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UK Staff Bargaining Perspectives: HE Employers' View

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UK staff bargaining perspectives: HE employers’ view

Helen Fairfoul
Deputy Chief Executive

Consultation
Promoting equality Representation
Professional advice Research
Lobbying Pay modernisation
Pensions Health and safety
Negotiation
Universities & Colleges Employers Association

What we do:

• Employment legislation and practice:
  – Information and advice in a UK HE context
• Reward and Pensions
  – Negotiations (national level) on pay
  – Intelligence about what HEIs are doing
  – Representation and consultation
• Seminars and training
• Research and surveys
• Lobbying and representation
UK Higher Education: some context

• 500,000 staff employed in HEIs

• 168 HEIs
  Range of UCEA members:
  – University of Manchester – 11,700 staff
  – Bishop Grosseteste - 260 staff

• Funding sources
  – Public sources
  – Students’ fees
  – Range of dependence on state
National pay bargaining

- The HE unions
- A strong tradition
- Prone to disputes?
- A journey: where are we going?
From 2001...

- many tables
- many pay scales

Pressures for change:
- European Equal Pay legislation
- Desire for equity and transparency
- Ability to respond to market pressures
- Ability to reward high performance
- Remove unhelpful (unlawful) demarcations
2004 Framework Agreement

- All-HE unions agreement
- Commitment to local delivery through partnership
- A national single pay spine
- Locally (HEI) determined common grades
- Underpinned by job evaluation in each HEI
- Some core expectations:
  - Schemes for determining / reviewing market pay
  - Schemes for rewarding contribution
  - Some progression on experience (for all grades)
  - Derivation of hourly rates
- Implementation by August 2006
The single pay spine in HE

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## Common grades: an example

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- Principal Lecturer
- Reader
- Senior Manager
- Accountant
- Senior Lecturer
- Senior Researcher
- Planning Officer
- Lecturer
- Senior Administrator
- Tutor
- Research Officer
- Administrator
And since then...

- 134 HEIs completed to date (some backdating)
- Will be 168 different pay and grading schemes
- Harmonisation of other conditions

Legacy:
- Resource intensive processes
- Distraction
- Turbulence / some discontent ("red circles")
- High cost to employers
- National vs. local deals
- Improvements for lowest grades
2006-09 pay deal

- Followed a dispute led by academic union(s)
- 3 year deal – some respite – at least 13.1%
- HE Finance & Pay Data Review (reports autumn 2008)
- Commitment to reform national machinery (JNCHES):
  - Streamlined
  - Single table
  - A timetable
  - Disputes procedure
Where HEI employers are now

- Single table seen as a necessity
- Attracted to “something for something” bargaining
- Strong employee relations embedded (in the main)
- Conditions a local issue – not for national table
- Concern over pay costs, including pensions
- Funding diversity concerns
- Regional employment market concerns
- 20% of academic staff are “off SPS”

- Majority want collective (national) bargaining for SPS – at least short- to medium-term
- Some may be ready for (and prefer) local bargaining
- Caveat is required reforms to JNCHES
Where unions are now?

• All committed to wanting national bargaining (for present)
• All unions, except UCU, signed up to reforms
• UCU position right now…a vote to reject by 10,000 members
• What next?
• Employers and unions having to prepare for a variety of scenarios
Paris or London?