



Isle of Man Airport
Ballasalla
Isle of Man
IM9 2AS

20 Oct 2025

By email to all ATCOs

ATCO Pay and Benefits Update

Dear colleague,

Following the most recent offer sent on 22 August 2025, I have received formal notification from both Prospect and Unite the Union confirming that the offer was unanimously rejected by all members, along with a feedback document dated 1 October.

While this outcome is disappointing given the extensive progress made during negotiations, I want to take this opportunity to set out clearly where we are, what has been offered, and how we intend to move forward.

August 2025 Offer

As a reminder the latest offer included the following provisions:

Pay

An **increase of 6%** to the basic rate of pay applicable to ATC Supervisors, Air Traffic Control Officers and Student Air Traffic Control Officers with **no change to conditioned hours**. This increase would have been **in addition to** any settlement agreed separately as part of the PSC pay negotiations for 2025/26.

This would have resulted in the following levels of basic pay (assuming a 3% settlement to the PSC pay offer):

	Current Pay (2024 rate)	Proposed Pay (6% + 3%)
ATC Supervisor	£105,299	£114,965
ATCO (SP47)¹	£101,316	£110,616
Student ATCO (Band)²	£28,979 - £49,054	£31,639 - £53,577

Pay for Specialist Roles

Allowances for OJTI and Assessor roles of **£5,000/annum paid monthly for each**, a **108%** increase in both allowances³ with new provisions for continued payment during temporary lapses of medical and/or competence.

Creation of a **new allowance** for the Unit Competence Scheme Co-ordinator of £3,271.92 per annum paid monthly.

Retention of the Unit Training Manager allowance of £3,271.92 per annum paid monthly.

Continuation of payments for the legacy roles of Unit Verifier and Unit Evaluator until formally withdrawn.

Overtime

All authorised overtime for ATC Supervisors, Air Traffic Control Officers and Student Air Traffic Control Officers to be paid at the **plain time rate** replacing the 2011 Local Agreement that capped weekday overtime at 2 Spine Points below plain rate.

Premium Pay

Premium pay would continue to be claimable for attendance on Bank Holidays.

Loss of Licence Insurance

A new 'Loss of Licence' insurance policy would be offered to replace the existing 'income protection' policy at no cost to the employee.

¹ As of Oct 2025, 7 out of 8 fully-qualified ATCOs are on the top Spine Point.

² Student ATCOs would benefit from quicker progression with a move from the current 4-point scale to a 3-point scale and with promotion to ATCO coming immediately on full qualification.

³ Current allowances are paid at £200/month for OJTIs (claimed retrospectively and claimed only in months where OJT is provided) and at £200/assessment for Assessors (based on an average of 1 assessment per month per Assessor.)

Airport Objectives

These proposals were made in exchange for ATC Supervisors, Air Traffic Control Officers and Student Air Traffic Control Officers agreeing to:

- Support all requested airport extensions up to 2315L (to accommodate a latest departure time of 2300L).
- Support overnight standby duties to facilitate out-of-hours flights by the fixed wing air ambulance and Search & Rescue flights.
- Commit to 2 training days per annum (or the equivalent hours) outside of normal rostered hours to help meet mandatory training requirements e.g. Continuation Training, Team Resource Management etc.

I believe this comprehensive offer addressed many of the concerns raised during the discussions and negotiations to date. I must also add that as the Airport does not operate as a standalone entity, this offer was at the **maximum of the financial envelope** available.

Negotiations and Offers

Negotiations began informally in late 2023 and continued through to August 2024 resulting in a proposal document submitted by representative ATCOs.

Following the departure of the former Airport Director, further discussions were initiated in October 2024 leading to a series of offers being made, which are summarised below:

- **21 November 2024** – offer sent relating to OJTI and Assessor payments following notification that OJTIs would withdraw from the role if no progress was made. A commitment was also given that discussions would continue in each of the other areas. This offer was not balloted and was rejected. Three out of 4 endorsed OJTIs subsequently withdrew from training duties progressively during the first half of 2025.
- **21 March 2025** – full offer sent covering pay, additional pay for ATC specialist roles (including OJTI and Assessor), overtime and loss of licence insurance. This offer was not balloted and was rejected.
- **13 May 2025** – full revised offer sent following negotiations held on 8 May between Prospect and Department representatives covering pay progression for Student ATCOs, additional pay for ATC specialist roles (including OJTI and Assessor), overnight standby allowance, overtime and loss of licence insurance. This offer was the first to be balloted and was rejected.
- **22 August 2025** – a full and final revised offer was sent following a series of further negotiations covering pay, pay progression for Student ATCOs,

additional pay for ATC specialist roles (including OJTI and Assessor), overtime and loss of licence insurance. This offer was balloted and was rejected.

Latest Feedback

Feedback received on 1 October restates earlier requests alongside several new elements in addition to other provisions already offered (pay progression for Student ATCOs, increased OJTI and Assessor pay, retention of current Unit Training Manager allowance, introduction of a new Unit Competence Scheme Coordinator allowance, higher overtime rates and new loss of licence insurance). These include:

- New Spine Points reaching SP53 (£127,710) for ATC Supervisors and SP 50 (£113,732) for Air Traffic Control Officers⁴.
- A 'retention bonus' of £15,000 be paid to ATC Supervisors and Air Traffic Control Officers.
- Extensions to 2300L to be limited to scheduled airline movements and air ambulance flights and not private jets or charters and a request that the Airport 'take action' against airlines who 'continually request extensions'.
- Further payment for specialist roles (Tower Manager, ATC Roster Manager, MATS Part 2 Editor), each to be paid £3,271.92 per annum.

The Public Services Commission has confirmed that any changes to Spine Points may only be made following a job evaluation and grading exercise. Such an exercise could result in a lower grade requiring independent market benchmarking against similarly sized UK airports. It is possible the outcome of such an exercise would result in basic pay levels considerably lower than have already been offered.

Tax rates and allowances differ across the UK and Crown Dependencies which make direct comparisons across all grades challenging. Nonetheless, we have aimed to achieve similar or greater standards for those working in the Isle of Man, but this could pose a further challenge in the event a job evaluation and grading exercise becomes necessary.

Impact on Training

The Airport has consistently stressed the importance of unit training. There are currently 4 Student ATCOs in the system and 2 experienced ATCOs also awaiting elements of unit training.

With 3 out of 4 endorsed OJTIs withdrawing from OJTI duties during this year, there is currently no unit training taking place.

The Airport and Department have at each stage of these negotiations acted swiftly and in good faith to put forward meaningful offers to achieve a positive outcome. However, the lack of unit training is now having a clear negative impact on individual

⁴ Rates shown are per current 2024 pay scales.

trainees and risks further longer-term detriment to the operational effectiveness and resilience of the ATC unit and Airport.

Next Steps

The most recent offer represented a full and final offer with no additional money available to the Airport.

Given the lack of progress indicated by the recent feedback, the Department will now seek to enter conciliation through the Manx Industrial Relations Service (MIRS). Whilst the Airport will progress this as quickly as possible, it is not clear how long the conciliation process will take.

However, we remain open to your representative bodies (Prospect and Unite the Union) to attempt further meaningful negotiation to settle these matters, should you wish them to do so, and I am happy to commit also to continue any talks from the Airport's perspective – although I must stress that there is no further funding available to increase the financial parts of the current offer.

I must be clear, several operational matters must be urgently addressed, to preserve the operational integrity of the unit, to continue to provide a reliable public service without undue disruption and to preserve positive industrial relations:

1. **Training.** Full unit training must recommence as soon as possible and therefore the HoATS will seek to make arrangements with existing qualified (but lapsed) OJTIs to regain their endorsements as soon as is practicable and to recruit new OJTIs. Due to the important and pressing nature of this requirement, and the potential consequences for the Unit of failing to do so, agreement on this needs to be reached urgently and likely **prior to the commencement of conciliation discussions**. We simply cannot wait.
2. **Extensions to 2300L.** The extant Local Agreement on overtime contractually commits ATCOs to guarantee to cover extensions of aerodrome hours between 0530L and 2300L and is being honoured by a majority of staff. However, **from the commencement of the December roster**, all ATCOs will be expected to cover requested extensions in accordance with the Local Agreement.

Opportunity for Further Feedback

The Airport recognises the value of seeking individual feedback from all affected staff as we seek to reach a positive outcome to these negotiations. Julie Bradley (Executive Director, HR) and Paul Beard (the Department's industrial relations advisor) will therefore be visiting the Airport on **Wednesday 5 November**, between **1300L - 1700L** and will be available to any staff who wish to speak to them individually and confidentially. I would encourage you to do so, since your perspectives gained directly may help us move on from the current situation. ATCOs wishing to do so should inform the HoATS who will coordinate timings.

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Pugh
Interim Airport Director

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Prospect
Unite the Union