

REPORT

To: JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES		Subject: WAGE SLIPS - ADVERTISING
From: HEAD OF PERSONNEL SERVICES		
Date: 8 May 2000	Ref: IW/AB/JJ	

1. Introduction

1.1 At the Joint Consultative Committee Meetings of 10 February 2000, the Trade Union Representatives expressed a number of concerns in relation to the information recorded on pay slips for both trade union subscriptions and advertising. It was agreed that the matter be further investigated, in discussion with the Director of Finance. This report presents an update on the outcome of the discussions.

2. Deduction of Trade Union Subscriptions from Pay

2.1 The introduction of the Deregulation (Deduction from Pay of Union Subscriptions) Order 1998, inter alia, no longer required employers to seek re-authorisation from employees of payments of trade union subscriptions by "check off" every three years. Additionally, employers were not required to give advance, written notification of any increase in the rate of deductions.

2.2 The law continues to require an employee's written authorisation before check off can start and an employee continues to have the right to stop paying by check off at any time, by giving notice in writing to the employer.

2.3 In response to the concerns expressed by the Trade Unions in relation to the appropriate form of wording to advise employees of their right to stop "paying" by check off, the Director of Finance has agreed to amend the message. For future purposes, as and when appropriate, employees will be advised of this right, expressed in terms which inform that they remain free to withdraw from check off at any time. Membership of a union will remain an entirely separate issue from payments to a union.

3. Advertising

3.1 The decision to commence payslip advertising, in 1999/2000, was taken by the Finance Committee on 22 October 1998. It was also agreed that prospective advertisers/advertisements would be vetted and approved by the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Convener of Finance.

3.2 The origins of this decision relate to the Best Value framework and the requirement to maintain a cost-effective payroll service. The use of advertising to generate income is used by most major employers, including central and local governments.

3.3 The advertiser has no access to payroll records or details and simply provides stocks of the inserts, which are enclosed into the payslips during the production routine at the Council's Printers. All revenue produced by this exercise is used to reduce employee costs to departments. There is no practical method of isolating any employee from the process, should individual objections be lodged. Overall, the benefits to the Council, at both employee and departmental levels, are considered to outweigh any perceived disadvantage of the process.

4. Conclusion

It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) notes the intention to amend the wording to employees informing them of their right to withdraw from paying by check off,
- (ii) notes the position determined by the Council in relation to advertising in payslips, and
- (iii) otherwise notes the terms of the report.

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