

CHAPTER 4

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

4.1 In considering our proposals for civil service pay, it is important to recognise that we have not specifically allowed for any increase in the cost of living or in private sector salaries generally since 1st April 1979. Our approach has been to examine each individual grade against the background of the principles and practices set out in our Report No. 1 and after having regard to any representations received from staff and management. In the great majority of cases this has enabled us to take a positive view on the pay scale appropriate to the grade concerned. Inevitably however we have encountered cases where because information is lacking, or conflicting, or requires further study, we have been unable to reach a firm conclusion within the time we have set ourselves for completion of this Report. As a continuing organisation we shall review these outstanding cases at a later date.

The system for setting pay scales

4.2 In our First Report on Principles and Practices, we outlined a "qualification method" for establishing a basis to calculate starting pay. This involves finding out the starting pay in the private sector for jobs requiring certain key qualifications, and then using these figures in setting "benchmarks" to calculate starting pay for civil service jobs requiring the same level of education qualification for appointment.

4.3 We also referred to a number of main "factors" which should be taken into account in establishing the pay scales of particular grades. These factors are :

- (a) Age Where a minimum age requirement has been set on the grounds that a job cannot be successfully performed by young and inexperienced staff.
- (b) Dangerous or obnoxious duties Duties where the work is generally recognised as being particularly distasteful or dangerous, e.g. working with explosives or in a mortuary.
- (c) Enforcement duties Enforcement duties which involve confrontation with the public to the extent that there is a risk of the enforcing officer being subjected to harm.
- (d) Job content Where a job requires special and unusual skills, an above normal level of responsibility for the rank, or the exercise of a supervisory role beyond that usually expected at the level concerned.

/ (e) Qualifications

- (e) Qualifications over and above the minimum Exceptionally, where an additional qualification is of particular value in a specific rank.
- (f) Required experience Where the entry qualification for a job requires a specified period of post qualification experience.
- (g) Shift work Shift work which involves working during evenings, nights and at weekends and therefore leads to appreciable disruption of normal family life.

Factors (b), (c) and (g) are used to adjust pay scales where three-quarters of the rank are involved. Where they are applicable to less than three-quarters of a rank no adjustment is made to the pay scales and civil servants affected should be compensated by means of an appropriate allowance.

4.4 To arrive at the pay scales recommended in subsequent chapters we have therefore first decided upon the benchmark entry point for each "qualification" group taking into account, where appropriate, such private sector evidence as is available. Secondly we have determined a "normal" maximum for the entry rank in the group having regard to the existing pay scales of one or more of the major grades within the group, again adjusting this maximum where necessary in the light of any private sector evidence. We have then adjusted the basic scales thus produced by having regard to the factors referred to in paragraph 4.3 to produce our proposed salary scales for the basic entry ranks of each individual grade. In adjusting the scales we have also taken into account any recruitment or retention difficulties and any other special factors which we consider relevant.

4.5 We have adopted a similar approach in arriving at the pay scales with regard to ranks above the basic entry rank except that the higher the rank, the more we have "broadbanded", a concept which we endorsed in our First Report on Principles and Practices. In the more senior ranks management and supervisory functions tend to outweigh other factors and at this level the more difficult it is to obtain valid private sector evidence. For most grades we have therefore broadbanded completely from the maximum of the third rank upwards.

4.6 In arriving at the system which we have adopted we have been influenced by the fact that most civil service pay disputes are based on internal rather than external relativity claims aggravated by the absence of any discernible pattern for setting pay. The system we have used provides for all grades within a group to be treated equally and fairly, and the replacement of the 46 occupational classes by broad groups based on educational qualifications should allow civil servants to obtain a clearer picture of the pay structure to which they have been related.

4.7 It has been the practice to avoid overlaps between the maximum of one scale and the minimum of the scale above it. While we have generally continued this practice there are instances where we consider overlaps to be both necessary and appropriate, for example in grades with multiple entry qualifications. The acceptance of the recommendation in our First Report on Principles and Practices that all civil servants should receive an immediate cash benefit on promotion means that civil servants will not be adversely affected by such overlaps.

4.8 In our First Report on Principles and Practices we stated that any attempt to apply rigid and inflexible formulae to civil servants' pay was impracticable. Inevitably therefore there are cases where we consider the application of the system outlined in this chapter would be inappropriate. For example educational qualifications have little significance in determining the pay of grades paid from Model Scale 1. And in the case of the disciplined services, while educational qualifications are important, more weight is attached to the other factors involved. Furthermore there are a few grades paid from the Master Pay Scale where we consider it inappropriate to attach too much weight to the educational qualifications. We have not hesitated therefore to depart from the system where we consider a special circumstance warrants special treatment.

Educational qualifications

4.9 We stated in our First Report on Principles and Practices that the educational qualifications for appointment should not be raised beyond those necessary to permit the competent performance of the job concerned. In the course of this review we have come across grades which have multiple entry points for different entry qualifications. In some cases, for example in the disciplined services, this practice is clearly desirable and we have recommended that it should continue, but in other cases the provision of higher entry points for qualifications over and above the minimum required is difficult to justify. Pending further consideration of this issue we therefore recommend that, except where we have indicated otherwise, higher educational qualifications than those required for appointment should not attract a higher entry point in the scale.

Representations

4.10 In the chapters which follow we make reference to some of the representations which we have received. These are naturally a very small proportion of the total which runs to thousands of pages. The fact that we do not mention all or any of the points made in certain representations does not mean that they have not been considered.

4.11 Many of the representations refer to matters outside our Terms of Reference, for example, requests for additional staff, for improved equipment, for re-organisation of work, for an improved working environment and so on. These are essentially management problems and should be referred by staff to their head of department. Many representations also refer to conditions of service, including housing. While we expect such conditions of service to be the subject of future reviews, we are precluded from considering such issues unless they are specifically referred to us in accordance with Terms of Reference I(d) and I(g).

4.12 In our First Report on Principles and Practices we expressed the view that civil servants attached too much weight to internal relativities. In a number of cases we have received representations comparing the pay scales of grades requiring entirely different qualifications and with no similarity in duties or responsibilities. We cannot accept that such comparisons are relevant. Where comparisons have been made with the pay scale of a grade that could possibly be regarded as having some relationship, there are nearly always sound reasons for the difference in pay. In the case of a few grades to which our attention is frequently drawn by other grades in their arguments for higher pay, our examination has tended to reveal that the pay scales for these grades are too high. These are dealt with later in this Report.

Career prospects

4.13 One of the more frequent requests from staff is for additional promotion posts or the creation of more senior ranks. Rarely, however, are such requests accompanied by any evidence of a functional need for the additional promotion posts. We would therefore repeat the statement made in our First Report on Principles and Practices that we consider the creation of promotion posts solely to provide civil servants with a career is both publicly and financially unjustifiable. As in the private sector, civil servants must accept that in some cases a career will not progress beyond the entry rank.

4.14 In our First Report on Principles and Practices we also undertook to look at the possibility of providing long service increments for those grades with no prospects of advancement whatsoever. However, in this Report we recommend the merging of a number of grades without promotion prospects with grades with promotion prospects which will in itself improve the promotion prospects of the occupants of the former grades. We intend to pursue the question of merging grades further and have therefore deferred consideration of the provision of long service increments for the time being.

Titles

4.15 We have received a number of requests from staff for changes in the title of their posts. As stated in our First Report on Principles and Practices it is not our intention to become involved in the detail of titles. Changes in title should be left to the department concerned in consultation with the Civil Service Branch. Our general view is that there are far too many titles and any changes should be with a view to reducing their number.

4.16 There is one issue concerning titles to which we would draw Government's attention. This is the inconsistency in the use of "Chief" and "Principal". In some departments "Chief" is used to designate the more senior ranks while in others it is the term "Principal". This is confusing and the situation should not be allowed to continue. We also feel that some better arrangement is needed than the present position whereby the "Government" Engineer is senior to the "Chief" Engineer.