

Public sector pay, smart working and quality of service

Many in the public sector understandably want a rise to offset the cost of living squeeze. The government is alarmed by current levels of spending and borrowing. It offers the below inflation rises the Independent Pay Review Boards propose, based as these are on private sector comparators. Most in the private sector are settling for rises well below current inflation.

Meanwhile productivity, output per person has at best gone sideways and in many public sector services has fallen since lockdown. This is painfully true of the asylum/economic migrant section of the Home Office. On the railways the collapse of commuter traffic and of passenger revenue has slashed revenue per staff member needed to pay the wages.

In each case the way forward should be a something for something deal. Management should be striving to improve work processes, offering right systems, protocols, training and supervision to raise output per person which could lead to better reward.

In the case of the NHS management is talking more in public about limiting the damage strikes do than about how to end them. Within nationally agreed rises and pay scales local managements have scope to offer increments, regradings and promotions to encourage and reward good people and to attract new full time talent.

In the private sector managers and supervisors help out to keep operations turning in the event of a strike.