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NJC pay consultation – use of Survey Monkey

Pay Matters 10 set out the consultation arrangements and timetable on the NJC pay offer. A number of branches have asked if they can conduct their pay consultation exercise via an online method such as Survey Monkey - either wholly or partially as their consultation method.

The UNISON NJC Committee has asked branches to hold postal ballots where possible because past consultations have delivered higher turnouts. If it is impossible to hold a postal ballot, members are to be asked at branch or workplace meetings whether they want to accept or reject the offer and complete the consultative ballot paper.

It is very important that all branches consult on the same basis and that our procedures are consistent. The UNISON NJC Committee has provided a consultative ballot paper to be used.

While it is appreciated that branch ballots are both time consuming and possibly costly, use of Survey Monkey should **not** be used to consult over NJC pay. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The agreed Service Group Pay Consultation Procedures agreed at conference suggest 'flexibility', but do not provide for electronic consultation. (We will look at this with a view to a potential safe means of electronic consultation for future consultations, but this would need to be agreed by Conference)
- There is significant scope for abuse of the consultation process through multiple voting using Survey Monkey or other electronic means. The only fool-proof means would be by use of membership numbers, but this would involve Regional staff in time-consuming checking exercises

- Our own experience shows overwhelmingly that electronic surveys result in substantial under-representation of 'hard to reach', front-line, low paid and part-time staff. This was borne out in our survey of local government workers earlier in the year. While part-time workers are 55% of the local government workforce, 75% of survey respondents were full-time and skewed towards higher earners. This is presumably because they have access to IT in their jobs and are more likely to be conversant with it
- On-line consultation alone could mitigate against recruiting and organising around pay. Branches are being encouraged to hold branch and workplace meetings and also to discuss the forthcoming Part-Time Matters survey – which could be a useful 'pull' for a significant group of members and non-members alike. The consultation will also lay the basis for our ongoing pay campaign and it is important to engage members in the direction of it
- It is very important that all members receive the same questions, in the same format and that the consultation is carried out consistently. Use of Survey Monkey could undermine this

If Regions have print functions and branches are willing to pay, then they can obviously be used to print the standard consultation form already circulated and to stuff envelopes. We have asked branches for some time to prepare for the consultation and the UNISON NJC Committee has advocated branch ballots or workplace/branch meetings at which votes can be recorded on the consultative ballot paper.

Members' Leaflet on the Employers' Offer

A members' leaflet on the offer and giving the UNISON NJC Committee's view is being printed (PDF attached.) The leaflet is available to order now - stock no 3264.

A powerpoint presentation with speakers' notes will follow next week.