



NEWSLETTER 20

19 October 2009

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

(Scotland – for information)

NJC PAY 2010/11 Pay Consultation Results and NJC Executive Meeting

Consultation

162 branches responded to our consultation over the three main elements of the pay claim for 2010/11. By overwhelming majorities of 99%, 97% and 98% respectively, UNISON branches have said they want:

- A one year increase
- A £500 flat rate increase or 2.5% - whichever is the greater
- Improvements to conditions to be kept separate from the pay claim.

This would mean a 4.3% increase for those on the lowest scale point (£12 145) and 2.5% for those on scale point 23 (£20,198) and above. Overall, it would mean an approximate 2.8% increase on the pay bill.

Thank you to all the branches who took part in the consultation over such a short time period – especially to those who managed to conduct a ballot!

NJC Executive Meeting

A Trade Union Side NJC Executive meeting took place on Tuesday, 13 October between UNISON, UNITE and the GMB where our consultation results were discussed and the position of the other trade unions was explored. Whilst we remain committed to delivering a pay claim as early as possible, in line with conference recommendations, the GMB position will not become clear until after their pay consultation meeting on 20 October. UNITE also want to submit the claim as early as possible. It is the continuing aim of all three trade unions within the NJC to submit a joint claim. A joint Trade Union Side meeting will take place on 26 October to finalise the claim. It is likely that a full NJC meeting will also be held with the employers on the same day.

An NJC Executive meeting with the employers was also held on 13 October. Whilst pay negotiations did not commence at the meeting, as no claim was submitted, the employers were open enough to rehearse their position in the negotiations to come. Their position will be similar to that of last year – citing “affordability” as the main pay constraint within the ‘double whammy’ context of increased demand for services and falling income. The LGA will start consulting employers soon and conclude the process by 14 December. We have supplied the dates of these consultations to Regions and NJC representatives. It will be important that branches help to ensure that councils get involved in the consultation and that our position is fully relayed to the employers before the meetings take place.

Some branch comments from the consultation process highlighted member concerns around job security and the level at which the claim is set. We will have a challenging job to persuade members that they deserve a decent pay rise - many seem to have accepted the financial situation as necessitating job cuts and reduction in services without contemplating the political nature of the choices being made. Freezing council tax and reducing jobs and services are part of the Conservative ethos of a reduced state and low taxation and linked to their drive to reduce council tax. Let’s not forget that the local government settlement will not reduce in 2010. Inflation is likely to average around 2.5% for the year, many ‘pay freezes’ apply only in the private sector and are unlikely to continue into next year and existing pay settlements for this year average around 2.5%. In addition, as we all know, pay in local government lags well behind that of other public sector employees.

We will soon be launching a hard hitting campaign over pay, conditions, cuts and privatisation in 2010, but will need active engagement across the union to mobilise support amongst the membership and to win over wider public support – watch this space!!