

IL/AV 156-18

Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive
Cafcass

(By email – no hard copy to follow)

23 December 2018

Dear Anthony,

Cafcass Interim Pay Award

I regret having to write to formally express Napo's huge disappointment and frustration at Cafcass management of the implementation of the interim pay award this month. The way this was communicated to staff and the failures to give prior notification to Napo has caused us great difficulty and embarrassment that was entirely avoidable. This is out-with the spirit of partnership that has been the hallmark of our relationship over many years and which we have been working hard to encourage and foster. In particular, it is being seen as something akin to a 'kick in the teeth' for our local Representatives. That senior managers were obviously briefed and informed and therefore were telling members what was happening before we knew ourselves is unacceptable, and would appreciate a personal reassurance from yourself and your senior leadership team that this will not happen again.

In relation to the pay talks, our local Reps, supported by my Assistant General Secretary Dean Rogers, have been working for a number of months with your officials to help shape and strengthen your business case to the MoJ. This makes the failure to update us even more disappointing. Going forward, I note your assurance that formal talks will continue with the unions and that this is an interim award with more to hopefully follow. In these circumstances, had we been consulted, it is possible that we would have supported and understood a desire to make interim payments before Christmas but as things stand I believe that you need to do more to communicate to staff that unions have been and will continue to be engaged in honest and thorough negotiations around pay and that further payments will not be made until we have been consulted – and had an opportunity to consult members. A reminder in this communication that in order to vote on any pay award, staff require current membership of a union, would be welcomed.

In relation to those talks it is opportune that I remind you of our key priorities:

1. Napo is explicitly opposed to any form of individual or team based performance pay. PRP in the civil service has been consistently found to be ineffective, inefficient and indirectly discriminatory. Most departments have abandoned PRP.
2. Napo recognise that the Chancellor has lifted the pay freeze for local authorities and so there is a risk that Cafcass will start to fall behind competitors when the reality is, as we have previously recognised, Cafcass needs to recruit and retain the best and most experienced social workers it can. Every case that our members manage would be in the most difficult pile in any local authority. You cannot allow Cafcass to fall behind and be seen as the poor relation because civil servants are controlled more closely than other public servants.
3. The MOJ is a poorly run and confused department, even by this Government's standards. This is not an excuse for Cafcass to fare badly. If the MoJ's wider problems start to impact upon Cafcass then we would expect you and your Board to recognise this and work with us to get a fair and sustainable deal for Cafcass.
4. The pay of our members isn't an issue that can fairly or fully be considered in isolation from the unsustainable workloads that have blighted the organisation. It is not possible to choose between more staff or fair pay. Both are required if our members are to have a fair chance of continuing to provide the service vulnerable children and their families need from your organisation.
5. The pay freeze has built up problems that need to be recognised and addressed strategically and so pay, like other issues needs to be tackled accordingly with short and long term strands that complement each other. Short term fixes that amplify or increase longer term challenges should be avoided.

I hope that you accept and welcome this input in the spirit intended and look forward both to a constructive and positive response.

Yours sincerely



IAN LAWRENCE
General Secretary