
Special Briefing

URGENT INFORMATION FROM THE COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION

SPECIAL BRIEFING

130/00

23RD March 2000

TO: ALL BRANCHES WITH POSTAL MEMBERS
TO: ALL POSTAL FIELD OFFICERS

Dear Colleague,

ILL HEALTH PROCEDURES – NATIONAL AGREEMENT

Further to the paragraphs contained in the General Secretary's Report where it was indicated that we were optimistic at reaching a new agreement in respect of the above, I am pleased to confirm this has now been achieved.

In June 1999 negotiations commenced against the background of a review by the Post Office of procedures relating to ill health retirement. The Post Office advised the Union that they were intending to revise the procedures and a series of lengthy and complex discussions took place.

The Union's principles aim in the negotiations was to ensure that those individuals able to continue in employment with the Post Office had the opportunity to do so while those who are either unable to work permanently or who could not work for the foreseeable future receive suitable payments to assist them. The last category dealt with the long running issue of around 250 of our members who have been dismissed each year under the unagreed "Phillips Procedures or Medical Severance" i.e. with nothing more than pay in lieu of notice.

To conclude an agreement that incorporated all of these objectives it was necessary to revise the earliest definitions for Ill Health Retirement and this has led to it being an extremely complex series of negotiations with the definitions being revised continually over a period of six months until we were at last sure they met our aims.

We then turned our attention to improving the benefits for people who are Retired with a pension and achieving the financial compensation for members who have long term Ill Health Conditions but will recover in the future.

You will see by the terms of new agreement in seeking these benefit improvements we have produced a package of measures, the significance of which cannot be underestimated for those members concerned.

We have:

- Gained a 75% enhancement future pensionable service up to age 60.
- Underpinned the 75% enhancement with the current $6\frac{2}{3}$ years or 20 years enhancement, so no body loses.
- Extended the 75% enhancement to widow(er)s and children in the event of the members death in service.
- Introduced the new level of payments for those who are not able to work for the foreseeable future.
- Gained agreement that the new lump sum payments will be paid on the basis of $1/80^{\text{th}}$ per year of service with no capping applied.
- This will mean a great deal to those of our members who, sadly, will either not be able to work again or will certainly have their ability to work severely limited.

In addition to this we have also established that individuals who have been Ill Health Retired but recover from their long term illness will have the opportunity to apply to work in the Post Office again.

In view of the substantial change and improvements achieved in the negotiations on benefits it was also essential that the Ill Health Process was robust and the new National Agreement incorporated all of the aspects that have been concluded in our joint review i.e. The Aims, Scope, New Definitions, Memorandum of Understanding, Process and agreed Joint Review of these new Ill Health Procedures.

This agreement which is effective from the 1st April 2000 applies to all employees other than casual and temporary staff of less than 12 months and links into all other Personnel procedures where Ill Health is identified.

Although negotiations have been very difficult this the first Post Office Wide Agreement which is in line with the principles contained in the Conduct Code Joint Statement which required a cross Post office process approach and also achieves the CWU Policy on SCS.

The agreement is a major improvement on the current procedures being applied and will be of great benefit to the members who are unfortunate enough to suffer from Ill Health Conditions.

Any enquiries should be addressed to John Keggie, Deputy General Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Keggie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent dot above the letter 'i' in "Keggie".

JOHN KEGGIE
DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY (P)