

UP & CLOSE PERSONNEL



The RAF Families Federation's Dawn McCafferty shares some of their casework

Dear Families Federation...

I and many of my colleagues are dismayed that the entire RAF allowances package has been reduced, in particular, the Home to Duty (Public) rate which has dropped from 31.2p last year to 25p this year.

As a result, I received £53 less this month than last, despite the cost of petrol and 'wear and tear' on my vehicle increasing.

My two per cent pay rise has been more than negated by the rise in quarter charges and the loss of petrol money. It will now cost me and several of my troops money to commute to work.

Particularly galling is the fact that I am forced to commute between one unit and another as there are no quarters at my parent unit.

Surely, neither I nor my troops who are in the same position should be out of pocket when our housing location has not been of our choosing?

Squadron Leader A

I was extremely disappointed to receive a pay cut of £45 this month owing to the reduction in the Home to Duty (Private) Allowance.

Whilst I appreciate that a rise, given the current economic climate, would have been unrealistic, a cut at a time when petrol prices are at their highest is just unreasonable.

I do feel disadvantaged living in my own home and commuting when I would have thought I would be less of a drain on the Service and MoD resources.

I would be most grateful if you could advise me on this matter and whether there is any recourse to challenge this decision.

Squadron Leader B

Dear Sqn Ldr A and Sqn Ldr B...

YOUR letters reflect the strong views that have been presented to us since the news of a reduction in allowances on April 1 2010; Home to Duty Travel in particular has drawn the most comment.

We know that the Motor Mileage Allowance Private Car Rate (PCR MMA) has been aligned with the Approved Mileage Rate (lower) set by HMRC, in accordance with Service Personnel Board instructions; this much was mentioned in a T Letter dated March 31 2010.

Chapter 6 of JSP 752 outlines how the rate is arrived at by using a Rate Calculation methodology but, as those who contacted us have highlighted, the individual perspective is clearly at odds

with the calculation used by the MoD.

The calculation adds the in-year running costs per mile (petrol, tyres, servicing, repairs and replacement parts) for a medium size car (source the Automobile Association) to the depreciation costs per mile quoted in 'Parker's Guide'. Consequently, the PCR has decreased by 6.2p per mile for 2010 – a not insignificant amount.

We all know that the allowances 'pot' is finite and that any increase in one area will invariably affect another; moreover, where the PCR rate set at the outset of a year becomes favourable as costs fall, the recipient gains – so over a period of time the allowance should, in theory, even out.

Nevertheless, we suspect that few will subscribe to this argument given the steady climb in costs of fuel. So what can we do to represent your views?

Although mileage rates are not set by the



ROAD RATES: Allowances have been reduced while petrol prices are at an all-time high

Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB), the members are always interested in hearing evidence about cost of living-related issues brought to our attention, be that the state of the housing market, levels of debt, costs of childcare or the need for a second income to support modern family life.

All evidence brought to us about the impact of reduced allowances will therefore feed the bigger financial picture upon which the AFPRB base their recommendations for pay, pension and

charges, as well as a range of specific allowances.

With this in mind, we will also be asking for serving personnel and family members opinions on these types of issues during our interactive workshops, which we will be running across the RAF over the coming months – more details can be found on our website at www.raf-ff.org.uk.

Our combined evidence will then be used to inform our report to the AFPRB in their Autumn evidence session.

● If you have been affected by this issue, or find yourself in a similar situation, please speak to one of the Families Federation team on 01780 781650 or go to the website at www.raf-ff.org.uk