

Single Status Project

Frequently Asked Questions

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Additional information on Single Status can be found at:

Intranet: <http://intranet.croydon.net/staff/hrod/single%20status/>

Croydon HR internet: http://www.croydonhr.co.uk/index.php?page_id=56

For support and help you can contact the Single Status team:

Helpline: 0208 6678388

Email: single.status@croydon.gov.uk

Write to: Single Status, 8th Floor, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon, CR9 3JS

General Questions

What is Single Status?

The Single Status project is the result of government legislation to ensure that all council staff across the UK receive equal pay for jobs of equal value.

Why are we evaluating jobs?

To enable Single Status the Council is required by law to undertake an assessment of pay and grading. This is to ensure that all jobs are fairly paid and that we meet our obligations under the Equal Pay Act.

What does assimilation mean?

Assimilation is the matching of an individual to a particular job at the relevant level of seniority or experience. This process is occurring for non-teaching staff in schools. An HR Consultant and Trade Union representative arrange a meeting with the Head Teacher to examine and discuss job descriptions and job evaluation questionnaires to decide on an outcome.

Trade Union Negotiations

Are the trade unions involved in Single Status?

Yes, Croydon Council recognises three unions, GMB, T & G and Unison for the purposes of collective bargaining. These unions are negotiating on behalf of all staff within the Council – not just union members. These unions are being consulted with at an individual and collective level. If you are a member of another trade union and want to know their position on Single Status please contact them directly.

I am not a member of a trade union – am I still represented?

Yes, the trade unions are negotiating on behalf of all staff within the Council – not just union members

Who are the trade union representatives?

You can take advice from your trade union representative at any time. At each stage of the evaluation process, a trade union representative takes part.

A list of contact information is available through the intranet:

<http://intranet.croydon.net/staff/NoticeBoard/trade-unions.asp> or through the Single Status helpline on 020 8667 8388 or email single.status@croydon.gov.uk.

Job Evaluations

How many jobs have been evaluated?

At the beginning of May 2007, over 1,000 jobs had been evaluated. Many of these jobs have more than one post holder so this means that around 2,500 staff have been through the job evaluation process so far.

What do I have to do to get my job evaluated?

Your manager should have submitted an up to date job description and job evaluation questionnaire to the Single Status team to be assimilated or job evaluated.

For non-teaching staff in schools, the process has been slightly different and you will have, or will be in the process of completing your own job evaluation questionnaires.

Who will evaluate my job?

A job evaluation panel consisting of a trade union representative and an HR Consultant will evaluate your job.

For non teaching staff in schools, the process is slightly different and the panel will normally consist of a trade union representative, the Head Teacher and an HR Consultant.

When will I know the outcome of my job evaluation?

The results of the job evaluations that have been completed will start being released to staff from the beginning of June 2007.

Why does my job have to be evaluated?

The Council has a responsibility under the Equal Pay Act to make sure that all jobs have been correctly graded. This is to make sure there are no inequities of pay and grade where individuals are doing the same or similar work.

How do I find out more about the job evaluation scheme?

You can find full details of the GLPC job evaluation scheme on the Single Status intranet or on the Croydon HR internet.

Intranet: <http://intranet.croydon.net/staff/hrod/single%20status/>

Croydon HR internet: http://www.croydonhr.co.uk/index.php?page_id=56

When will the job evaluations be completed?

It is planned that all job evaluations will be completed by July 2007.

What do I do if my job grade has gone down?

If your job grade has gone down and you suffer financial detriment, you will be protected for one year on your current pay.

If you disagree with the result of your job evaluation, you have 28 days from the date of being written to, to appeal. You will need to provide evidence under one of the 11 job evaluation factors used, as to why you think the grade you have been given is incorrect.

What happens if my grade remains unchanged or increases but I suffer financially?

If your job grade has remained the same or increased, but you suffer overall financial detriment due to a change in enhancements, you will be protected for one year on your current pay.

What is the Appeals Process?

If you wish to appeal, you should first speak to your manager to talk through your concerns. If you then decide to proceed with your appeal, your manager should be able to provide you with a copy of the appeals form and explain the process to you. Information on the appeals process will also be available on the Single Status intranet or you can contact the help line on 0208 6678388.

Any appeals will be heard by a panel consisting of a trade union representative and an HR representative. This panel will be a different one to that which originally evaluated the job.

Is there a time limit to appeal?

Yes, you have 28 days from the date of being written to, to appeal against your job evaluation grade.

If I do not appeal against my job evaluation outcome but a colleague doing the same job does, what happens?

If you are doing the same job and that individual's job is upgraded as a result of their appeal, you will also be upgraded.

What happens if I am moved up to a higher grade as a result of job evaluation?

You will automatically be moved to the bottom spinal point of the new grade or if there is a grade overlap, to one incremental point higher from the date of Single Status implementation.

What happens if other councils are paying more for a similar job to mine under Single Status? Will there be equity of pay between council authorities?

Part of the job evaluation process includes comparing the outcomes of this council's job evaluations against the outcomes of other London authorities. Data has been received from London Councils (formerly Association of London Government) on the outcome of job evaluation from other London boroughs. This process does not however guarantee that all similar roles will pay the same rates as each council is an autonomous employer so there will be variations.

Can staff ask for a copy of their job description and managers questionnaire?

Yes. All staff should be in receipt of an up to date job description and can have access to the information being submitted by their manager.

Has the Single Status job evaluation process been equality impact assessed?

Before a final proposal is put to the trade unions, an equality impact assessment will be undertaken by an HR consultant. The results of the Equality Impact Assessment will be made available to trade union representatives as soon as it has been completed.

Working Week

Is the normal working week changing?

It is proposed that the normal working week will change to Monday to Saturday, 7am till 7pm.

I have heard that the Council is going to ask people to work on Saturdays as part of their normal working week. Is this true?

The Council wishes to redefine the normal working week as being from 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday to enable it to deliver services more flexibly and to improve recruitment and retention by offering more flexible working arrangements for staff.

This does not mean that you will automatically be asked to work on a Saturday. If your manager identifies that there is a need for your department to work on a Saturday, they will

need to make a business case and consult with you under the Council's Staff Consultation Framework.

Why are you proposing to change the working week to include Saturdays?

The reasons for this proposed change are so that the Council can:

- Deliver service more flexibly
- Improve recruitment and retention by offering more flexible working arrangements
- Meet Council's modernisation agenda

Weekend Enhancements

Will I still receive a weekend enhancement payment for working on Saturday?

It is proposed that those staff currently receiving Saturday enhancements will continue to do so. This enhancement will be paid at the proposed rate of time and a third (without any deduction of London Weighting in calculating the hourly rate, as is done at present)

All new staff employed after the implementation date and those staff who are currently contracted to work Saturday as a normal working day and who do not currently receive an enhancement, will be paid at flat time between 7am and 7pm.

What about Sunday enhancement?

Enhancements will be paid at a rate of 75% of flat rate pay (without any deduction of London Weighting in calculating the hourly rate, as is done at present).

Irregular Working

I currently receive a payment for unsocial hours. What will happen to this?

It is proposed that this will be removed and an enhanced payment will only be made for work undertaken at night (see below).

Night Working

Will I still be paid an enhancement for working at night?

It is proposed that night work will be defined as working between 7pm and 7am. If you work during this period, you will receive an enhancement of 33% of your flat rate of pay.

If I work nights on a Sunday will I receive the Sunday enhancement of 75% of flat rate pay?

You will be able to receive the Sunday enhancement between midnight on Saturday and midnight on Sunday. You will receive the night enhancement of 33% for all other hours worked between 7pm and midnight on Saturday and midnight on Sunday and 7am on Monday morning.

People who regularly work nights, for example staff working in residential homes, you will automatically receive your night enhancement in your pay. If you work on a Sunday evening, you will need to claim for the additional enhancement.

Back Pay

Am I likely to get back pay?

You will only get back pay if your job grade moves up under the job evaluation process.

How much back pay will I get?

If your job grade moves up under job evaluation, you may be entitled to back pay. The amount you will receive is dependent on how long you have been doing your current job, with the maximum amount available for six years service. If you receive a bonus and/or contractual overtime these will be included as part of your basic pay and offset against any compensatory back pay calculation.

The amount of back pay that you receive will be calculated by reference to a ready reckoner table. An adjustment will be made to the amount paid where bonus, contractual overtime and other allowances are regarded as basic pay.

Part time staff will receive back pay paid pro rata.

If my job is upgraded, when will I get my back pay?

Your back pay will be backdated from the date that Single Status is formally implemented. It is currently hoped that the implementation date will be in autumn 2007.

Will I get back pay if I leave the Council before Single Status is implemented?

You have 6 months from leaving the Council to claim back pay. If you would like to register a claim for back pay please write to the Single Status team to let them know that you are leaving and your contact details

Protection

Will my salary be protected if it goes down under job evaluation?

Your salary will be protected for 12 months but will only be paid where you suffer an overall financial detriment. Overall detriment is defined where your overall earnings after job evaluation and changes to any other pay, allowances or premium rates of pay under this proposal is less than your equivalent earnings in the financial year 2006/07.

This excludes the Highways DSO bonus scheme or miscellaneous allowances which have been taken into account by job evaluation.

Protection will be for a 12-month period after the implementation of Single Status and will be offset against any future pay awards.

If you move job voluntarily (regardless of grade) or take on a more responsible role with higher pay, then protection will cease. Where you are already in receipt of protection of pay, then this protection will continue.

Why can't I receive pay protection for more than one year?

Because Single Status is intended to tackle pay inequality (which mainly affects groups of women workers), protection will be limited to avoid a situation where women's pay may never 'catch up' so a pay gap remains, or a pay gap is created by unequal treatment.

The Council's legal advice supports this timeframe. It states clearly that to introduce pay protection perpetuates inequality in pay and that 12 months would be the maximum limit for protection.

What happens if I am already receiving pay protection and my job grade goes down?

You will continue to be protected on your previous grade on a "marked time" basis in line with the Council's Redeployment Procedure i.e. the existing grade rate will be fixed at its present monetary value without incremental or other increases. The protection will cease when the grade rate for the new job, with agreed increases, reaches the monetary level of the protected pay.

What happens to staff that have been transferred to a new employer under TUPE (transfer of Undertaking of Protection Employment) regulations?

You will move across to your new employer on the terms and conditions that you are on at the time of your transfer.

Bonuses

What will happen to bonuses under Single Status?

Current bonus schemes within the Council will be abolished under Single Status. This is due to the legal advice the Council has received, indicating that these bonuses cannot be justified under the Equal Pay Act.

Jobs which currently receive bonuses will be job evaluated to see if the bonus can be absorbed into basic pay.

The exception to this is the **Highways DSO bonus scheme** where a proposal has been put to "buy out" the scheme.

Overtime

Will overtime change under Single Status?

It is proposed the overtime will change under Single Status with standard overtime being paid at 133%. Sunday and bank holiday overtime will be paid at 175%. However, overtime will from now be calculated on basic pay, so that although the rates have gone down from 150% and 200% you should not notice any significant difference to your pay. Currently, London weighting is deducted from pay before the overtime calculation is made (see overtime table).

Overtime will be paid at these rates up to grade 11 (PO3) and for agreed overtime worked by grades 12 and above it will be paid at plain time rates. You cannot claim both overtime and enhancements.

Bank Holiday Working

If I work on a bank holiday, what will I be paid?

Staff required to work on a public holiday as part of their normal working week are entitled to be paid at plain time for the hours worked in addition to their normal pay for that day. They are also entitled to time off with pay at a later date as follows:

- half day: where the time worked on the public holiday was less than half the normal working hours for that day
- full day: where the time worked on the public holiday was more than half the normal working hours for that day

For staff required to work on a public holiday as overtime:

- Overtime rates worked on public holidays will be paid at 200%

Shift Allowances

Will I still be paid a shift allowance?

If you work shifts, you will continue to be paid a shift allowance. It is proposed though that shift allowances will be harmonised to 2 rates – 10% and 17%. The 10% allowance will be paid for a 2 shift working pattern and 17% for a 3 shift working pattern.

If a 2 shift working pattern covers 24 hours or more, for overtime purposes, this will be classed as 3 shift working and will therefore receive 17%.

I receive additional incremental points for working on shifts. Will this continue?

No, but you will be paid a shift allowance instead, which is more favourable.

Miscellaneous Allowances

Allowances paid for additional responsibilities

I currently receive an allowance for additional responsibilities. Will this continue? Allowances paid for additional responsibilities such as qualifications will no longer be paid as these will be reflected in the grade for the post determined by job evaluation.

Personal Additional Allowances

I currently receive an honorarium. Will this still continue?

Personal additional allowances will be audited on an individual basis to make sure that they are still appropriate and should be paid.

On Call/Standby Payments

Will I still be paid on call or standby payments?

It is proposed that all on call and standby payments will be harmonised at the same rate for all staff. There will be two rates of standby pay - £20 and £30 which will be paid per on call period. There will be nine on call periods per week – one per day from Monday to Friday and two 12 hour periods on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays. The £20

payment will be paid where there is a low likelihood of being called out and £30 where there is a high likelihood of being called out. For example, if you work on call or standby from Monday to Sunday, you will receive 5x £20 (if there is a low likelihood of being called out) from Monday to Friday and 4 x £20 from Saturday to Sunday – a total of £180.

Once you have been called out, normal overtime rates will apply.

Sleeping in Allowance

I currently receive sleeping in allowance. Will this continue under Single Status?

Sleeping in allowances will continue in their current form.

Market Supplements

What impact will Single Status have on market supplements?

There are no plans to remove the Council's flexibility to award market supplements. However, we are currently reviewing all market supplements to make sure that they are still applicable.

As a manager, will I still be able to pay a market supplement?

If you wish to pay your staff a market supplement, you will need to demonstrate proven recruitment and retention difficulties in your area and provide evidence to the Divisional Director of HR and OD, Pam Parkes (see Guidance on Market Supplements).

Career Progression Schemes

What impact will Single Status have on career progression schemes?

Career progression schemes will continue under Single Status but they will need to clearly demonstrate how individuals can progress through the scheme. This means that before a job goes to a job evaluation panel, the job description will clearly need to indicate the criteria that an individual will have to meet to progress through the scheme at each stage.

If you are planning to introduce a new career progression scheme, you should refer to the Performance, Development and Competency Scheme.

Car Allowances

Will I lose my car allowance under Single Status?

A separate piece of work is being undertaken on car allowances to ensure that they are being paid appropriately.

Accommodation

I currently live in council accommodation as a schools caretaker. What will happen to my accommodation?

A review of service related tenancies is currently taking place, with a view to charging a market rent for council premises, which takes into account the location of the property e.g. if it is on a school site, the likelihood is that the rent will need to be discounted.

This project is separate to Single Status and there is no correlation between the job evaluation process and any possible changes to service related tenancies.

Performance, Development and Competency Scheme (PDCS)

I have heard that there is a new appraisal scheme. Is this true?

The HR & OD team has developed a Performance and Development Competency Framework (PDCS) for the organisation which is known as 'Performance Matters'. This performance development scheme replaces Job Review and was introduced on 1 April 2007.

Where Single Status seeks to ensure consistency of pay and grading, the new performance development scheme seeks to ensure consistency of staff development and progression. Performance Matters will encourage:

- Greater emphasis on performance, key accountabilities, targets and performance measures
- Consistent use of the Council's competencies and values
- Performance rating based on achievement of targets, performance measures and competencies
- Withholding of increments for poor performance
- More consistency across the organisation, of one-to-ones, learning and development, career development and performance management

I have heard that my pay can be reduced under PDCS. Is this true?

Under the scheme your manager can withhold an increment after a proper appraisal process, if they feel that you have not been performing in your job. This cannot happen until 2009 as 2007/08 is a pilot year for the scheme.

Restructuring

My job has changed under an organisational restructure. Will it have to be re-validated under the GLPC job evaluation scheme?

Yes, if your job has changed significantly, it will need to be re-evaluated. Your manager will need to submit an up to date job description and a job evaluation questionnaire through their HR Consultant to the Single Status team.

Pensions

How will Single Status affect my pension?

If pensionable earnings are reduced as a result of these proposals, employees can request a 'Certificate of Reduction of Earnings' as part of the Local Government Pension Scheme. This certificate enables an employee who is due to retire to choose their best earnings out of the previous five years or the average of the best three consecutive years, in the final thirteen years of service, as a basis upon which to calculate their entitlements.

How is my pension affected if my grade goes down?

If pensionable earnings are reduced as a result of these proposals, the effect on an employees' pension will depend on their retirement date.

For more information on how your pension is affected by changes in your earnings, contact the in-house Pensions Team on the 6th Floor of Taberner House, ext. 62892 or via email to pensions@croydon.gov.uk.

How do the contractual overtime proposals affect workers currently receiving it who are approaching retirement (within 5 years)?

If pensionable earnings are reduced as a result of these proposals, employees can request a 'Certificate of Reduction of Earnings' as part of the Local Government Pension Scheme. This certificate enables an employee who is due to retire to choose the best earnings out of the previous five years, or the average of the best three consecutive years in the final thirteen years of service, as a basis upon which to calculate their entitlements.

For more information on how your pension is affected by changes in your earnings, contact the in-house Pensions Team on the 6th Floor of Taberner House, ext. 62892 or via email to pensions@croydon.gov.uk.

Non-teaching staff in schools – specific questions

Is there a different arrangement for non-teaching staff?

For non-teaching staff in schools, job evaluations began in 2005, under the Government's Workforce Remodelling agenda. Since September 2006 we have been looking at those jobs again to ensure that the evaluations fall in line with the rest of the Council, under the GLPC scheme. We are working closely with Head Teachers and unions to include Nursery Nurses, for example, who were not covered in the earlier arrangements. This means non-teaching staff will be at the same stage as other council employees. Each school is being supported on an individual basis through the assimilation process, which is time consuming but necessary, given the diverse needs of different schools.

Where do we get information about the road shows and the Single Status process?

You can contact the Single Status team by email: single.status@croydon.gov.uk, by phone on 020 8667 8388 or log onto http://www.croydonhr.co.uk/index.php?page_id=56.

What information has been sent out to schools?

A number of letters have been sent to Head Teachers and staff at all schools in Croydon outlining the Single Status process and highlighting any changes to job descriptions. Information about the consultation process and road shows has also been distributed. Each staff member, based on information supplied by their school, has been sent a pack containing a post holder questionnaire and job description relating to their post.

Where can I get copies of my job description?

Job descriptions are available through the Croydon Council HR website http://www.croydonhr.co.uk/index.php?page_id=56 . Alternatively, your Head Teacher or manager should have a copy.

How much time do we have to complete the questionnaire?

The deadline for completed questionnaires to be returned is normally two weeks from when you receive them. The letter that is initially sent out to you will have a date by which questionnaires will need to be returned. It is important to have reached agreement with your line manager or Head Teacher, or to have completed the questionnaires fully by the time the Council and trade union representatives meet with your Head Teacher.

Do I have to speak with my Head Teacher or manager?

You will need to speak to your manager or Head Teacher at some stage during this process. It is advisable that you meet with them and discuss your job description. Ideally, you would come to agreement with the Head Teacher but in the event that you cannot agree, at least the process would have been open and consultative.

Which sections of the questionnaire are mandatory or relevant?

This depends on the way that you wish to answer the questionnaire. If you choose not to submit information (Section 1), then you need only to indicate this and complete the post holder statement. If you agree or disagree with the Job Description you have attached, then you will need to nominate the appropriate section (Section 2 or 3) and sign the post holder statement and then fill in the remaining sections as required. Where you disagree with the job description, it is vital that you provide substantive examples of tasks that you perform which are not covered by the job description you have attached. These examples must be provided under the appropriate heading on the questionnaire (contacts, creativity etc).

I have received three job descriptions. How do I know which one is the correct one?

You will need to identify which of the three job descriptions most reflects your job at present. The first page of the questionnaire asks you to agree or disagree with the job description YOU ARE ATTACHING. In sections 4 and 5, you will need to state whether there are tasks that you perform which are not covered by the job description, and those tasks that you do not do, which are in the job description. All other information that you provide in subsequent sections relates to the attached job description and so it is important that you can determine which one most closely matches your role.

What if I am a long-term employee and my job description has changed?

You should look at the job description you have been provided with or the generic job descriptions that have been sent to your school which are also available at: http://www.croydonhr.co.uk/index.php?page_id=56 and determine which description most accurately reflects the work that you do now. Alternately, you can discuss your role with your Head Teacher and develop a satisfactory job description, to which you can agree.

What if I have been sent or given the wrong job description?

If you have been given the wrong job description please go to http://www.croydonhr.co.uk/index.php?page_id=56 or call the Single Status help line on 020 8667 8388. If none of the job descriptions apply to you then ask your line manager or Head Teacher.

What is the process for job evaluation after I have sent in my job description and questionnaire?

Once job descriptions and questionnaires are completed, a Human Resource Consultant, a trade union representative and the Head Teacher will meet to try to assimilate each member of staff into a post grading. If you disagree with the grading, you have the right of appeal to your school. Once posts have been evaluated, staff will be notified of the results.

What happens if a member of staff has submitted their questionnaire and job description and the information is incorrect?

Go back to your Head Teacher and tell them that the information you have submitted was incorrect and that you would like to resubmit it. You can access a blank questionnaire at http://www.croydonhr.co.uk/index.php?page_id=56. The important thing is to complete your questionnaire as comprehensively as possible, if you disagree with the job description that you have attached.

Will I hear from Croydon Council, my trade union representative or my Head Teacher about the outcome?

Each individual will receive a letter from the Council confirming the grade to which their position has been assimilated.

The Costs of Single Status

How much will implementing Single Status cost the Council?

Single Status will cost the Council an additional £750,000 each year. It is also estimated that the costs for 2007/08 to include back pay will be around £7 million.

How will the Council pay for Single Status?

The Council has put an additional £750,000 into its base budget to pay for Single Status on an ongoing basis. It has made provision to borrow the money to pay for back pay.

Will job cuts have to be made to pay for Single Status?

No, introducing Single Status is not about making job cuts.

Will the council tax be increased to pay for Single Status?

No, council tax has already been set for 2007/08.