



NICS has asked the Labour Relations Agency (the Agency) to make conciliation available to NICS employees who consider that they may have grounds to make complaints to the Industrial Tribunal regarding equal pay and/or sex discrimination.

## **The role of LRA**

The Agency is an independent body that, among other things, has a legal duty to promote settlement of claims that have been lodged with the Industrial Tribunal. The Agency also has a duty to promote the settlement of claims that *could* be made to the Tribunal. The Agency provides these settlement services on an impartial and confidential basis. Our role in these matters is simply to help employers and employees, if they wish to do so, to reach a legally binding agreement (recorded formally on a document called a CO3) that settles the actual potential claims concerned.

## **Settlement offers**

NICS is offering you a payment as specified in recent correspondence to settle certain possible complaints you could make to an Industrial Tribunal. If you wish to accept this offer you will be required to sign a conciliated agreement (CO3) in the terms set out in the example provided by NICS.

## **Roadshows**

If you believe you might have a claim to the Tribunal in relation to the matters described on the specimen CO3 form and you would like to consider accepting the offer from the NICS to settle it, as you know you will have to attend one of the Roadshows. **Attending a Roadshow puts you under no obligation to accept the offer.**

Before you come to the Roadshow it is important that you obtain as much information as you need to help you decide whether to accept the settlement offer. You can seek advice from your Trade Union (if you are a member) and/or consult an independent solicitor, a Citizens Advice Bureau, The Equality Commission, or any other competent source of your choice.

At the Roadshow Agency Officers will fully explain their role and provide you with information so that you can make an informed choice about whether or not you wish to sign the agreement. Agency staff, known as Conciliation Officers, will not advise you what to do or try to persuade you either to accept or refuse the settlement offer. **If at any stage before signing a CO3 Agreement you decide you want more time to consider your position or seek further advice, the Conciliation Officer will allow you the opportunity to do so.** Arrangements can be made to allow you to sign at a later date if you decide to do so.

## **The CO3 agreement**

If you decide to accept the offer you will be asked by the Conciliation Officer to sign your personal CO3 agreement form available for you to sign. The effect of signing a CO3 agreement is that in return for the payment concerned you would give up your rights to make certain claims to the Industrial Tribunal concerning equal pay and/or sex discrimination in connection with equal pay, or for compensation related to such a claim. The agreement will not however affect any rights you may have in relation to personal injury claims or your existing pension arrangements. The CO3 agreement will be legally binding when you and your employer have signed it. **You should only sign the CO3 agreement if and when you are sure that you wish to accept the offer. Once you have signed it you will not be able to change your mind afterwards.**