



**CONSULTATIVE BALLOT ON NEW PAY OFFER OPENS 30 NOVEMBER**

**PLEASE VOTE TO HAVE YOUR SAY**

**19 November 2015**

Dear colleagues

Thank you for your continued commitment to delivering an excellent service to our clients and customers throughout what is a difficult time for all.

We met with union representatives on 2 November 2015 and have put an offer on the table which we believe is fair, providing financial security to you while helping our businesses remain competitive in this tough economic climate.

The unions intend to hold a telephone ballot from **Monday 30 November to Friday 4 December 2015**. It is very important to note that this telephone ballot is only open to members of either union - we urge all union members to take part in the ballot.

The Q&A below is designed to answer your questions about what the offer means for you. It also explains how you can vote in the ballot if you are a union member.

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss the offer in more detail please contact your chef/manager, operations manager or HR team or email COTA at [feedback@cota.org.uk](mailto:feedback@cota.org.uk).

We hope that union members will vote to accept the offer, allowing us to settle the dispute. There can be no winners through industrial action. We must all work together to service our clients and customers and grow our business to secure jobs in the future.

Yours sincerely

COTA

## Your questions answered

### What is COTA offering?

We have put an offer on the table which we believe is fair, providing financial security to you while helping our businesses remain competitive in this tough economic climate.

This offer will be back dated to **1 September 2015** and will mean the reinstatement of:

- Increase the offshore delay from £40 to £75;
- Introduce a minimum payment for those undertaking training for emergency duties out with their normal working hours of 3 hours at overtime rate ; and
- Amend clause 27 of the agreement so that the Shetland payment will now be made in the event of delays on route to the point of your departure no matter where they occur.

We have also promised that all terms and conditions of employment for staff under the COTA agreement will remain in place until the end of the current COTA year (31<sup>st</sup> August 2016).

### How much are these payments worth to me?

Combined, these measures are worth a 0.5% increase. This will make a significant difference to employees, particularly when UK inflation is at -0.1%.

### What have RMT and Unite leaders said about our offer?

Representatives from both unions as well as the joint union shop stewards' negotiating committee have accepted our revised offer and have **recommended that their members vote to accept the offer.**

### Why is COTA unable to offer the original pay increase?

Since the original pay increase was offered last year the oil price has more than halved. This has only added to the problem of spiralling cost of operations in the North Sea. Our clients are asking us to find cost savings and we have to play our part. If we do not, we will be contributing to the economic instability of the North Sea at present.

We understand employees' frustrations that we have had to retract the original offer. We hope that you will understand it is not a decision we took lightly and is aimed solely at securing the future of the business and the jobs it supports.

## **How do we know that other terms and conditions of our employment will not be changed?**

Our offer includes a promise that all terms and conditions of employment for staff under the COTA agreement will remain in place until the end of the current year, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

The COTA agreement is negotiated annually and any subsequent changes could not take place without the involvement of the unions

### **I'm a union member. Why should I take part in the ballot?**

The result of this ballot affects all of our employees. There are no turnout restrictions in consultative ballots so it is important that all union members make their views heard and we would encourage union members to approve the offer.

Only 9% of the COTA workforce voted in favour of industrial action in the October ballots. Yet the result of this new consultative ballot, if members do not approve of the offer, could have a detrimental effect on the ongoing viability of the North Sea oil and gas industry, especially if industrial action were to then occur.

### **I'm a union member. How can I vote in the ballot?**

The consultative ballot will run from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December. Lines are open from 9am – 5pm, Monday – Thursday and 9am – 12 noon on Friday.

To register your vote, please call one of the following mobile numbers:

**07949890164**

**07949890175**

**07949890290**

### **What if I am not a member of Unite or RMT? Does the outcome of this ballot affect me?**

Yes. The ballot affects all of our employees who are employed under the terms of the COTA agreement, regardless of your role or whether you are a union member. If the union members accept the offer made by COTA, then all employees employed under COTA agreement will benefit.

If however, union members do not accept the offer made by COTA, this could lead to industrial action occurring. This would then add to the current instability across the North Sea and threaten jobs in the long term.

If you are not a member of Unite or RMT please talk to your colleagues who are and encourage them to take part in the vote.