

CWU continue to reject BT's derisory offer in pay talks

The CWU negotiating team led by Andy Kerr, Deputy General Secretary (T&FS) has held further meetings with BT to discuss the 2017 NewGRID grades pay review.

The offer, which has not been increased since BT Pay Bulletin 3, has again been rejected outright by the CWU negotiating team.

Why the Union are rejecting the offer.

- We believe CWU represented employees should be fairly rewarded with an inflation plus pay rise for the considerable contribution made over the last 12 months to BT's strong market position, which has increased BT's pre-tax profits by 14.52% to £3,029m
- BT has invested millions in securing its place in the market, but refuses to invest in its people. They have invested £897m for three seasons of exclusive coverage of Champions League and Europa League football, starting in 2015-16 and £960m for three season's coverage of premier league football from 2016/17. They are also about to invest in another round of Champions League and Europa League football.
- If BT wants its employees to feel proud of the place they work and values their commitment and expertise, it should invest in them. To give everyone an above inflation pay rise it would increase the current pay-bill by around £35m.
- BT is financially sound:
 - BT consumer revenue is up 7% over the year, reflecting 17% growth in broadband and TV revenue, benefiting from investments in BT Sport and BT Mobile.
 - BT's broadband market share grew from 40% to 41% over the year.
 - BT TV customers were up 28% over the year to 1.5m customers.

- We do not believe our members should be penalised for financial decisions taken by the company, on pensions or anything else that is out of their control, and they should certainly not be paying the price for accounting irregularities In Italy.
- The pay team continues to be concerned about the precedent that could be set in accepting an element of non-pensionable pay for members in the BT Pension Scheme.
- BT's insistence of using CPI as the measure for inflation continues to be wholly unacceptable. The pay team remains of the view that RPI reflects the real cost of living for working people. The recent price hike announced by EE (owned by BT) using RPI as the measure of inflation – proves the double standards of the company, who pick and choose inflation rates to suit themselves. The December inflation figure, published in January for CPI is 1.6% and RPI 2.5%.
- The double standards applied to deal with ordinary workers and those in the City are rife as BT provided a final dividend to shareholders of 14.0p, up 13% last year and they expect to grow their dividend per share by at 10% in both 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The current offer is:

- A quantum of 1.8% in consolidated pay increases for all NewGrid grades;
- For members in the BT Pension Scheme (BTPS) 0.7% is fully pensionable anything above this would be non-pensionable;
- For all other employees the award is fully pensionable;
- The potential to discuss different awards for different grades that would reduce the disparity between NewGRID WF 2020 grades and all other NewGRID grades.

The CWU are refusing to accept what we believe to be a derisory offer for our members. Our members are constantly told to increase efficiency, work to tighter deadlines, improve customer service and be multi-skilled, yet BT refuse to reward them with a cost of living pay rise. We are standing firm and won't accept a real-terms reduction of our members' pay now or into the future.

Please back your Union and let us have your views at BTpay@cwu.org. We also trust you are taking every opportunity to make BT aware of your discontent.