



**UNISON response to  
TBG Flex Reward  
Strategy  
May 2017**

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## **Introduction**

As noted in the Barnet Group Board paper, Barnet UNISON is opposed to the detrimental alteration of Terms and Conditions for new staff within the Barnet Group.

UNISON believes that the intention to impose inferior Terms and Conditions within the Barnet Group through TBG Flex will be disadvantageous, creating a divided workforce and which will ultimately be counter-productive to the Barnet Group's intention of engendering a productive and equal working environment and contradicts the stated guiding value of "One Team".

TBG Flex represents a retrograde step with the introduction of two tier workforce within the Barnet Group and will promote and exacerbate current staff recruitment and retention difficulties.

There is a real concern that the Barnet Groups stated objective of an appropriate Work/Life balance for all staff, as espoused in the Barnet Group Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be vitiated.

We also have serious concerns with respect to the fairness of the TBG Flex scheme both in terms of the description of the way it should operate and in comparison with the workforces on Barnet Homes terms and conditions and in YCB. We remain unconfident this two-tier approach is Equal Pay proof.

## **Pay**

The TBG Reward strategy states:

Pay will be regularly reviewed (at least annually); however, there will be no guaranteed increases. Pay increases will be dependent upon individual performance and business performance and affordability.

Individual performance against agreed objectives (as defined through the performance management process) will determine the level of any pay increase.

UNISON would like to point out that this statement seems to rule out any cost of living increases, which is a retrograde step.

There is concern that performance management is properly utilised to recognise individuals' contribution and appropriate reward is fairly distributed.

If there is a conflict resulting from the proposed Strategy regarding pay, recognition needs to be given to the role UNISON performs in achieving a beneficial outcome for our members and the business. This is not currently indicated as part of the Strategy.

There needs to be a very clear and transparent policy underpinning this scheme and a robust way of reviewing its application in order to ensure fairness is maintained.

## **The Grading Framework**

The TBG Reward strategy states:

HR owns the use of the methodology for job evaluations in the business and is responsible for evaluating jobs to ensure consistency. Jobs will only be re-evaluated in response to requests from line management based on an updated job description reviewed against organisation design principles and including details of how the job might have changed. The job is then evaluated and allocated to a grade based upon the points score achieved using the job evaluation scheme.

It should be noted that the evaluation process does not involve an assessment of the individual job holder or their performance in any way. The focus is on the job and the level of work that it is being asked to undertake. An individual's performance is assessed through the performance management process.

There does not seem to be any mention of the active role UNISON performs in reaching an agreed evaluation with HR.

It is UNISON's position that recognition of our participation during the process should be formalized in the Strategy.

## **Terms and Conditions**

As previously stated, UNISON has grave concerns that the retrograde Terms and Conditions offered in TBG Flex will have a significant impact on Recruitment and Retention and a detrimental effect on staff morale and Work/Life balance.

**Hours of Work** - 37.5FTE for non-managers. Managers may be required to work additional hours above this for proper performance of duties. Working patterns will be determined locally with an option to include weekends and extended hours opening where required.

UNISON is concerned with the above statement.

If allotted work is not completed within the increased hours TBG staff will be contracted to, expectations of what is achievable within that time may need to be more realistically adjusted, rather than there being an expectation for Managers to work above their contracted hours.

**Annual Leave** - For posts graded up to and including 9 Small leave entitlement is 23 days per year. This will increase to 24 days after two years complete years of service and 25 days after three years.

For posts graded at 9 Big and above leave entitlement is 25 days per year. This will increase to 27 days after two complete years of service and 30 days after three years.

Part time staff will get a pro-rata entitlement. Bank holidays are in addition to this, or where an employee is required to work on a bank holiday they will be entitled to time off in lieu. There may be specific jobs where there is variation from this for, in which case this will be made clear to any candidates.

UNISON would like to point out that because a staff member has a less well paid job, it does not mean that they need less of a break to recover from the demands of their working career.

In many cases, the less well paid are generally in more manual and frontline, physically demanding services, which have a greater need for increased Annual Leave for rest and recuperation purposes.

There is the financial argument. Managers or Directors are compensated with higher remuneration and it poses an inherently increased cost to the Business for higher Annual Leave entitlement than some of the more physically demanding roles.

UNISON position is that ALL employees in TBG Flex should benefit from 30 Days Annual Leave a year. This would be the cheapest way to mitigate some of the other, more inferior Terms and Conditions on offer in TBG Flex.

## **Sick Pay**

During 1st year service SSP rules no pay for 1st three days - then Statutory pay £87.55 for up to 28 week. After 1 year service 2 months full pay will be paid from day 1 of any sickness then SSP after 2 months' sick pay has been exhausted.

UNISONs position is that the provision of sick pay as detailed above is neither workable nor reasonable.

Consideration needs to be given to life changing illnesses and conditions that are covered by the Equalities Act 2010 – In such cases, would The Barnet Group want to be the type of employer that would increase staff anxiety and difficulty by only granting 2 months sick leave?

If so, it seems to be in contradiction to accomplishing the stated aims and objectives of the Barnet Group Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

## **Risks**

- Administration costs in relation to two different reward strategies/holiday entitlement/Terms and Conditions
- Administration costs of two different pension schemes
- Recruitment of new staff
- Retention of new staff
- Health and Wellbeing of new staff
- A two tier workforce
- Staff morale
- Industrial unrest due to no cost of living increase
- Industrial unrest due to perceived unfairness of performance related pay strategy
- The Barnet Group no longer being seen as a 'good' employer

## **Recommendations**

1. To apply Annual cost of living increase to pay
2. Transparent policy underpinning performance related pay scheme and a robust way of reviewing its application and appealing outcomes in order to ensure fairness is maintained
3. UNISON recognition in pay bargaining
4. UNISON participation in Job Evaluation
5. 30 Days Annual Leave for all TBG Flex employees
6. Sick Leave to be reinstated to current Local Government entitlement

UNISON would ask the Barnet Group Board to reconsider the need to take the retrograde step of slashing Terms and Conditions for new staff within our business.

UNISON believes that the Barnet Group should reinstate Local Government Terms and Conditions and Pension Scheme for all staff.

