

Forestry Commission Trade Unions

Pay 2005: *The Claim*

May 2005



Introduction

This paper contains details of the 2005 pay claim which has been submitted on behalf of all of the trade unions recognised in the Forestry Commission.

How the claim has been drawn up

In 2003 the unions carried out the largest consultation on pay ever undertaken in the Forestry Commission. Over 600 members attended twelve workshops and discussed all of the key issues which led to our claim last year.

Although our 2004 negotiations did make some progress towards the goals in the claim there are some areas where there is still a lot more work to be done, for example on performance pay. Additionally, there are a number of areas such as the need to increase the scales in line with inflation, which remain valid irrespective of the changes made last year.

Consequently the FCTU Council decided that this years claim would again be based on the clear feedback from members who attended the pay workshops, but be updated to reflect the progress which was made last year. The claim has been agreed by the executive committees of each of the unions.

Format of the claim

In line with the format established last year the text of the claim is given in **green**, and where appropriate commentary is given to highlight the changes introduced this year.

Next Steps

The claim has now been submitted to the Commission's senior management. The next step is that they will need to consider the claim and apply for a pay remit from Treasury. We currently hope to start negotiations in July or early August.

I'll keep you updated with our progress.

Edward Shephard

Secretary

If you just want to know what's in the claim, then skim the document and read the sections in **GREEN**.



Section I: What's in the Claim

Background

At the end of 2003 the unions carried out the largest consultation on pay ever undertaken in the Forestry Commission. In addition, in response to what was seen by many as an unfair settlement for 2004, each of the unions has received significant feedback on those areas of the pay system which need to be changed. This claim, therefore, is based on comprehensive input from members: we commend it to you.

General Pay Increase

We seek a pay increase on all pay band minima, maxima and spine points of 3.2%. This figure is the current percentage annual increase in the retail price index. The increase should be fully consolidated and pensionable; and is in addition to any increases due through the pay progression system.

This section has been amended to show a clearer link to changes in the cost of living (inflation) as opposed to the Office of Manpower Statistics data used last year, and to reflect the concerns over the low increases in pay band maxima in 2004.

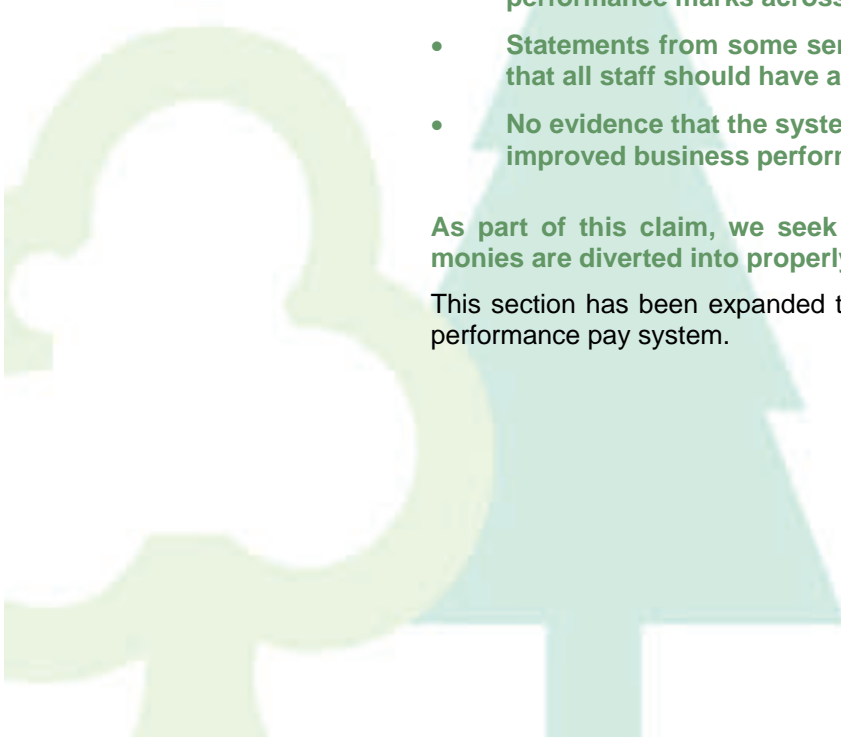
Performance Pay

It is the clear view of our members expressed through the staff survey and pay workshops that the performance related pay system used by the Forestry Commission is divisive, discriminatory and de-motivating. This view is further borne out by:

- Seven years of statistics demonstrating a growing disparity in performance marks across the organisation.
- Statements from some senior managers that contradict the principle that all staff should have an equal opportunity to achieve a bonus.
- No evidence that the system is fulfilling its purpose of contributing to improved business performance.

As part of this claim, we seek that the system is scrapped and that all monies are diverted into properly funding the basic pay system.

This section has been expanded to better reflect our concerns over the current performance pay system.



Progression Arrangements

It is our aim to ensure that staff can move through the fixed points of a learning curve for the job from band minima to band maxima, in no more than five years. Unfortunately progress was not made in this area during the last set of pay negotiations and we therefore seek to make further progress in this set of negotiations by establishing the four, six, and eight year method of progression already used in the Scottish Executive and other civil service areas.

Overtime and TOIL

We seek to introduce a standard set of overtime and TOIL arrangements for all non-operational staff; including those at pay bands 1 and 2.

We claim that all staff should be eligible for overtime at rates equivalent to those currently paid to staff in pay bands 5 - 7. We further claim that overtime rates are calculated based on a 37, rather than a 42 hour week. In addition, those staff who are currently required to work an additional 2½ hours before they are eligible for overtime, should be brought back into the standard system and be eligible for standard overtime, once the normal core hours have been completed.

We claim that TOIL should be earned at a rate equal to the equivalent rate of overtime that would otherwise have been payable.

Civil Service Pay Harmonisation

Since the introduction of delegated pay bargaining, civil servants doing the same, or very similar work now receive very different rates of pay, which has led to unfairness and equal pay problems. Part of our claim, is to seek to enter into a dialogue with Forestry Commission management and HM Treasury with a view to returning to full national civil service pay bargaining.

Harvester Operator Bonus System

This system was introduced as a temporary measure to aid the transition of the harvester fleet through staff unification. The system has been problematic since its introduction and should now be brought to an end. We, therefore, seek to ensure that all operators should be given the personal choice of being paid either through the standard salary and overtime system, or through an operational salary based on 48 hours.

Leave Allowances

We claim the following minimum provisions: -

- 30 days annual leave for all staff.
- 26 weeks maternity leave paid at full salary for all women, irrespective of length of service.
- That the current provisions for paternity leave should be extend to

cover partners of either gender, and others, who have a significant role in providing support to the primary carer and bring up the child.

- 26 weeks adoption leave paid at full salary for all staff, irrespective of length of service. All staff should be eligible for this leave, irrespective of whether or not the other parent is taking statutory leave with another employer. The scope of Paternity Leave (adoption) should be extended to mirror the arrangements for standard paternity support leave as outlined above.
- 13 weeks paid parental leave (18 weeks for a disabled child). All staff should be entitled to the leave irrespective of length of service. Where both parents work for the commission, then the combined leave allowance should be pooled and transferable.

Again this section has been updated to reflect the changes made in 2004. In particular we have clarified the section on paternity leave to seek to extend its scope to include partners and others who undertake a significant support role. This broader definition of 'maternity support' is now used in an increasing number of larger departments

Additional Allowances

We also seek a consolidated increase of the rate of inflation backdated for every year since the allowance was last increased, to the following allowances: -

- Tool allowance
- Telephone allowance
- Dog allowance
- Ferret allowance
- On call allowance
- Clothing allowance for rangers

In addition we seek that the current entitlements to dog allowance and reimbursement of veterinary bills is extended until the death of the dog, rather than to its retirement.

Some progress was made on additional allowances last year and the claim has been updated to reflect this. A new element regarding dog allowance has been added.

