



SLT's Proposals – Union FAQ's

Following meetings online this week and communications being sent from your employer, we want to ensure that members have full information in order to come to an informed decision around the proposals set out by Sandwell Leisure Trust.

Use your voice - have your say - vote today

- **We've been told that the council will have to bail out the Trust? Management say this isn't the case – can you explain?**

Sandwell Council will have to bail out the Trust or take the service back over. This is the stark choice that the LGA (employer's body) has said to Council's during this crisis. *"When a leisure operator running services on behalf of a council begin to fail, the council faces a difficult choice. It can either allow the operator to fail, potentially bringing any facilities owned by the council back in-house as a means of keeping them open, or it can choose to support the operator. **Either approach is likely to involve significant costs to the council.**"*

In the discussions we have had with Sandwell Council and Councillors they have said they are willing to comply with the LGA, but on an open book basis. The Trust have told us that they are, but the council are saying otherwise. As we are not part of these discussions we can not say which party is speaking the truth on this issue.

- **The Trust have said that they are not looking to change terms and conditions, why are Unions concerned?**

If your employer had no intention, now or in the future to reduce the terms and conditions you work under they would not be proposing to come away from the NJC.

If they wanted to enhance or keep the terms & conditions the same, you could remain part of the NJC.

- **Why does SLT say they have to come away from NJC to discuss pay?**

The simple answer is they don't, if this was an issue solely around pay, the Trust could propose a local agreement but they haven't.

We are aware of other organisations over the past few years that have imposed pay freezes without the need to come away from nationally agreed terms and conditions.

- **Will Trade Unions still be recognised?**

The Trust have stated in their communications that we have been telling staff we won't be your voice at work. This is not the case, we welcome the Trust advising that we will still be recognised for collective bargaining, however they also state that the board will be the decision maker of future pay awards, terms & conditions – we have no mechanism to consult with the board, only the senior management team.

We also believe that the by reinforcing that there is an employee seat on the board could undermine your collective bargaining power. As members you elect us to be your voice at work, yet we have no seat on SLT's board to ensure your views are heard.

- **Why have the Unions said this is the 'thin end of a wedge'?**

We believe that by coming away from the NJC and the board having full control of your terms & conditions at work can only have negative consequences in the future.

Our job is to protect your terms & conditions and we believe that coming away from nationally agreed T's & C's would not benefit you.

- **I felt compelled to respond to SLT's email saying I agreed as I thought if I didn't take a pay freeze my job would be at risk, can I change my mind?**

Being able to make an informed decision is key.

We have heard lots of comments like this and urge you to make sure that as you have full details of what coming away from NJC could mean you can make that decision, if that means changing your response to the employer, then please do so and ensure you complete and return your Trade Union ballot by 3rd July 2020.

- **Sandwell Council pay 1% of any national pay award – why are SLT not passing this onto us?**

This is a real concern that the Trust are proposing a pay freeze and during the consultation we will be asking what happens to the 1%

- **Ryland Centre is a separate business to SLT, why are Unions worried that the board may look to mirroring their terms and conditions?**

This is correct- it is a separate entity BUT the terms & conditions were set by the board. They could have offered NJC terms & conditions but didn't....

- **If I were to be made redundant or leave under retirement and the pay freeze is implemented, would it affect my payments?**

Yes, any future payments you would be entitled to would be calculated on salary at that time.

“A trade union is like a bundle of sticks. The workers are bound together and have the strength of unity ... A worker who is not in a union is like a single stick. they can easily be broken or bent to the will of the employer”