

National Employers for local government services

Mike Short, Kevin Brandstatter, Clare Keogh
Trade Union Side Secretaries
NJC for Local Government Services
c/o UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
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Dear Mike, Kevin and Clare

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2025

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 31 January. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and met initially on 24 March to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The National Employers sought councils' views at the regional pay consultation briefings regarding your request that their offer should not be badged as '*full and final*'. Broadly speaking, whilst there was sympathy with your request for meaningful negotiations, a majority understood the pragmatic reasons behind making a '*full and final*' offer and the imperative of transparency and implementing the pay award as soon as possible and therefore were in favour of that being the approach taken again this year for all the negotiating bodies for which the National Employers have responsibility¹.

Accordingly, the National Employers have agreed that making such an offer would again provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

However, as you will be aware, on 11 June the government will be announcing the details of its spending review, and we are hopeful it will provide councils with a three-year funding settlement. A longer-term settlement would provide more financial planning certainty for councils which in turn could, from 2026 onwards, enable the employers to consider alternatives to the one-year pay offers of recent years. Multi-year pay offers / deals would by necessity require meaningful negotiations and once agreed, would allow the breathing space we need to concentrate our joint efforts on reviewing the pay spine and preparing for the transition of significant numbers of NJC staff into the two new national negotiating bodies being established by the government.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive and on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (*in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4*)²**

¹ NJC for local government services; JNC for local authority Craft & Associated employees; JNC for local authority Chief Officers; and JNC for local authority Chief Executives

² The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

- **With effect from 1 April 2025 an increase of 3.20 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2024 NJC pay agreement circular dated 22 October 2024)**
- **With effect from 1 April 2026, the deletion of pay point 2 from the NJC pay spine**

Once again, the most important factor in formulating this response has been affordability. We have a duty to balance your claim against the interests of local residents, in terms of the level and quality of services provided by local authorities. The proposed increase will again be very difficult to fund in a number of local authorities and anything beyond that would take many more authorities well beyond their level of affordability. In response to other elements of your claim:

- ***A phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible***
The Employers reject this element of the claim. In order to achieve this objective would require increasing the bottom pay point by 22.35 per cent over the period 2025-27. That, plus the subsequent knock-on effect of increases to all subsequent pay points would be prohibitively expensive for councils at any time, not least during the current difficult financial circumstances.
- ***One extra day of annual leave for all staff***
The Employers reject this element of the claim. All NJC employees currently receive a minimum of 23 days' leave (with a further three days after five years' service), plus two extra statutory days, plus public holidays. Many councils have a more generous basic leave entitlement.
- ***A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay***
The Employers reject this element of the claim in relation to a proposed 35-hour week (34 in London). Such a reduction would be out of line with norms in local government and would result in an increase in costs that would adversely affect local authority services.
- ***The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay***
The Employers reject this element of the claim. With the impending reinstatement of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB), that will have responsibility for considering changes to pay and conditions for this group, we believe school employers in particular would have concerns about the NJC reaching a national agreement that gave all their non-teaching NJC employees the right to take "[at least] one day" off in term time. The cost of having not only to pay for that day but also for cover, would be significant at a time when schools are struggling financially and there is significant uncertainty about the SSSNB's remit and timetable.

The National Employers of course respect that each of your unions will have its own processes and procedures to follow, but we urge you all to please try and synchronise the timing and duration of your membership consultations, as you did last year, in order that a final agreement is reached and employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

A prompt settlement this year would give us the necessary opportunity to focus our efforts on negotiating a redesigned national pay spine, as well as continuing to discuss other complex issues, for example, the reinstatement (in England) of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary