



NEWS BULLETIN

NEWSLETTER 1

14 JANUARY 2009

For local government branches in England, Wales and Northern Ireland only

(Scotland – for information)

NJC PAY CLAIM 2009 - 2010

Please find attached the 2009 - 2010 NJC pay claim, which will be lodged with the Local Government Employers today.

This is going to be a difficult year for all public sector workers. We have argued in our claim that NJC employees are going to be vital to supporting local communities under stress. Councils therefore need to preserve jobs, while recognising the work our members have done to bring about widespread improvement through a decent pay rise.

We are also arguing strongly that a decent pay increase *is* affordable. Councils have made more cuts than necessary and put record amounts into reserves in recent years, while cutting jobs and keeping pay rises below inflation. The Audit Commission has recently said that councils have not been as affected by the credit crunch as the media has made out.

We need **you** and **every branch** to lobby your elected members and MP's to ensure that councils behave sensibly and ensure our members are rewarded for keeping services going under pressure.

The following are the key points made in the claim:

- 1 Local government pay is significantly lower than comparable groups of public sector workers. So are most conditions and expenditure on training. This inequality is unjustifiable, undermines joined-up service delivery and must be rectified

- 2 Failure of councils to achieve gender pay equality and eliminate the large gender pay gap accounts for a large element of the poverty pay many of our women members receive
- 3 The growing number of redundancies across councils place greater strain on our members and conflict with the Government and LGA's objective of supporting local economies through the economic crisis
- 4 A fair and justified settlement is affordable
- 5 The 'un-affordability' argument by local government employers does not hold water or reflect the increased level of council reserves, the potential use of efficiency savings and a possible re-appraisal of expenditure on agency staff and consultants to provide a decent NJC pay increase in 2009 -2010
- 6 The widespread use and high expenditure on agency workers and consultants does not make sense in terms of good employment practice, service delivery or cost
- 7 The recent economic situation has markedly increased the cost of living for local government workers and left many in debt
- 8 Persistent local government recruitment and retention difficulties could be largely overcome by a fair pay settlement this year – and in future years
- 9 The employers' aim of following (unachieved) government inflation targets of 2% is now untenable, with CPI at 4.1% and RPI at 3.0% (November 2008)
- 10 The Local Government Employers (LGE) have frequently repeated the desire to be 'employers of choice'. This aim – which the Trade Union Side supports - will remain unattainable while NJC employees have the worst pay and poorest conditions of all public sector workers

Please make sure that you read the claim, share it with activists and members and use it to recruit new members.

We are producing a leaflet, stewards briefing and a PowerPoint presentation on the claim for you to use locally. You can also invite your Regional NJC Committee or national NJC Committee reps to speak at your branch meetings.