

Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street,
London, EC1M 5LG
Telephone 020 7296 6600 Fax 020 7296 6751
Employers' Secretary, Charles Nolda

**POLICE SUPPORT STAFF
COUNCIL
Employers' Side**

Direct Dial
020 7296 6712

e-mail: graham.baird@lg-employers.gov.uk

**To: Clerks to Police Authorities (England and Wales excluding Metropolitan Police)
Chief Constables (England and Wales excluding Metropolitan Police)**

Metropolitan Police and Forces in Scotland (for information only)

7th February 2002

CIRCULAR EMP/1/02

Dear Sir/Madam

**JOINT REVIEW OF POLICE SUPPORT STAFF COUNCIL HANDBOOK -
EMPLOYER CONSULTATION WITH FORCES**

1. This circular seeks the views of police forces on an impending review of the Police Support Staff Council Handbook. While it is formally addressed to clerks to police authorities and chief constables, you may consider it appropriate for your force's response to be made by the head of personnel (or equivalent).

Background

2. The first PSSC Handbook came into effect in September 1996 (and was reissued in 1998 with a few very minor amendments). Support staff had previously been covered by either the Purple Book (the old local government white collar agreement), the White Book (the old local government manual worker agreement) or by the local government craft agreements. (In 1997 the APT&C and Manual Worker NJCs were replaced by the NJC for Local Government Services. That body subsequently introduced the new Green Book single status agreement for the whole of "mainstream" local government.)
3. The PSSC has given support staff their own separate identity and dedicated negotiating machinery. This has a number of advantages: in particular it means that discussions in the PSSC can be directed to the specific needs of the police service and its employees; and that the police service does not get dragged into any industrial difficulties in local government. It provides a national system of determination for pay and core conditions of service (giving clarity and certainty and, where appropriate, consistency) while leaving other issues, including many that affect managerial and operational efficiency, for determination at local level.
4. Both sides of the PSSC believe that if the service is to continue to benefit from these arrangements then it is essential for the Handbook to be reviewed periodically. It has therefore

been agreed that that the first review should now be undertaken. The review will examine the detailed contents of the Handbook, whether it maintains an appropriate balance between national and local determination and the extent to which it should include joint guidance on issues such as fairness and equality, training and development, health and safety and job evaluation.

Terms of reference

5. The agreed terms of reference for the review are:

“To undertake a joint review of the PSSC Handbook and in particular to:

- Review the role and responsibilities of the constituent organisations of the PSSC
- Clarify the presentation and wording of existing agreements
- Update agreements to reflect recent changes in employment law
- Consider the extent to which there should be any other amendments or additions to existing agreements
- Develop joint guidance on issues such as equal opportunities, training and development, health and safety and job evaluation”

6. In agreeing to the review both sides of the PSSC have said that they are committed to developing the Handbook so that all police authorities in England and Wales conclude that it is of mutual benefit to incorporate its terms and conditions into the contracts of employment of their support staff.

7. Both sides have also confirmed that they are committed to the continuation of a national pay spine that is used by individual forces to produce appropriate local grading structures.

Views of police forces

8. Forces are invited to comment on the future shape of the Handbook and in particular:

- (a) the extent to which you consider there may be any shortcomings in the clarity and presentation of existing agreements (eg it is apparent from inquiries to the Employers’ Secretariat that the appendix on shift working, stand-by and call-out arrangements creates particular problems);
- (b) the extent to which you would welcome the inclusion of any new issues in the collective agreement;
- (c) the extent to which you would welcome jointly agreed guidance on issues such as equal opportunities, training and development, health and safety and job evaluation (you may recall that the ACAS arbitration award on the 2000 PSSC pay settlement encouraged the use of the PSSC job evaluation scheme as a means of considering relative job value).

9. The first two meetings of the joint working group have been set for 20th February and 12th March. It is anticipated that the first meeting will be concerned with a discussion of general principles and the role and responsibilities of the constituent organisations of the PSSC. Detailed consideration of the contents of the Handbook would commence at the second meeting. It would therefore be helpful to receive your response by **Monday 4th March**, in time for the second meeting.

Yours faithfully

Phil White
Assistant Employers' Secretary