



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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M.R.H.A. - ADMIN.	
RCVD. - 7 DEC 1988	
FOR ACTION BY FTG	
COPIES SENT TO:-	
RGM	

Dear Regional General Manager

2 December 1988

MLSO PAY AND GRADE RESTRUCTURING

1. The Advance Letter on this agreement was issued on 25 November. I am writing to ask you to brief your DGMS on the managerial objectives behind the agreement, and the action required. Staff Side bodies will be briefing their local representatives on how the agreement can best be used for the benefit of their members. It is therefore essential that General Managers, Pathology Managers and Personnel staff should be adequately prepared.

Objectives and key features of the new agreement

2. The existing MLSO grading structure and grade definitions are based on pre-automation patterns of work. Despite considerable investment in equipment and other changes in techniques, laboratory staffing patterns have changed little. Many tasks carried out by MLSOs no longer need their qualifications and skills. Grading criteria for senior posts are no longer suitable, particularly those based on numbers of staff supervised.

3. The objectives, from management's point of view, are to achieve the most cost-effective staffing pattern related to present and future work needs; to improve the job content of qualified MLSOs, and hence their job satisfaction; and to enable any future shortages of qualified staff to be more easily overcome.

4. The key features of the new agreement are as follows. It

- replaces the present five qualified MLSO grades and their prescriptive definitions with a four grade structure based on guidance which is deliberately couched in broad terms to encourage flexibility;
- introduces a medical laboratory assistant grade which can be used for a range of routine tasks at present undertaken by MLSOs;
- places all the grades on a common salary spine with a facility for scale advancement to enable management to recognise special skills and/or additional responsibilities which are insufficient to justify a higher grading.

5. Implementation is to be in three stages:

1 April 1988 - a .5% increase on existing pay scales;

1 October 1988 - further increases on automatic assimilation to the new spine:

by 1 April 1989 - assignment of each existing post to one of the new grades

The 1st April 1989 re-grading

6. Each post must be reviewed in the light of stated criteria and grades assigned by 1st April 1989 at the latest.

7. Contrary to some reports, re-grading does not depend on organisational structures or job descriptions operative at any date before management has carried out the above review.

8. Some grading decisions will be represented as downgrading of individuals. The position, and the implications for their personal careers, will need to be carefully explained to those affected, for whom the agreement provides salary protection.

9. Some tough decisions will be needed if the management objectives of the agreement are to be secured. For example, Senior MLSO posts should not automatically be assigned to the new MLSO 2 grade. MLSO 1 grading may sometimes be appropriate.

10. Use of the facility for scale advancement is a matter for local decision. There is no appeal beyond the employing authority on this issue.

Subsequent changes

11. The grading exercise to be undertaken by 1st April 1989 offers an immediate opportunity to move towards a more cost-effective staffing pattern. This should not, however, be seen as a once and for all exercise. The new grading structure offers the opportunity for regular adjustments of staffing as working patterns change and as a supply of Medical Laboratory Assistants becomes available.

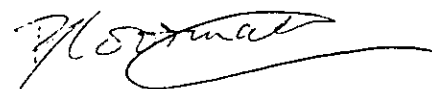
Management Advisory Service report on laboratory staffing

12. This report was published on 31 October 1988 for comment by 28 February 1989. The MAS recommendations go wider than the present agreement but there is no conflict between the two.

Speakers

13. Any requests for Management Side speakers to explain the agreement should be addressed to the Management Side Secretary, Nick Shirley, on 01 703 6380 Ext 3342.

Yours sincerely



P J WORMALD

This letter will be cancelled and deleted from the current communications index on 31 December 1989.