

23rd June 2006

Our Ref: 5/2/2-06

To: Forestry Commission Executive Board

CC: Trade Union Members



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Edward Shephard
Secretary

FCTU JOINT PAY CLAIM FOR 2006

On behalf of GMB, PCS, Prospect and the TGWU, I should like to submit our joint trade union pay claim for 2006.

When the progression system was introduced in 2001 it was accepted by both sides that although the three year deal would see the introduction of the system, that deal alone would never be sufficient to reverse more than a decade of neglect brought on our pay system by under-funding and delegated bargaining — all else being equal the system would result in additional costs through to 2012/13. Therefore having introduced the progression system in full knowledge of the associated costs, we believe that it is now beholden on the Executive Board to provide it with the proper support — and funding.

We do not believe that it is acceptable for the board to under-fund the system, thereby forcing cost of living increases to be offset against the costs of progression. We do not believe that it is acceptable for the board to try to find savings by disrespecting long-serving staff through false comparisons with other employers. We do not believe that it is acceptable for the board to starve money from the basic pay system whilst squandering hundreds of thousands of pounds on failed reward schemes such as performance related pay and FChoices. We do not believe that it is acceptable for staff to be expected to find saving from their own pockets to pay for government programmes which Ministers are not willing to properly fund themselves.

There has to be a recognition that making good a decade of under-funding to our pay system requires investment; there has to be a recognition that the disagreements which lay behind last year's imposed pay settlement must be addressed.

In previous years it has been our custom to submit an all encompassing claim covering pay, hours, leave, family friendly policies and other allowances. However based on the experience of last year's imposed settlement, the informal talks which we have had thus far, and the need to restore confidence in the negotiation process; we have decided this year to focus solely on our members' two key priorities — pay progression, and the need for across the board cost of living increases.

We therefore make the following claim for 2006:

- We seek the continuation of the current pay progression system.
- We seek an across the board increase to all pay points on all scales (including band minima & maxima) in line with the retail prices index.

That concludes our claim. We are keen to meet with you and set dates in our diaries as soon as possible in order that we can work towards a settlement by the 1st October anniversary date.

Michael McCann
Chair, FCTU pay committee.