

Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

General Council Report 1406

(Meeting/s of 27 February 2002, 27 March 2002, 29 May 2002)

A claim for an allowance in the nature of pay for Executive Officers who are Deputy Managers in the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs's Local Offices.

1 This claim had been discussed at local level in the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. The Public Service Executive Union (PSEU) indicated that they had referred the claim to General Council under the provisions of Paragraph 24 of the Scheme of Conciliation and Arbitration.

2 The PSEU said that the claim related to Executive Officers who acted as Deputy Managers in the local offices of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. Because these Executive Officers are called upon to perform the full range of duties carried out by Local Office Managers whenever the Manager is absent, they are required to carry out a range and volume of duties greater than what is expected of other Executive Officers. These duties could be broken down under three categories which were:

Staff

This includes responsibilities such as managing the various types of leave, flexi-time arrangements, handling staff problems, dealing with disciplinary issues, staff rotation and assessment etc.

Housekeeping

The PSEU said that these duties include security and accommodation issues such as heating, hygiene facilities etc.

Customer Services

As the 'de facto' person in charge in the Manager's absence, the Deputy Manager must deal with the full range of customer services, deal with difficult customers, deal with complaints, respond to queries by elected representatives, deal with Branch Office queries, etc.

Deputy Managers must take decisions, often at short notice, in the Manager's absence. They are also required to explain changes in work to staff and manage work output. Deputy Managers are integral to the management structure in a Local Office to an extent which is not

comparable to Headquarters Sections. Certain decisions in Local Offices can only be taken by Managers or Deputy Managers e.g. All cheques over £800 are sent to either Manager or Deputy Manager to be checked. As a result Managers and Deputy Managers co-ordinate leave arrangements to ensure that one is present in the Local Office at all times.

3 The PSEU emphasised that this claim did not in any way seek to establish a principle that allowances should be paid to Executive Officers generally for deputising for Higher Executive Officers for short periods. The entire basis for what was being sought was the view of the union that the Executive Officers covered by the claim were in a unique position since they carried greater responsibility when substituting for Managers than applied to other Executive Officers substituting for a higher grade, either in the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs or elsewhere in the civil service. The Union emphasised that the claim was of purely departmental application.

4 The Official Side said that the claim related to duties performed during the absence of a Manager for short periods. There was an agreed arrangement with the civil service unions for the payment of a higher duties allowance where the duties of a higher grade were performed for at least four weeks. Allowances were not payable in respect of short term absences of a higher grade.

5 The Official Side said that while the PSEU had referred to Deputy Managers, no such posts existed. It was not accepted that the Executive Officers covered by the claim were in a special position. In relation to duties undertaken during short term absences of a higher grade, it was the view of the Official Side that their responsibilities were no greater than those applying to other Executive Officers in the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs or elsewhere in the civil service.

5 Following further discussion, it was decided that a report should be prepared recording disagreement on the claim.

Agreed report, recording disagreement.

This report was adopted on 29 May 2002