

CENTRAL PERSONNEL GROUP

NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE

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12 February 2002

DEO 8/02

TO: ALL ESTABLISHMENT OFFICERS
AND INDUSTRIAL PERSONNEL OFFICERS

Dear Establishment Officer / Industrial Personnel Officer

NIC/ICTU ACTIONS ON FRIDAY 18 JANUARY 2002

Introduction

This DEO replaces DEO 2/02 which was withdrawn on 18 January. It provides Establishment/Personnel Officers with fresh guidance on the management of staff who supported the actions called for by Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC/ICTU) on the day of action – 18 January 2002.

Background

As you are aware the Head of the Civil Service met with representatives of NIC/ICTU on 15 January to discuss their call for lunchtime rallies and a half-day stoppage for Friday 18 January in order to permit public sector workers and other members of the public to express their abhorrence of the upsurge in violence, including the murder of the postal worker Daniel McColgan and the death threats issued against teachers and postal staff.

At that meeting Mr Loughran advised NIC/ICTU that NI Departments would be pleased to offer their wholehearted support and co-operation in facilitating NICS staff in attending the lunchtime rallies. This is consistent with the approach that the NICS has taken in supporting previous lunchtime anti-violence rallies.

However, as an employer, Mr Loughran advised NIC/ICTU that he could not support the proposed follow on half-day stoppage.

Mr Loughran minuted his Permanent Secretary colleagues to this effect on 15 January. As indicated above, this minute provides Establishment/Personnel Officers with further management advice.

Attendance at lunchtime Rallies

Managers should continue to consider attendance at the lunchtime rallies in a flexible and sympathetic manner. Staff who attended the rallies should, if they have not already done so, be advised to add 1 hour flexi credit to their flexi sheet.

In calculating how long staff were away from their offices to attend the rally, managers should also ensure that reasonable allowances are made, on a case by case basis, where staff had to travel some distance to attend the nearest rally and in light of any transport difficulties which may have arisen.

The half-day stoppage

As indicated above, the HOCS clearly advised NIC/ICTU, in advance, that the NI Departments could not support the call for a half-day stoppage. Staff therefore who on an individual basis supported the half-day stoppage should have availed of annual or flexi leave, subject naturally to the need to maintain essential services to the public.

Where staff did not request leave but decided, nevertheless, not to return to work on the Friday afternoon, they should be asked for the reason for not being at work. Where there is a genuine reason for being unable to return, i.e., transport arrangements failed, they took sick, etc., no further action is required. Where, however, no reason is given or the reason is solely to support the stoppage, the member of staff should be given the choice of covering the absence retrospectively with flexi or annual leave or having a ½ day's pay deducted.

Where the ½ day pay is deducted it should be ring fenced. As a result staff who were scheduled to work overtime that weekend should continue to attract the relevant overtime premiums and are not required to have completed their normal conditioned hours.

Finally, participation in the stoppage should not be treated in any way as a disciplinary matter. Where a ½ day pay is deducted the related absence will not be taken into account by managers or Personnel staff in considering inefficiency cases.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Johnston

W JOHNSTON (MISS)

0207
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