



NEWSLETTER 53

6 FEBRUARY 2007

Scotland for information only

NEWSFLASH!

Draft Redundancy and Efficiency Provisions Changed

As branches know, the proposals in relation to redundancy and efficiency in the draft Regulations were a major shock for everyone – not having been raised before in the current round of negotiations. We made it very clear straight away to the Local Government Employers (LGE), the Local Government Association (LGA), civil servants and the Minister, Phil Woolas, that they were totally unacceptable to us.

Following further negotiations and lobbying, the DCLG produced revised draft Regulations on redundancy and efficiency on 2 February. They say that Regulation 11 has been redrafted. Providing the redundancy or efficiency retirement is lawful or objectively justified and meets the 'age test', it now says that LGPS members dismissed on redundancy or efficiency will **“be entitled to immediate payment of retirement pension without reduction”**. Existing members must be age 50 if they are dismissed before 31 March 2010, after that date it is age 55 for all members.

This is welcome news. UNISON is seeking clarification as to how objective justification and the 'age test' will be applied. Branches will receive guidance before the new scheme takes effect.

LGPS Draft Regulations - Regional briefings completed

Regional briefings on the DCLG's proposals for the new LGPS from 2008 have now all taken place. These briefings have been very well attended and saw lively discussions on the draft Regulations. Regions were asked to hold meetings of the LGPS Service Groups following the briefings to consult on the current draft Regulations. They have now fed back responses from them to the NEC Service Group Liaison LGPS Strike Committee, which oversees the LGPS Campaign.

Service Groups were asked to respond to the following:

- Members overall reactions to the draft Regulations
- Elements of the new scheme which are welcomed or unacceptable
- Likely support for industrial action if the proposals are unamended and/or if we secure improvements
- The type of industrial action members would be prepared to take if it proves necessary.

The NEC's Service Group Liaison Committee will meet on 7 February to consider the responses to the consultation exercise, followed by meetings of the Service Groups during the week. These meetings will consider how to progress decisions taken by the Service Group Liaison Committee and the latest news from the negotiations and the Joint Trade Union Side, which will meet on 6 February. A special Campaign News will be issued to inform members of the outcome of these key meetings.

LGPS 'Ready Reckoner' is ready!

UNISON has now produced an on-line ready reckoner for members with our actuaries, AON, so that they can see what impact the draft Regulations as they stand would have on their personal pension. This will be ready for use by next week. Watch the UNISON Pensions website for details of how members can access it.

Special Local Government Conference on the LGPS

Just a quick reminder that the Special Local Government Service Group Conference will be held at **1.00 pm on Tuesday 6 March 2007** at Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, London N22 4AY. The sole purpose of the conference is to consider the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Please make sure that your branch has registered by 12 February for the Special Local Government Conference so that your views are reflected in this hugely important debate about the future of your pension scheme. (Branches should contact us on 020 7551 1326 if you have mislaid your pink registration form).

Recruitment

As we approach the crunch time in our negotiations on the LGPS it is vital that we encourage non union members to join UNISON. There really is strength in numbers and whilst we are working tirelessly for a negotiated settlement we have to be prepared for industrial action. This means in every workplace we have to build union density. Union density counts for everything when we are negotiating with Government and employers on issues such as pay and pensions.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS)

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LGPS member? What you should do now....

- Make sure you've got UNISON's new leaflet on the draft Regulations so that you know what's in them and what UNISON and the other unions think of them
- Give copies to your workmates and non-members too
- Get non-members in your workplace to sign up to UNISON
- Log on to the UNISON website www.unison.org.uk/pensions for a more detailed briefing on the new proposals – “The New LGPS and You”
- Discuss it in your workplace
- Find out about the LGPS campaign activities in your branch ring UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845 for your branch details if you don't have them
- A Special Local Government Service Group Conference on the LGPS will be held at 1.00 pm on Tuesday, 6 March 2007 to consider the Local Government Pension Scheme
- The deadline for registration for the Special Local Government Conference is 12 February. Contact your UNISON branch now if you are interested in attending
- Make sure your branch has got your correct details in preparation for a consultation ballow on the proposals or further industrial action