



Chief Executive

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Information for all Employees of Norfolk County Council

11th July 2002

Dear Colleague,

Pay Dispute 2002/3 – Strike Action

As you may know, unions (Unison, GMB and T&G) have called for a national strike of their members on Wednesday 17th July. It is possible that further industrial action may follow at a later date. This has implications for all employees, particularly for those who are members of the above unions who decide to take strike action. If you are a member of any of these unions, you will be invited to participate in industrial action unless you are in a post which has been exempted (see below). If you are not a member of these unions you may still be asked to cross a picket line (see below). **In either case, no-one can be pressurised to take strike action and everyone should feel free to make a personal decision.** The message from the National Employers body, which is supported by the County Council is that 3% is a reasonable offer considering the level of inflation, reflecting the level of settlements in the economy as a whole and representing a real increase in earnings.

Pay implications – A deduction will be made from your pay if you strike. This will be calculated on the principle of 1/5th of a week's pay per day for full time employees. This deduction is made to reflect the proportion of time lost out of the working week. The effect is pro-rata for part-time staff and for absences on strike action of less or more than a normal working day. This deduction is not a penalty for taking strike action. Strike action is a breach of contract and employers are therefore entitled to claim damages as a result.

Pension implications – If you are a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme and you take strike action, you will lose that day's pension membership, including the employer contribution. However, you can buy this back by paying 16% of a notional day's pay as prescribed by the scheme regulations. If you take strike action, Capita will contact you regarding options to buy-back your lost pension. If you are a member of a different Pension Scheme, you should contact your departmental personnel section for advice on the pension implications.

Picketing – Peaceful picketing, by up to 6 people, at or near the place of work is lawful. Its purpose is persuasion. However, employees have a responsibility to report for work. If you refuse to cross a picket line to get to your place of work you may be deemed to be taking strike action. On the other hand, if you do not choose to strike, you should not feel intimidated from coming to work; you have the right to do so and I have no reason to suppose that pickets will behave in anything other than a peaceful and reasonable manner.

'Exempt' Employees – to make sure that people's lives and safety are not put at risk, certain jobs have been agreed by unions to be exempt from being requested to take strike action. The list of exempt posts has been agreed with Unison and is available from departmental managers.

Notifying your line manager - Managers may ask you whether you will be taking part in strike action for operational reasons. This is particularly important if you are a key holder of a vehicle or building. I would ask you to co-operate in giving this information as managers will wish to make alternative arrangements for continued service delivery.

Closures – You should not assume that your place of work will be closed on 17th July. Contact your line manager if you are in any doubt. Unless you are told that your normal work place will be closed, you will be expected to come to work.

Covering other work – If you are asked to cover similar work to your own, I expect that you would co-operate with any reasonable requests from managers. However, in exceptional circumstances, you may be asked to cover different work from your own. In such circumstances I hope that you will help wherever possible to make sure our essential services can continue to operate.

Annual and Flex Leave – If you have already asked for leave on July 17th and this request has been approved, you can take it in the normal way. You will not now be able to book leave, lieu days or flex leave for 17th July. After notification of any possible future action, requests will only be approved if they do not disrupt normal working

Sickness or other absence – Normal arrangements for sickness and other short term absence will apply. However, please note that staff taking strike action are not entitled to sickness payments.

If you have any queries, or want further information please discuss it with your line manager in the first instance, or alternatively your departmental personnel section (see contact number below):-

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| Social Services | 01603 223060 |
| Education | 01603 222418 |
| Cultural Services | 01603 224253 |
| Planning and Transportation | 01603 222630 |
| Chief Executive's | 01603 222065 |
| Fire | 01603 819793 |
| Capita Pension Services | 01603 495782 |

Finally, I know that this industrial action is unsettling for all concerned. However, I am confident that staff in all services will meet the challenge of keeping our essential services going and that with common sense and flexibility, we will be able to get back to working effectively together.

Your sincerely



Tim Byles
Chief Executive