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Tim Flesher
Prison Service Pay Review Body
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22 March 2022

Dear Tim,

PRISON SERVICE PAY AWARD 2021/22

I am grateful to you and Judith for meeting me on 4 February to discuss the 2021 pay round and the grading review.

I am writing to inform you that NIPS Management was unable to reach an agreed pay settlement with the Staff Associations in respect of 2021 pay.

Negotiations with the PGA were concluded before Christmas, and whilst they were unable to endorse the pay proposals, they noted our intention to make payments within this financial year.

While the POA did not meet Management until February 2022, the Area Committee put forward a counter-proposal and gave an undertaking to endorse the pay offer if it was tabled through a ballot. I received approval from the Justice Minister and Finance Minister to offer this on the basis it led to an agreed settlement. Local committees did not follow through on their agreed position, and wrote to members rejecting the award.

Following further deliberation the POA Chair wrote to his members prior to a ballot being launched. The POA balloted members without actively supporting the agreed position, and the majority of those who voted then rejected the pay proposals.

I have therefore taken the decision to proceed with implementation of a 12 month deal as set out in the attached circular which has now issued to staff. I am pleased that I have received agreement to proceed with substantial improvements to the CPO, NCO, and PCO pay scales. This is a very positive development for these staff.

Unfortunately, as a result of the ballot, we cannot move to an eight point scale for CPOs and it will take longer for all staff in this grade to reach the new maximum of £32,629. Terms and conditions changes cannot now be made; CPO staff on the minimum cannot progress ahead of accreditation, and the new grade within PECCS cannot be created which would have introduced a new band minimum of £33,350.



The purpose of this letter is to ask you to note the outcome in relation to the 2021 pay award.

I think it is important to move forward and look forward to the involvement of the Prison Service Pay Review Body in relation to 2022 pay. I believe this will be extremely challenging given the affordability position for the Department of Justice which will impact on the recommendations.

There are still a small number of job descriptions overdue for return, but Governors have been asked to ensure their completion so that the grading review can be brought to a conclusion in May.

An activation letter will be issued in due course and I would be grateful if OME officials could liaise with NIPS over the timetable for this process.

Yours sincerely,

RONNIE ARMOUR
Director General