

A better and fairer way

Common employment provisions for the public service

Common employment provisions are to raise standards for a better working life, and to support a public service that is truly “an employer of choice”. They are a direct outcome of the Partnership for Quality agreement signed in 2007 by the Government, the PSA and the SSC.

As a public servant, you might expect to enjoy similar conditions of employment as public servants in other government departments.

In fact, how much leave you are entitled to, or whether you have flexible hours or time off for study, depends a lot on which department you work for – and on how much bargaining strength you have.

Some public servants are better off than others; some are considerably worse off.

There is not even a guarantee that you will be able to hang on to service-related entitlements such as long-service leave if you move from one department to another.

It cuts right across the Government’s concept of the public service as an integrated whole and an “employer of choice . . . promoting mobility between departments”. [The Government’s Bargaining Parameters. 2005].

Section 2.5 of the partnership agreement states that “a high performing public service must include . . . common employment provisions”. And it must be an employer of choice, fostering talent and providing career pathways and progression within and across the public service.

The corollary of this is high standards of employment across all departments. This will provide fairness, greater certainty, and seamless career mobility for public servants.

It’s an approach that makes sense and is fair to everyone.

The first stage

The first common employment provisions are about leave. Some departments may already have some or all of the provisions in place – others won’t. They cover:

- broadening service recognition beyond the core public service for leave entitlements
- 25 days’ annual leave after five years’ service
- long-service leave of two weeks after 10 years’ service and one week each five years after that
- annual entitlement of 15 days a year after two years when you are sick or to care for dependants, able to be accumulated
- additional paid day’s bereavement or tangihanga leave to attend an unveiling
- preference for re-employment after four years’ absence for childcare

Questions and answers

When will we get common employment conditions across the public service?

They have to be in place by July 2009 at the latest; departments can implement them before this date.

How will they be brought in?

The provisions will be offered to PSA members by their employer. Members will vote on whether or not to accept the provisions as part of their employment agreement.

We’ve just negotiated our collective agreement. Will we have to wait until the next negotiations to get these improvements?

No. Your collective agreement will be varied to include the common provisions if members vote to accept them.

What if the agreed standard for annual leave, say, is not as good as what I already have?

The reason for common employment provisions is to raise standards, not to lower them. Nobody will be worse off; many will be better off.

More information

- Bargaining for decent pay, decent workplaces – the PSA public sector bargaining strategy
- Your right to bargain your pay
- Performance pay has had its day

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