

STRIKERS GUIDE
TO
SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFITS

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N.B. For the purposes of simplicity "striker" in this pamphlet refers to any person involved in a trade dispute and whose requirements are disregarded for the purposes of benefit (S.S. 66 10 (1)). The Department of Health and Social Security considers all forms of dispute as a strike for claim purposes.

In addition to this guide, claimants committees should have the following:

1. Claimants' Handbook for Strikers.
2. Supplementary Benefits Handbook (referred to as S.B.H.)
3. Ministry of Social Security Act 1966, Chapter 20 (SS 66)
4. Social Security Act 1971 (SS 71)

S.B.H. Chapters 1 - 5 should be read by members of the Committee with the reservation that references to strikers and scale rates may be out of date.

INTRODUCTION

For many years strikers, and those involved in any kind of trade dispute, had to rely on the union's strike fund, levies and collections among the trade union movement, plus any savings that were available. Very few strikers, finding the strike fund etc. inadequate to live on, claimed their right to Supplementary Benefit from the Department of Health and Social Security (previously the National Assistance Board). Rather than this a striker would borrow money from friends and relatives, do odd jobs or if married, the wife would try to get a job, or increase the hours she already worked. The National Assistance was thought of as a charity, which no one with any self-respect would accept.

The last couple of years have seen a change in attitudes. Supplementary Benefit is a right for those not in work and not receiving unemployment benefit (or whose unemployment benefit is not enough for their needs)

The crucial pressure that will force strikers back to work (apart from the lies and distortion of the press and television about the "national interest", and "small groups of wreckers blackmailing the rest of society") is lack of money. No amount of determination will feed the most militant striker or his or her family. This is why the whole question of the Social Security system must be carefully examined by trade unionists.

Supplementary Benefit is a means-tested benefit, payable by the state to those not in full time employment, in order to make their weekly income up to what is known as the "Supplementary Benefits level" - subsistence level. The amount payable is governed by the Social Security Acts of 1966 and 1971, and the methods of working of the Department of Health and Social Security are also governed by the secret "A" code.

Except where the income of a striker's dependants is above a determined level, a striker has a right to obtain benefit for his dependants. By certain provisions of the Social Security Acts of 1966 and 1971 discretionary payments may also be made to the striker and to meet other needs.

Neither Tory nor Labour governments, nor the 'faceless ones' of the civil service like strikes. Their aim is to break any and every strike. In their day-to-day dealings with claimants the S.S. is not renowned for its helpfulness in informing people of their entitlements, especially those cases that involve discretionary payments. At the time of a dispute it can be guaranteed that they will be even less forthcoming.

However we have seen recently a slight change in the tactics of the S.S. In some cases in the miners strike, and in the Manchester engineering dispute, a show of cooperation has been made. Often as a result of an approach by the union official the S.S. has offered some limited information, and even offered to meet the men in dispute, at the factory or pit, to explain their entitlements. Don't be fooled. What they have to offer is the minimum information, and when it comes to dealing with your claim, they are as willing as ever to delay you and send you away empty-handed.

DEFINITIONS

RESOURCES

For the purposes of calculating benefit, the savings (and requirements) of dependants in the same household are added together and treated as the resources of the claimant. SS66 schedule 2 para. 3 SBH para 10

DEPENDANTS

These include the wife, and children under 16 who are living with the claimants and, in certain circumstances, other children living with them and maintained by them. Children over 16 are also included in the assessment if they are still at school or receiving full-time education of a kind given in schools, or are apprentices with net earnings above their S.B. rates. Members of the household not at school and not working must claim on their own behalf.

Provision is also made for children in the care of relatives, friends, etc., where the claimant is providing maintenance. Other members of the household e.g. pensioners, handicapped people, whose net income or allowance is below S.B. scale rates should supplementary allowances or pensions for themselves. (Leaflet S1 for those under pension age; SP1 for those over)

MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE TO WIFE

The S.S. argue that the strikers should apply to the court for the letter of explanation, and that the wife should claim on her own behalf if she is eligible. However an appeal against this has been won in Croyden.

PARENTAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS FOR STUDENTS

The claimant cannot claim for this and the student will have to claim under SS66 Section 30 para. 2

"For the purposes of this section (Section 30 (1) states that a person who refuses or neglects to maintain himself or any person for the purposes of this Act is liable to maintain and in consequence of his refusal or neglect benefit is awarded to meet requirements which are or include his or those of such a person, he is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment or fine or both) a person shall not be deemed to refuse or neglect to maintain himself or any other person by reason only of anything done or omitted in furtherance of a trade dispute"

N.B. Couples living together as man and wife are treated as though they are married. Their children and adopted children are treated as all other children.

ENTITLEMENTS

As has already been noted, the D.H.S.S. pay out benefit in accordance with their idea of subsistence level - the "Supplementary Benefits level". A striker's wife will be on the non-householder's rate of £4.60 (though if the rent book, lease or mortgage papers are in her name, then the rate of £5.80 for the householders will apply).

The basic rates are:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Non-householder 21 and over | £4.60 |
| 18-20 | £4.05 |
| 16-17 | £3.60 |
| 13-15 | £3.00 |
| 11-12 | £2.45 |
| 5-10 | £2.00 |
| Under 5 | £1.70 |

RENT

In addition, the weekly rent or mortgage interest and a figure for repairs and insurance plus rates is considered in establishing the entitlement.

N.B. Rent means average net weekly rent and includes rates. This might mean for a man living in council accommodation, where rent is paid on the basis of a 50 week year, that the amount allowed in calculating a claimant's entitlement is less than the amount he actually pays. To assess rent in these cases, multiply

the rent due by 50 and divide by 52

The amount for rent may also be reduced, either because the rent^{the} claimant pays includes services such as heating and lighting, or because he sub-lets part of his accommodation. However, an allowance is made for expenses connected with subletting which varies from 90p per week where the accommodation is furnished and light and heat provided, to 15p per week where unfurnished accommodation is sublet without the provision of any services.

Unless the claimant, or his wife is blind, the sum allowed for rent is usually reduced by the amount reasonably attributable to other persons in the household who are not dependent on the claimant. The non-dependent's share of the rent is calculated by adding up the number of people living in the household, with children under sixteen years counting as half units, and working out his proportionate share. Thus, if the household consisted of the claimant, his wife, two daughters under sixteen and a son in full time work and the weekly rent and rates came to £7.50, the son's share would be £1.87¹/₂p. If it is considered that the non-dependent is unable to pay his proportionate share, e.g. because of low earnings, the sum attributable will be modified. (If a claimant's wife or working children refuse to divulge their earnings on the grounds of privacy, then these considerations cannot be assessed. Cases have been won this way; but this is not advised as it could well go against the claimant. (N.B. the only purpose for which the SS needs to know the earnings of non-dependent children is to determine whether or not claims that the proportionate share of the rent is excessive are valid.)

The 'householder' is the person in whose name the rent book is signed. Thus if a couple are living with one parent, in whose name the rent book is held, the claimant's entitlement will be assessed as a non-dependent's contribution, even if the claimant ordinarily pays the rent in full.
(SS 66 schedule 2 para. 3. S.B.H. Chap. 4 paras. 34-50)

DEDUCTIONS

The amount of benefit payable is the amount by which a claimant's requirements exceed his or her resources. In the assessment of a claimant's resources, the Act provides that certain resources shall be disregarded completely (i.e. won't count at all--this is referred to as the disregard), other resources disregarded in part, and others taken into account in full.

1. Family allowances, family income supplements and main national insurance benefits and pensions, e.g. maternity allowances (but not maternity grants) are taken into account in full.
2. Maintenance payments, whether voluntary or under court orders, for wives and children are also counted in full as weekly income.
3. Earnings. The disregard of earnings is personal, that is, there is a separate disregard for part-time earnings of a claimant, for the earnings of the spouse, and for those of any dependent children. Normally the amount they disregard is £2.00 per week of net weekly earnings, plus expenses involved in such work (bus fares, union dues, laundry costs for work clothes etc.)--except for a striker, a claimant required to register employment, or a child under sixteen, in which case the disregard is £1.00.
4. Disablement pensions, etc. Up to £2.00 of the total of the following is disregarded:-
 - a) War and industrial disablement pensions.
 - b) Workmen's compensation.
 - c) The amount by which a war or industrial widow's pension exceeds the standard rate of national insurance widow's pension.
 - d) Part of the children's allowance included in the national insurance widow's pension--38p a week for the first and second child, and 28p for each subsequent child.

Other income up to £1.00 a week is disregarded from the total of any other income, e.g., superannuation, tax rebates, regular payments from friends or relatives and the tariff income from capital. But the amount disregarded under this sub-paragraph when added to any amount under sub-paragraph 4 (above) cannot exceed £2.00 per week.

SAVINGS

Tariff income from capital (savings) in accordance with the 1966 SS Act (second schedule, para 19) is deducted as follows: capital of less than £325 is completely ignored; with capital of £325 or more any actual income it produces is ignored - instead under the Act a weekly income is calculated according to a tariff of 5p for each £25 between £325 and £800. The effect of this is that a claimant with no other disregard of income will usually have the first £800 of his capital ignored as the tariff income of £1 on the first £500 above £300 will be disregarded.

See SBH Ch 3, paras 20-27.
It is worth noting the way the SS deals with savings, indicated above, is usually modified in the case of a striker's claim for his or herself, and for some aspects of the claim for dependants (see ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS - SINGLE PAYMENT FOR EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS). As payments for strikers themselves, and exceptional needs payments are within the discretionary powers allowed under the SS Acts, savings are not solely considered as a source of income at the rate indicated above, but are also viewed as being available to meet the needs of the claimant. The way in which the SS deals with savings in such situations is laid down in the 'A Code' (the secret guide for SS clerks).

An example will show how the SS will work out the benefit to a male, married striker, with three children, as shown below:

| | | | |
|------------|--|---------|--------|
| S.B. Rate | Striker | NIL | |
| | Wife | £4. 60 | |
| | Son 14 yrs. | £3. 00 | |
| | Daughter 11yrs. | £2. 45 | |
| | Son 7yrs. | £2. 00 | |
| | Rent (incl. rates - but not electricity and gas) | £4.00 | |
| | | <hr/> | |
| | | £16. 05 | |
| | | <hr/> | |
| Deductions | Strike pay | £4.00 | |
| | Disregarded | | £1. 00 |
| | Taken into account | £3. 00 | |
| | Wife's pay | £6. 00 | |
| | Disregarded | | £2. 00 |
| | Disregard also expenses involved in that work | | £0. 85 |
| | Taken into account | £3. 15 | |
| | Family allowance/F.I.S. (taken into account in full) | £1. 50 | |
| | | <hr/> | |
| | Total deductions | £7. 65 | |
| | | <hr/> | |
| | Total benefit paid | £8. 40 | |

On top of this, the claimant is entitled to free milk tokens for a pint of milk a day for every child under 5. You are also entitled to free school meals for children at school. For every child under 2 you are entitled to tokens for free vitamins. When you first claim ask for a certificate of exemption from payment of prescription charges. At the same time you are entitled to free spectacles and free dental treatment - your optician or dentist will have the relevant form.

ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND SPECIAL NEEDS.

The SS uses discretionary powers to adjust awards of supplementary pensions and

supplementary allowances on a regular basis where there are exceptional circumstances. (SS 66--schedule 2 para. 4. 1a/S.B.H. para 56, 57.) However, for this purpose only 50p a week income will be disregarded. The special expenses for the dependant are calculated and any disregarded income in excess of 50p a week deducted. (The tariff income from savings is not included). (SS 66, Schedule 2, para 4 [2] and [6]: S.B.H. para 58, 59) The most frequent special expenses are those ensuing from need for domestic assistances, a special diet recommended by a doctor, extra heating, or substantial spending on laundry (S.B.H. 60).

SPECIAL DIETS

For diabetics, ulcers, throat conditions, piles, tuberculosis--77½p per week; and in other cases 35p per week. If more is needed and not given claim under section 7 or 13 of SS 66 Act. Note that this rate was assessed in April 71--food prices have risen by over 10% since then (S.B.H. 62)

EXTRA HEATING

For example: For a dependant whose mobility is seriously restricted by chronic ill health, general frailty, old age, or where the accommodation is particularly damp or hard to heat (S.B.H. 63). This last case is particularly valuable in the case of a striking claimant for his or her dependents, as clearly the demands of heating for a family are going to be greater than in the case of a single person in digs, for example.

LAUNDRY COSTS

Laundry or Laundrette expenses in excess of 10p per week can be claimed where necessary, e.g. due to illness etc. or where neither claimant or spouse can do the washing, or where there are no washing or drying facilities in the house. It would seem that the average weekly expenses for laundry at home (taking soap powder, electricity, H.P. payments etc., into account) or at a laundrette will be well over this figure.

OTHER SPECIAL EXPENSES

These mainly concern provision for old and disabled and those with dependents who are old or disabled. The relevant paragraph of the S.B.H. is 65--which also notes such things as H.P. payments for essential items of household equipment or furniture; or fares to visit a relative in hospital.

N.B. If any dependent is in need of care and attention for reasons of age, infirmity or whatever reason, at least £5.00 can and should be claimed (i.e. at least at the scale rates for the blind). (S.B.H. paras 91-111; particularly paras 99, 100 and 133).

If a striker is sick he or she is entitled to normal sickness benefit.

ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

Not specifically covered in the S.B.H. nor under SS 66 schedule 2, nor amended by SS 71. An attendance allowance is not a means test for benefit and any attempt to deduct this allowance as income should be appealed against.

SINGLE PAYMENTS FOR EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS

(SS 66 Sections 7, 13: S.B.H. Ch. 5, Para 77-90).

Section 7 SS 66

"Where it appears to the Commission reasonable in all the circumstances they may determine that benefits be paid to a person by way of a single payment to meet any exceptional need."

However, only £100.00 of capital is normally ignored--any available savings above this can be taken into account. Where there is a disregard of any income of over

50p which would meet the needs if taken over a four week period, a payment is not normally made (S.B.H. para 78).

The main factors governing such a lump sum payment is whether the need is a normal requirement i.e. whether it is covered by the basic scale rates, whether it is essential and whether the person is already in a position to meet the need.

Clothing and footwear are counted as included in the S.B. scale rate, but payment can be made for immediate need for where a family is without reserves of capital and has been living on or below S.B. level for some time. (S.B.H. para 80)

Other items include bedding, furniture and household equipment, either needing renewal or where they are required for the first time (S.B.H. para 32); removal expenses (S.B.H. para 82); redecoration (S.B.H. para 84); cost of clothing, tools etc. for starting work (S.B.H. para 85); fares in some circumstances, e.g. to send children of sick parents to relatives and friends, fuel debts and rent arrears where they occur through mis-spending or mismanagement--although heating and rent are normally considered covered by the S.B. scale rates (S.B.H. paras 86 and 87); H.P. debts where a lump sum might be considered preferable (S.B.H. para 88); and funeral expenses (S.B.H. para 89).

HOW TO CLAIM

Persons involved in a trade dispute fill in form B.71D. This only deals with payments for which dependents are eligible as a right. Where dependents or relatives should claim in their own right, they should use form S1 or SP1 (pensioners) and take it to the local SS office.

You are asked to take with you your rent book, family allowance book, Family Income Supplement book, details of mortgage payments, bankbook, last two weeks' wage packets and details of wife's earnings in the case of male married striker. Because the SS assume that the head of the household is male, a married woman in dispute is unlikely to have any chance of receiving benefit for dependent children. There is more chance of getting the rent (or mortgage interest) paid if rent book or mortgage papers are in her name. In the case of a married woman in dispute whose husband is unemployed, although it is unlikely that the husband would be successful in attempts to claim benefit for his wife during the dispute (she would have to claim on grounds of hardship, under section 13 of the 1966 SS Act.) Any deductions normally made from benefits on the basis of the wife's earnings would cease to apply for the duration of the dispute, except where strike pay or similar payment exceeded the £2.00 allowed for under the provisions of the 1966 SS Act. However, the SS will not make such an adjustment until they are informed of the change in circumstances--it will be the responsibility of the claimant (in this case, the husband) to make sure that they are aware of the change in circumstances and have made the appropriate adjustment.

If you have not got all the relevant documents but can prove identity, a provisional payment of approximately the amount of the claimant's full requirement should be made (S.B.H. 189). However, this is being used by the SS as an opportunity to cause delay and inconvenience strikers. If a clerk attempts to turn away a claimant on this basis, it is worth demanding to see a supervisor or manager of the office--though if all the relevant documents are produced at the initial claim, it saves a certain amount of inconvenience. (It is not necessary to produce evidence of savings, for example a bankbook--the SS should accept your word. They have no right to find out details of your bank account without your permission.)

Once the claim form is in the possession of the SS a Post Office Giro should arrive through the post within a couple of days. Payment may be delayed if wages have been paid to the claimant the previous week. If this happens, it is worthy querying the decision and if needs be, appealing against the decision. As wages are normally paid at the end of the week's work and then usually a week in hand, it can be argued that any such payments can not be expected to last into a further week, having to meet the necessary expenses for the previous week's living.

You are entitled to a full written assessment of how your benefit is calculated, form A124A. Note: "The claimant is told that he can have a detailed statement of his assessment if he wishes" (S.B.H. 192) (We are told that this form is your legal right and a civil case may be taken against the S.S. if they persist in refusing to produce the form.) It is particularly useful to obtain this form as it makes the consideration of whether to appeal or not a lot clearer.

Remember to claim for travelling expenses but bring proof of distance travelled. The payment of travelling expenses is discretionary. Some offices will only pay for distances travelled over 4 miles. If you travel by car they usually pay 2½p per mile.

REPRESENTATION

You are entitled to a representative. "The Commission is grateful to all those who act as friendly counsellors to claimants." (S.B.H. Introduction.) If any S.S. Officer is rude, make a note of it, if possible with a witness present, let him see you doing it, ask him for his name and tell him you will send a complaint to the regional office, and your Trade Union branch. Then do so.

In all cases of harrassment, ring the regional office and ask for the regional manager. He is more susceptible to public pressure and more worried about bad publicity than the desk clerks.

HOW TO APPEAL

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the S.S. you are entitled to appeal against their decision to the Appeals Tribunal. This is composed of a chairman, a representative of the bosses and one from the Trade Unions (It is useful for strike committees to find out who the trade union representative is through the local Trades Council.)

The appeal should be made in writing to the local office. A form for this purpose is available, although any piece of paper will serve. State that you are dissatisfied with such and such a decision on such and such a date, using the words "I wish to appeal against" . Give as many details as you can about your circumstances. These will provide the substance of your case. The appeal should take place within 21 days although it is possible that it will take even longer.

The main grounds for appeal are:

1. The amount of an award, the refusal of supplementary benefit and the withdrawal of benefit.
2. Refusal to review an existing benefit.
3. Recovery of the whole of any sums or any part by virtue of section 13 (SS 66, section 13, S.B.H. para 211)

N.B. Consider carefully all grounds for an appeal - contrary to what it says in the S.B.H. (para 212) Tribunals have refused to consider evidence if it was not contained in the appeal.

You are entitled to a representative as well as all interested parties over 16 (e.g. wife or husband) being entitled to attend. You may call witnesses and "cross examine" the spokesman for the D.H.S.S. Usually, the S.S. spokesman, the "presenting officer", will be a deputy manager of the local S.S. office. Persons attending the Tribunal can claim travelling and other expenses (including loss of earnings) (SS 66, Schedule 3, para 6 (1)c). Make six copies of the appeal you are going to present (e.g. breakdown of your weekly budget) and bring along any relevant documents. Ask for a written explanation of the Tribunal's decision. You will hear within a week about the result.

THE SINGLE STRIKER

We have not yet dealt with the case of the single striker. Benefit for the striker himself or herself, be he or she single or married can be claimed under Section 13 of the S.S. Act 1966. As this is within the area of the S.S.'s discretion the case will have to be carefully presented - it is normal to claim on the grounds of hardship. The Act states:

- "1. Nothing in Sections 8-10 of this Act nor any determination under Section 12 thereof shall prevent the payment of benefit in an urgent case, and in determining whether any benefit is payable by virtue of this section and the amount or nature of the benefit the Commission shall not be bound by anything in Schedule 2 to this Act or in any regulations made under this Act which appears to them inappropriate in the circumstances of the case.
2. Where by virtue only of this section any sums are paid to a person engaged in remunerative full time work, the Commission may determine that the whole or part thereof shall be recoverable from him by the Minister, if they are satisfied that the circumstances are such that a recovery would be equitable". (SS 66, Section 13 - see Appendix).

It is very rare that on first presenting a claim, even when the case of special need is carefully argued, that the S.S. will grant payment. The B710 that strikers fill in is considered as a basis for a regular payment for the duration of the dispute (although they constantly check to see that your circumstances have not changed). Claims under Section 13 are usually considered as a single payment although it is within the power of the S.S. to make a regular payment under it, thus your claim on the basis of hardship will require an appeal. It is therefore essential that all strikers (including single strikers) fill in the B710 or even the S1, although they will probably refer you to the B710. And of course, Demand a written explanation. The single strikers claim and the married man's claim for himself, will be refused. On the Appeal form, explain fully the basis of your claim - detail the hardship: lack of any savings, so much required for rent, so much for food etc. Explain that you wish to claim under Section 13 of the 1966 Act. (see Appendix for arguments to use).

The S.S. normally review a decision before it goes to the Appeals Tribunal. This applies to all appeals, not just for strikers themselves. It is possible that at this stage a payment will be made. If not, then fight it as for any appeal. N.B. Wives who are involved in a dispute will have to claim for themselves under Section 13.

RETURNING TO WORK

In addition to counting income tax and strike pay as other income and reducing S.B. for those sacked for "industrial misconduct" the S.S. Act of 1971 further states that any subs of advances of wages made or offered by the employer during the first 15 days of a return to work and any earnings from this full time work will be taken into account in determining S.B. assessments.

On returning to work the striker is no longer penalised and can claim S.B. for himself or herself as well as for his or her dependants for 15 days as a right. This should be claimed in preference to a sub from the employer, as the Act lays down the conditions under which the repayment of benefit paid to the striker can be recovered. The recovery of such benefit from wages at a later date is done at such a rate as to leave the striker with 'protected earnings' of the S.B. rate, plus £3.00 less any family allowance. If a striker's net earnings for any given week are below this rate of 'protected earnings', no recovery of benefit can be made that week.

N.B. 1 Only benefit paid after a return to work can be recovered - if during the period of the dispute the S.S. offer a loan rather than an outright

grant they cannot deduct it from your wages after a return to work, but have to rely on voluntary payment. (The wording of the Act on this question is so loose and ambiguous that they would be most unwise to take you to court over it as they would almost certainly lose)

2. Monthly paid workers may have to claim under Section 13 for the second 15 days, but any sums paid might be recoverable.

ORGANISATION

The D.H.S.S. is a collection of full time skin flints. Their attitude, obviously an essential part of their training, is as if it were their own money they were giving away, rather than the money paid into taxes etc to which we all have a right. Another feature of their activity is the ability to appear helpful and reasonable, prepared to act in your favour, particularly when faced with someone official, be he the boss of the local factory or a trade union official. Don't be fooled. To get the better of these people; to make sure we are able to take full advantage of our rights, we need to be organised. Claimants all around the country have organised themselves into Claimants and Unemployed Workers' Unions - and notice the advantages.

The need for strikers to organise effectively is clear - the S.S. adopts a different, harder attitude to strikers than other claimants; The need to pool all the experience gained right from the start of any encounter with the S.S. is even greater for strikers because their experience of dealing with the S.S. is less.

- What is required is a Committee set up to concentrate on Social Security (in a dispute Stewards Committees are usually too busy.) This S.S. Committee should make a point of studying the relevant material thoroughly so as to get a working knowledge of it. They should be known to the strikers, or at least have an office or somewhere that people will know where to find them - then if information is needed or new information is on hand there can be no confusion of delay.

It has already been observed that the S.S. in a dispute, are overworked, and often have to call in extra staff. One aspect of this is that they pull in "strike specialists" - the other side of the coin is the use of inexperienced clerks from other departments. Organised mass claims put pressure on them; they will feel less able to turn single strikers, for example, away with a blank refusal. With a body of strikers claiming at once the most timid of them will not accept such a reply.

For an initial claim, all the strikers should be briefed on the procedure at the S.S. Office - what they put on their forms etc. (In Manchester the S.S. were prepared to hand over bundles of B710's to Stewards to ease the process of making claims - in such circumstances it is fairly simple to get the forms filled in at the factory in consultation with the S.S. Committee). It is important not to delay getting the claim forms in into the S.S. - to organise those claiming to all march to the S.S. office together, if it is nearby, or to meet up at the office at a particular time. Again, drawing on what happened at Manchester, strikers' claims were dealt with at the office whose area the factory was in, not, as is normal, on the basis where the claimants live. Again, if the claimants are seen to be organised at the S.S. office, the chance of them trying to mess you around is less.

Subsequent visits to the S.S. office will usually be in smaller groups - married strikers' dependants should get benefit paid straight away; single strikers and married strikers will almost certainly be refused money for themselves at first. When the first claim is made, try and get the manager of the office to promise a date (no more than two or three days later), by which all the claims will have been assessed - so that you can more easily arrange follow up visits. It is the responsibility of the S.S. Committee to ensure that all strikers claiming demand a written explanation of how their benefit, or lack of it, is worked out. (Form A 124A). This should make your job easier later.

The next visits to the S.S will be to deal with the single strikers and married and married strikers, who have been refused benefit for themselves. It will be useful to deal with the SS separately on these two issues, as the arguments to use differ slightly. (see Appendix). Another follow up visit will be to take up the cases of married strikers whose benefit for their dependants has not been worked out satisfactorily. All these follow up visits will probably require an appeal to be put in. Minor details can possibly be sorted out by another interview - if the clerks are unco-operative, ask to see the supervisor or manager. Precisely how these follow up visits are organised will obviously depend on the numbers involved.

Another useful job the SS Committee can do is to establish links with other SS Committees or Stewards' Committees in the area to exchange ideas and information that have arisen out of dealing with the SS.

APPENDIX

BASIC ARGUMENTS TO USE WHEN APPEALING FOR BENEFIT FOR A SINGLE STRIKER UNDER SECTION 13

1. State categorically that you have no savings. They cannot determine how you use your wages - and the case can be made that on starting work you don't get any money for two weeks and so have been living on credit from wage packet to wage packet. It has been known for the SS to deduct as little as £1.50 (admitted by one miner when claiming) from the first week's benefit.
2. Give a detailed account of what you require money for - Rent, food etc. Letters threatening eviction are particularly useful.

They normally work on the figure of £4 for single strikers once they have been persuaded to make a payment.

BASIC ARGUMENTS TO USE WHEN APPEALING FOR BENEFIT FOR A MARRIED STRIKER UNDER SECTION 13

1. State categorically that you have no savings.
2. Give a detailed account of what you need the money for.
3. Make the point that your dependants are living at the supplementary benefits rate. (Unless your wife's earnings are sufficiently high to leave a significant margin above the S.B. rate) They are not going to let you starve nor are they going to exile you to one room in the house without any heating etc. This will mean that they (dependants) are living below the S.B. rate - sharing the money allowed for food with an additional member of the household (you), and sharing the money for heating, lighting, cooking etc. (None of these arguments apply in the case of a woman striker whose husband is working or unemployed - although in the latter case, if the S.S. are unwilling to increase the benefit by the amount the wife was assumed to be contributing when working, the above argument should also be used).

If your wife (in the case of the married male) is getting the non-householder rate of £4.60, she should be able to receive £5.80 (the additional amount supposedly to cover the additional expenses such as heating, lighting etc. If the husband (and they automatically assume the husband to be the householder) is paid the full benefit rate, the joint benefit for husband and wife will almost certainly be rounded down to £9.45, the married rate.

N.B. The S.S. consider couples cohabiting in the same way as married couples.

S.S. ACT 1966 SECTIONS 8, 9, 10, and 12

Below are some of the relevant conditions which do not apply if a claim is made under Section 13.

Section 8 (2); "The Minister may by regulations provide for postponing the applications of sub section (1) (which denies benefit to those in full time work) of this section in the case of persons becoming engaged in remunerative full time work until such period from the beginning of the engagement as may be specified in the regulations."

It is on the basis of this section that payments are made on a return to work. However, normal income requirements have to be met for free prescriptions, welfare goods etc.

Section 10 (1) "Subject to sub section (2) of this section, where by reason of a stoppage of work, due to a trade dispute at his place of employment, a person is without employment for any period, during which the stoppage continues and he has not during that stoppage become bona fide employed elsewhere in the occupation which he normally follows or becomes regularly engaged in some other occupation, his requirements for that period shall be disregarded for the purposes of benefit except so far as they include the requirement to provide for any other person".

This is the bit that causes all the bother.

ON STRIKE ON STRIKE ON STRIKE ON STRIKE ON STRIKE ON STRIKE ON STRIKE
 STRIKERS CAN CLAIM SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFITS (FORMERLY CALLED NATIONAL ASSISTANCE)
 FOR THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN. But as with gaining other workers's rights,
 a lot of bargaining power is needed. There is no doubt that more money will be
 made available if claimants are organized. The best way to do this is for
 strikers and their dependants - the ones who are actually doing the claiming -
 to go down to the social security office as a group and to demand that the
 clerks see them as a group. In this way individuals won't be intimidated by
 the more experienced counter clerks.

Take with you to the Social Security office 1. Pay slips for the last 2 or 3
 weeks at work. 2. Your rent book. 3. Your family allowance book.

WHAT YOU CAN CLAIM

BASIC WEEKLY RATES

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Husband on strike | Nil |
| Wife | £4.50 |
| Other persons | |
| aged over 21 | £4.50 |
| 18-20 | £4.05 |
| 16-17 | £3.60 |
| 13-15 | £3.00 |
| 11-12 | £2.45 |
| 5 -10 | £2.00 |
| under 5 | £1.70 |

Plus rates and rent

Less 5p. for every £25 of savings over £300.

Less family allowance and any other income.

DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS

If the strike is prolonged you are entitled to 'extras' such as grants for bedding, clothing, household equipment, hire purchase debts etc. Tax Rebates- Can only be deducted from your benefit for the week they are received. They cannot be divided and spread over the whole strike.

EMERGENCY PAYMENTS AND SINGLE MEN

The Supplementary Benefits Commission can make grants or loans if money is urgently required by you, under Section 13 of the Social Security Act(1966). In emergencies gas and electricity bills can be paid. During the miners strike single men were receiving £4 emergency pay per week.

FREE MILK AND SCHOOL MEALS AND HEALTH AND DENTAL CHARGES

You are entitled to one free milk token for each child under 5 years old. Also free school meals-form can be obtained from education office.

MORTGAGE

Mortgage interest, not capital, is paid plus an amount for rates, repairs, and insurance.

WRITTEN ASSESSMENT

You are entitled to a clear, written explanation of any decision reached or calculation made. Do not hesitate to demand this right.

IF DISSATISFIED

You can send a note to the manager of your local Supplementary Benefits Office stating that you wish to appeal to the Appeals Tribunal.

This leaflet has been printed by Nottingham Claimants Union as a very small contribution to your fully justified struggle. Further leaflets or information can be obtained from NOTTINGHAM CLAIMANTS UNION, 49, Constance Street, New Basford, Nottingham or 56, Park Road, Lenton, Nottingham.

SOLIDARITY IS STRENGTH

GOOD LUCK IN YOUR FIGHT