

NJC PAY

14

Campaigning for a fair deal for local government workers

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NJC PAY NEGOTIATIONS: UPDATE FOR BRANCHES

Dear Colleagues,

This bulletin is to update you on recent developments around this year's NJC pay negotiations.

Our claim

As you know, the three unions – UNISON, GMB and Unite - submitted an initial claim for 2014-2015 for a minimum increase of £1 an hour on all scale points to achieve the Living Wage for the lowest paid and to begin to restore the 18% lost earnings for members above the bottom pay point. At the moment, 450,000 NJC workers earn £6.45 pence an hour - £1.20 an hour less than the Living Wage.

The LGA's initial offer

On 20 March the LGA made an offer – without entering into negotiations with the unions – of 1% on scale points 11 and above and lump sum payments between £580 and £175 for those on scale points 5 – 10. All three unions rejected the offer and took industrial action on 10 July. Further action is planned for 14 October. The LGA steadfastly refused to negotiate with us over an improved offer or enter into arbitration talks via ACAS – despite a clause in the Green Book which enables either side of the NJC to seek arbitration. However, in the last four weeks there have been Joint Secretarial discussions seeking to achieve a further acceptable offer.

New proposals – not a formal offer

These discussions produced a set of proposals from the LGA which were put to UNISON's NJC Committee yesterday. The LGA's proposals are attached, as are some UNISON calculations which show the value of the proposals. The LGA had asked the unions to suspend the 14 October industrial action and consult members over the proposals while they also consulted councils. The employers did not feel able to make the proposals as a formal pay offer, although they did have the agreement of the four political group leaders on the LGA and the councillors on the Employers Side of the NJC. They had asked the unions to consult members over the proposals while they got the approval of councils for them to become a formal offer.



What's in the proposals?

As you will see, the proposals – outlined below - are complicated!

- They cover a two-year period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2016
- They are made up of a lump sum to cover the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014. This will not be consolidated into basic pay rates
- The lump sum is £325 for those on scale points 5, 6 and 7, £150 for those on scale points 8,9 and 10 and £100 for those on scale points 11 and above
- 2.2% increase for those on scale points 11 – 49 from 1 January 2015
- 8.56% increase (£1065.00) on scp 5 from 1 January 2015
- 7.93% increase (£1,000) on scp 6 from 1 January 2015
- 6.19% increase (£800) on scp 7 from 1 January 2015
- 4.13% increase (£550) on scp 8 from 1 January 2015
- 2.55% increase (£350) on scp 9 from 1 January 2015
- 2.32% increase (£325) on scp 10 from 1 January 2015

In addition, scale point 5 would be removed from 1 October 2015, to make the bottom rate £7.06 pence an hour. The new basic payscale points are on the back of the LGA letter outlining the proposals.

UNISON's NJC Committee decision

UNISON's NJC Committee met on 25 September and considered the LGA proposals. After a very lengthy discussion, the NJC Committee decided to:

- Reject the proposals on the grounds that the lump sum payment for the first nine months of the 2014-2015 pay year from 1 April 2014 amounts to less than one year's back pay on the original 1% offer and
- The overall impact of the offer of 2.2% on basic pay for those on scale points 11-49 from 1 January 2015 is too low and does not begin to compensate our members for the loss of earnings and hardship they face
- Reject the proposals on the grounds that have not yet been agreed by councils and so do not constitute a formal offer which can be consulted on under UNISON's pay consultation procedures
- Continue with the industrial action planned for 14 October

- Seek further talks with the LGA to discuss an improved offer

After the discussion, the NJC Committee agreed a statement as follows:

“In light of the absence of a formal offer being made by the employers, who have instead chosen to share a set of pay proposals that procedurally under Conference policy we cannot consult on and which appear extremely limited in terms of benefits to our members, the UNISON NJC Committee rejects these proposals and declines the employers’ request to suspend industrial action at this time. The NJC Committee has agreed to share these proposals so that members could also be properly informed. The NJC Committee agreed to continue to explore alternative proposals, the details of which are attached for information”.

More information attached

Attached to this bulletin is:

- A copy of the LGA’s proposals
- A UNISON spreadsheet which highlights the impact of each element of the proposals on members’ pay
- A copy of the letter sent to councils by the LGA today

You will see from the UNISON spreadsheet that the value of the lump sum payment is less than 1% of current basic pay for all those on scp 10 and above. This is also true of the combined effect of the lump sum payment and the 3 months pay increase for all those on scale points 26 and above.

What happens next?

We have informed the LGA of UNISON’s decision and have requested an urgent meeting with the three unions to discuss a further improved offer.

We will keep you informed of developments.