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Circular: 2024HOC0282BS

Date: 03 July 2024

To: All Members

Dear Brother/Sister,

This circular brings to your attention the NJC Circular Grey Book maternity provision following NJC agreement.

Members and Officials should read the circular.

For Noting.

Yours in Solidarity,

Ben Selby
Assistant General Secretary

BS/pw

Grey Book maternity provision following NJC agreement

1. Authorities will be aware from NJC Circular 3/24 that the pay agreement reached this year extended occupational maternity pay to 26 weeks at full pay followed by SMP (where eligible) for 13 weeks.
2. This is an amendment to the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) Part D – Maternity, childcare and dependency section. However, this section of the Grey Book is itself currently in need of updating, and colleagues will want to note NJC 2/11 for the current wording for maternity pay, which we have updated below.
3. Rather than provide track changes, we provide the new paragraphs here:

Maternity pay

19. An employee who has less than a year's continuous local government service at the beginning of the eleventh week before the EWC shall receive their entitlement to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP).
20. An employee who has completed at least a year's continuous local government service at the eleventh week before the EWC shall be entitled to the following:
 - (1) For the first six weeks of absence, full pay offset against SMP, or Maternity Allowance (MA) for employees not eligible for SMP.
 - (2)(a) Where she has declared an intention to return to work, a further twenty weeks at full pay offset against SMP, or Maternity Allowance (MA) for employees not eligible for SMP. Then, SMP (if eligible) for the subsequent thirteen weeks.
 - (b) Where she does not intend to return to work, SMP (where eligible) for the subsequent thirty-three weeks (following on from the provision set out in 20(1)).
 - (3) Payments under (2)(a) shall be on the understanding that the employee shall return to work for at least three months, which may be varied by the fire and rescue authority on good cause being shown. In the event of her not returning to work, the fire and rescue authority may require her to refund all or part of the payments made. Payments made to the employee by way of SMP are not refundable.
4. It is recognised that individual fire and rescue services may also need to review any local practices, and policies to consider whether additional change is needed at local level and as always are recommended to meet with their local trade unions about any proposed changes.
5. The Joint Secretaries recognise that the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) Sixth Edition 2004 (updated 2009) needs updating to incorporate the changes that have been issued via this and previous circulars and intend to begin this work as soon as possible.