



35 Hours – Important Update on Negotiated Position with Trade Unions



Isla Newcombe

Chief Officer - People & Citizen Service

Further to my previous communications outlining that a negotiated position had been reached with Trade Unions on the proposal to reduce the standard working week from 37 to 35 hours, Trade Unions have been engaging with their members over the past weeks.

- [35-hour working week update: Agreed position reached with Trade Unions](#)
- [35-hour working week: Financial Buyout Calculations](#)

I met this morning with all three Trade Unions relevant to this proposal, to discuss the outcomes of their consultations and the potential next steps.

I can confirm that the vast majority of members from two out of the three recognised Trade Unions have indicated that they wish to accept the negotiated position.

A final agreement is needed from all three Trade Unions to be able to move forward with the negotiated position. On this basis I will meet again with Trade Unions next week, which represents the latest point that an agreement on this enhanced negotiated position, as it currently stands, could be made.

There have been a number of clarifications about the terms of the negotiated position provided to employees and Trade Unions on behalf of their members, during the course of the last few weeks. [FAQs](#) have been published on this basis.

Some areas where clarification has been provided are as follows:

- There would be no clawback in place as part of the buyout payment. This means if you leave the organisation after receiving one or both of the buyout payments, there would be no obligation to pay this money back;

- If an employee changes roles internally, over the course of the 12 months from the first buyout payment being issued, they would still be eligible for the second payment;
- Pension protection certificate guidance has been issued;
- A summary of the changes which would occur if the negotiated position were to be agreed, including a personalised buyout quote, have been emailed or posted to all employees in scope;
- The Flexibility Allowance is included in the calculation of the buyout payment for eligible Craft Workers.

A number of concerns have also been raised by Trade Unions as a result of their consultations and the following commitments have been offered in order to address these:

Concern	Commitment / Response
During the initial implementation and transition period, due to demands, employees may work additional hours above their contracted 35 hours.	<p>In recognition of the concern raised, all employees in scope of the proposals will be allocated 'transitional allowance of TOIL hours' as a temporary arrangement to the value of a half day this calendar year and a half day next calendar year, to recognise that hours may be worked but not formally claimed.</p> <p>In areas where TOIL is not utilised as a standard arrangement, we will undertake an alternative process to ensure that hours are available to be taken as time off, in accordance with business requirements.</p>
Overtime rates are not enhanced for hours over 35 hours from day one of implementation.	The dates that enhancements would begin to apply and to what level were agreed as part of the negotiated position, and this negotiated position represents a significant improvement on the current ACC proposal where overtime remains permanently at plain time for hours worked between 35 and 37 hours.
Some areas of the organisation feel they have not had their job (and grade)	It was committed that job review and grade evaluation for specific roles will be

Concern	Commitment / Response
reviewed for a number of years.	undertaken as identified by Trade Union colleagues.
New working patterns from 1st July 2025 may not allow for employees to utilise flexible working options fully, or teams or individuals may not feel they have had input to the new ways of working required on day 1.	Each service area shall undertake a period of learning, during which time feedback will be sought from employees in order to assess if further changes are required to ways of working. This will also assess whether workloads are being suitably managed.
Due to operational demands, some areas find it challenging for their employees to use their annual leave entitlement before the end of the calendar year.	<p>Managers to support and encourage employees to schedule contracted leave and also are support the carry forward of leave as appropriate and in line with policy.</p> <p>It will also be the case that where leave is often rejected due to conflicting requests, that it will be explored as to whether greater visibility of leave requests across the team can be made available.</p>
Concern raised that where issues had been raised via Trade Unions regarding cost efficiencies at a local level, that these are not being fully considered within those operational areas.	<p>Those areas' working practices will be reviewed as to whether staff engagement can be undertaken in an alternative way to support the consideration of frontline concerns and ideas.</p> <p>Our employee ideas scheme will also be reviewed, as will the Whistleblowing policy, with awareness raising undertaken about how to raise or escalate a concern.</p>

Next Steps

Over the course of the next week Trade Unions will continue to engage with their members on the above clarifications and commitments.

At the end of next week, I will be in a position to provide a further update as all Trade Union engagement will have concluded.

Timeline if Agreed

- Formal Communication (individual letters) to be issued to impacted staff (June)
- Implementation of contractual changes effective from 1st July 2025 – hours of work reduced from this date
- Buyout payment will be included in July salary payment.