£51,614
		SR3	£55,599	£56,711
	Maximum	TR	£60,596	£61,808

C1 Accountant

Accountant	Pay Point		2007	2008
Acc Band C1	Minimum	SR1	£21,058	£21,283
		SR2	£21,996	£22,436
		SR3	£23,871	£24,348
	Maximum	TR	£25,989	£26,509

IT

IT	Pay Point		2007	2008
Band C IT	Minimum	SR1	£22,503	£22,953
		SR2	£23,441	£23,910
		SR3	£25,316	£25,822
	Maximum	TR	£27,192	£27,736
Band C1 IT	Minimum	SR1	£25,508	£25,822
		SR2	£26,446	£26,975
		SR3	£28,321	£28,887
	Maximum	TR	£30,439	£31,048
Band D IT	Minimum	SR1	£28,513	£27,736
		SR2	£29,763	£30,358
		SR3	£32,263	£32,908
	Maximum	TR	£34,763	£35,458
Band E IT	Minimum	SR1	£34,763	£35,458
		SR2	£36,338	£37,065
		SR3	£39,487	£40,277
	Maximum	TR	£42,636	£43,489

London

London	Pay Point		2007	2008
Band A	Minimum	SR1	£16,606	
		SR2	£16,937	£17,276
		SR3	£17,598	£17,950
	Maximum	TR	£18,260	£18,625
Band B	Minimum	SR1	£18,260	£18,625
		SR2	£19,001	£19,381
		SR3	£20,482	£20,892
	Maximum	TR	£21,964	£22,403
Band C	Minimum	SR1	£22,053	£22,403
		SR2	£22,991	£23,451
		SR3	£24,866	£25,363
	Maximum	TR	£26,742	£27,277
Band D	Minimum	SR1	£28,063	£27,277
		SR2	£29,313	£29,899
		SR3	£31,813	£32,449
	Maximum	TR	£34,313	£34,999