

# Prison Governors Association

Representing: The Prison Governors of the United Kingdom since 1987



**PGA Office:** Room 3.10  
Clive House  
70 Petty France,  
London, SW1H 9EX

**PGA Officers:** President  
Vice President  
Finance Officer  
National Officers

Andrea Albutt  
Nick Pascoe  
Shaun Williamson  
John Attard  
Dave Hoskins  
Duncan Scales

Telephone: 020 3193 5770

Email: [james.bryant01@hmps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:james.bryant01@hmps.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.prison-governors-association.org.uk](http://www.prison-governors-association.org.uk)

Twitter: @PGA\_Prisons

20 February 2017

## PRESS RELEASE – Prison Officer Bonus Scheme

The bonus scheme announced by the Justice Secretary to attract new officers, while welcomed in principle, serves only to highlight a prison reward system in a mess.

The additional allowance will exclude many staff who are indispensable to the running of a prison, for example: prison governors, operational support grades (OSGs), officers on old terms and conditions as well as civilian staff. This is likely to further damage staff morale across the entire staffing spectrum from the lowest paid office worker to governing governors.

Whilst the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) response, to officers on old terms and conditions is likely to be that they already get paid more than new officers, it will not state that these most experienced staff have not had a real pay rise in many years, while their colleagues have. The MoJ will also be silent on the fact that many jobs, once performed by well-paid officers, are now carried out by OSGs paid much less, which will be significantly less once officers in the 31 prisons receive their bonuses. Recruiting OSGs is just as difficult as recruiting officers and, in some cases, much more so due to the poorer rate of pay they receive. In regards to prison governors, as a percentage, the service shed just as many as it did officers with governors being required to take on a wider range of duties. Unlike officers, however, the additional hours they are now working to compensate for the shortfall, including carrying out officer duties, are unpaid. Prison governors, in some prisons, take home less pay than the staff they are managing in incredibly demanding conditions.

How the independent Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) will receive this news remains to be seen but it will not go unnoticed that their function appears, on the face of it at least, to have been diluted. Introduced as a compensatory mechanism since making strike action illegal, the task of the PSPRB is to provide independent advice on the remuneration of governors, prison officers and support grades. They are due to make their recommendations in just a matter of weeks after hearing oral evidence from relevant unions. How much of the total pay budget has been allocated to this scheme is unknown but unions will, not unreasonably, expect the PSPRB to be allowed to perform its statutory duty without a smaller pot to work with because the MoJ has already spent it.

Disappointingly, the PGA was not consulted on the changes, which is unfortunate given that governors will have to manage the discontent felt not just in the prisons where the bonuses will

not be paid but also in the prisons where they will be. The National Offender Management Service pay policy is in a state of confusion due to many years of tinkering for short-term benefit and continues to lack long term, strategic direction. This is epitomised in its decision to remove the local pay allowance five years ago from many prisons despite warnings that it was a mistake that would lead to recruitment and retention problems in the future, which we are now experiencing. It is unsurprising, therefore, that around 33 percent of the prisons identified to receive the bonus payments are those prisons which had the local pay allowance removed. Furthermore, local pay allowances formed part of staff pensions, which is unlikely to be the case with these new additional allowances.

Pay needs to be appropriate for the conditions that all staff are working in if the government and NOMS are serious about making prisons and society safer. This scheme may be considered divisive by some staff who will feel disenfranchised but, in any event, it is likely to generate a whole new set of problems that must be addressed now if we are to avoid recreating the disarray the service is in.

\*\*\*\*\*

Note for editors:

The Prison Governors Association was founded in October 1987 to represent the higher operational managers in the Prison Service in England and Wales. The PGA was placed on the register of Trade Unions on 6 November 1987 (No. 639T). On 28 July 1988 the Certification Officer under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974 issued the Prison Governors Association with a Certificate of Independence. The status of the Prison Governors Association is that of an independent registered Trade Union.

For more information contact John Attard, PGA National Officer, on 07772 659945 (Email: john.attard@hmps.gsi.gov.uk)