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Union proposals — 'not fit for purpose'

An independent body appointed by the government which verifies the costs and savings of proposed changes to businesses and civil society has slammed the government's impact assessments on trade union proposals as "red — not fit for purpose".

The Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) found that the government had not made the case for any changes in the law on trade union picketing and protest, including proposals to make unions give 14 days' advance notice of whether their members will use Twitter or Facebook during protests. It said that "there is little evidence presented that there will be any significant benefits arising from this proposal" and "the definition of the problem currently appears weak and must be substantiated".

On agency workers being allowed to replace striking workers, the RPC found that the government's impact assessment seems to undermine its own central assumption, as "it provides reasons why it might be more beneficial to the employer to take the short-term costs associated with a strike instead of seeking temporary workers".

And the RPC suggested that the government had been too hasty in pushing through their proposals, and called on the government to consult further — including specifically with those unions and employers affected by the additional 40% threshold requirement for industrial action.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said "The government's *Trade Union Bill* threatens the basic right to strike — and it's being rammed through with unseemly haste, without a proper case being made.

"We're pleased that the Regulatory Policy Committee has exposed the lack of consultation and the unfair imposition of excessive red tape on unions and employers. This is an opportunity for the government to take a step back, recognise that they were wrong, and drop these proposals which threaten the democratic right to strike."

www.gov.uk/government/collections/red-rated-impact-assessment-opinions-since-may-2015

www.tuc.org.uk/union-issues/trade-union-bill/workplace-issues/independent-watchdog-slams-government-trade-union

Long-hours culture brings risk of stroke

The dangers to health of a longer working work have been highlighted by research.

Working 55 hours or more a week is linked to a 33% greater risk of stroke and a more modest (13%) increased risk of developing coronary heart disease

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compared with working a standard 35 to 40 hour week, according to the largest study in this field so far, led by UCL and published in *The Lancet*.

Professor Mika Kivimäki and colleagues at UCL's epidemiology and public health department carried out a systematic review and meta-analysis of published studies and unpublished individual-level data examining the effects of longer working hours on cardiovascular disease up to August 2014.

Analysis of data from 25 studies involving 603,838 men and women from Europe, the USA, and Australia who were followed for an average of 8.5 years, found a 13% increased risk of incident coronary heart disease (that is, a new diagnosis, hospitalisation, or death) in people working 55 hours or more a week compared with those putting in a normal 35 to 40 hour a week, even after taking into account risk factors including age, sex, and socioeconomic status.

The pooling of all available studies on this topic allowed the researchers to investigate the association between working hours and heart disease risk with greater precision than has previously been possible.

Analysis of data from 17 studies involving 528,908 men and women who were followed up for an average of 7.2 years, found a 1.3 times higher risk of stroke in individuals working 55 hours or more a week compared with those working standard hours. This association remained even after taking into account health behaviours such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and physical activity, and standard cardiovascular risk factors, including high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Importantly, the researchers found that the longer people worked, the higher their chances of a stroke. For example, compared with people who worked standard hours, those working between 41 and 48 hours had a 10% higher risk of stroke, and those working 49 to 54 hours had a 27% increased risk of stroke.

Although the causal mechanisms of these relationships need to be better understood, the authors suggest that increasing health-risk behaviours, such as physical inactivity and high alcohol consumption, as well as repetitive triggering of the stress response, might increase the risk of stroke.

Professor Kivimäki said: "The pooling of all available studies on this topic allowed us to investigate the association between working hours and cardiovascular disease risk with greater precision than has previously been possible. Health professionals should be aware that working long hours is associated with a significantly increased risk of stroke, and perhaps also coronary heart disease."

www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/0815/20082015-working-long-hours-stroke-risk

Moves to increase in apprenticeships

The government has outlined a package of plans to increase the number of quality apprenticeships across England.

Employers are being consulted for their views on the introduction of an apprenticeship levy, planned for 2017 and designed to increase investment in training and apprenticeships.

Other proposed steps include a requirement to take a company's apprenticeship provision into account when awarding government contracts worth more than £10 million, and the publication of new industry standards so that apprentices are taught the right skills.

The government hopes the steps will help to keep the UK competitive in a global economy. "Skilled people are the lifeblood of a strong economy but for too long UK businesses have invested too little in developing their employees' skills to meet the demands of a competitive global market," said skills minister Nick Boles. "The apprenticeship levy will ensure that businesses invest in skills and training, and will act as a much-needed shot in the arm for the country's productivity."

The steps form part of the government's pledge to support three million new apprenticeships by 2020, which was announced in the July Summer Budget.

Ben Willmott, head of public policy at the CIPD professional association, said that the organisation welcomes the government's commitment to increasing the quantity and quality of apprenticeships, but added that a focus on what apprentices are learning is essential. "It's important that the introduction of an apprenticeship levy is used to focus on increasing the quality of apprenticeships and not just the numbers, which means that this investment by large employers should mostly be reserved for the creation of more Level 3 and above apprenticeships," he said.

"The government has also rightly highlighted its concern about falling investment in training over the last 20 years, and while increased investment

in apprenticeships is welcome it is not a panacea in itself. We need to understand the broader factors that will boost training investment and productivity and ensure that people skills are utilised more effectively in the workplace, including, crucially, investment by employers in their leadership and management capability," Willmott added.

Among those welcoming the announcements was Alex Meikle, director of employment and skills for the Electrical Contractors Association.

He said: "We recognise the pressing need for the whole of industry to get behind the drive to increase apprenticeships. Much detail remains to be worked out, but we are supportive of a levy on employers and hope this will support those who currently invest to continue, and incentivise those who do not engage with apprenticeships to begin to do so."

www.hrmagazine.co.uk/hro/news/1153335/government-outlines-apprenticeship-plans

When is pay rise not a pay rise?

There seems to be some confusion at the Treasury over public sector pay rises.

In his Summer Budget speech, chancellor George Osborne said: "We will continue recent public sector pay awards with a rise of 1% per year for the next four years."

However, a letter from Treasury minister Greg Hands to the chairs of the public sector Pay Review Bodies (PRB), including one covering NHS staff, states that not all staff will get a pay rise as promised by Osborne.

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said: "It is clear from this letter that the government's promise of a 1% pay rise for public sector workers was all smoke and mirrors.

"There was no substance to Osborne's claim and ... staff will be bitterly disappointed to hear many of them may not even get an extra penny for five more years."

Hand's letter says: "As you will have seen, the government announced at Budget it will fund public sector workforces for a pay award of 1% a year for four years from 2016-17.

But he goes on to say: "The government expects pay awards to be applied in a targeted manner to support the delivery of public service, and to address recruitment and retention pressures.

"This may mean that some workers could receive more than 1% while other could receive less, there should not be an expectation that every worker will receive a 1% award."

Dave Prentis commented: "It is difficult to see how much targeting you can get from a miserly 1% without resulting in hundreds of thousands not getting a pay rise at all.

"Ministers' acknowledgment of saving at least £8 billion with the pay caps and freezes imposed on public sector pay proves it is nurses, healthcare assistants, porters and paramedics who are still paying for a deficit they have nothing to do with."

www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/budget-july-2015

www.unison.org.uk/news/press-release/2015/08/governments-claim-of-pay-rise-in-nhs-all-smoke-and-mirrors-says-unison/?

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/455907/CST_to_office_of_Manpower_Economics.pdf

Executive excess

The gender pay divide shows up in the latest tranche of 30 top executives that feature below.

Just two of the 30 executives of FTSE 350 companies are women. Lynne Fordham is chief executive of private equity firm SVG Capital, but her £5.4 million remuneration package comes through her being an employee of investment group Aberdeen Asset Management.

Her remuneration package for the 13 months ending January 2015 came to £4.55 million or £80,750 a week.

The average full-time worker earned £27,200 a year in 2014, according to the Office for National Statistics. That means Fordham earned almost three times the average UK salary in just one week.

The other woman in the table, Ingrid Johnson, only took up the reins as finance director at insurance, banking and investment group Old Mutual in July 2014, but for remainder of the year she received a total of £2.23 million.

Fordham's package put her in fourth place in the table, but her package was dwarfed by that of two executives at advertising and PR group WPP.

In 2014, chief executive Sir Martin Sorrell saw his package grow to £42.98 million – or a staggering

£826,500 a week. In one week, Sorrell received the equivalent of 30 times the average worker's annual earnings.

WPP finance director Paul Richardson lagged almost £32 million behind his colleague. Nevertheless, his £11.22 million package came to £215,740 a week – almost eight times a full-time worker's annual salary.

Third spot, with a package worth £4.82 million last year, was taken by André Lacroix, chief executive of multinational automotive retail and services company Inchcape. Earlier this year, Lacroix stood down to take a job elsewhere. No doubt he will have negotiated an increase on the £92,770 a week package at Inchcape and be looking forward to earning more than 3.4 times the annual salary of the average worker.

Year-on-year comparison could be made for 27 of the executives and 15 saw their packages grow last year.

Two executives at student accommodation group UNITE – Richard Simpson and Richard Smith – took the top spots. A 56.1% rise took property managing director Simpson to £1.3 million a year, equivalent to £24,960 a week. Managing director of operations Smith saw a 52.2% in his package to £1.29 million or roughly the same per week as Simpson.

Mark Dixon, founder and chief executive of office space group Regus, took third spot with a 49.4% rise. His £2.77 million package equates to £53,270 a week – around twice the annual salary of the average UK worker.

Dominic Burke, chief executive of insurance agency Jardine Lloyd Thompson (JLT), saw the biggest cut in remuneration of the 30 with a 21.9% cut. However, his £3.1 million package still works out to £59,596 a week – 2.2 times the annual salary of the average UK worker.

The total remuneration figure given in the table includes: basic salary, cash bonus, long-term share bonuses, golden handshake, pension payments and a cash figure for other benefits that directors receive, such as use of company car, life insurance, private health benefits and housing allowance. It does not include dividends received from their shareholdings in their group.

Executive	Company (financial year end)	Total remuneration (£000)	% change
Sir Martin Sorrell	WPP (12.14)	42,978	44.0
Paul Richardson	WPP (12.14)	11,219	22.3
André Lacroix	Inchcape (12.14)	4,824	9.6
Lynn Fordham [1]	SVG Capital (1.15)	4,549	-17.1
Julian Roberts	Old Mutual (12.14)	4,212	-12.0
Mark Read	WPP (12.14)	3,435	14.7
Dominic Burke	JLT (12.14)	3,099	-21.9
Mark Dixon	Regus (12.14)	2,770	49.4
John McConnell	Inchcape (12.14)	2,685	25.8
Mark Allan	UNITE Group (12.14)	2,478	27.5
François Wanecq	Vesuvius (12.14)	2,385	-2.5
Aidan Heavey	Tullow Oil (12.14)	2,378	-13.5
Jeremy Helsby	Savills (12.14)	2,237	14.1
Ingrid Johnson	Old Mutual (12.14)	2,234	n.a
Simon Shaw	Savills (12.14)	1,678	13.3
Paul Hanratty	Old Mutual (12.14)	1,646	n.a
Joe Lister	UNITE Group (12.14)	1,602	35.4
Steve Ingham	Michael Page Int (12.14)	1,494	13.4
Nick Henry	James Fisher (12.14)	1,486	6.7
Ian Springett	Tullow Oil (12.14)	1,406	-13.7
Graham Martin	Tullow Oil (12.14)	1,325	-13.6
Angus McCoss	Tullow Oil (12.14)	1,323	-13.7
Paul McDade	Tullow Oil (12.14)	1,322	-13.7
Richard Simpson	UNITE Group (12.14)	1,298	56.1
Richard Smith	UNITE Group (12.14)	1,294	52.2
M Drummond Brady	JLT (12.14)	1,261	-19.0
David Broadbent	Int Personal Finance (12.14)	1,184	-19.0
Robert Gray	UBM (12.14)	1,056	-4.2
Tim Cobbold	UBM (12.14)	1,033	n.a
Stuart Kilpatrick	James Fisher (12.14)	1,001	6.5

[1] % change annualised

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