

LG/10/2010

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To: Secretaries of Local Government Branches in England, Wales
and Northern Ireland
(Scotland – for information)
Regional Heads of Local Government
Registered Professional/Sectional Bodies - for information

9 February 2010

NJC Pay 2010 - 2011

This circular updates branches on the outcomes of the UNISON NJC Committee and NJC Trade Union Side meetings held on 3 February to discuss the pay 'freeze'. It sets out the three unions' jointly agreed campaign plan and asks branches to take urgent action at local level. A model letter to MP's and councillors is also attached for you to customise and send as soon as possible.

The UNISON NJC meeting and the joint NJC Trade Union Side held on 3 February 2010 concluded that the employer's position of imposing a pay 'freeze' – really a 'cut' - is a disgrace and must be challenged. Below are the key points raised in the discussion:

- Many members are understandably concerned over their jobs, their pension and cuts, but there is also anger over the pay 'freeze'
- We need to give them confidence to challenge the 'freeze' which is not necessary and has got nothing to do with the recession
- Members are increasingly covering redundant/frozen/deleted posts and doing ever more for less and less
- Their own personal lives as local residents are also affected by local cuts
- The pay freeze won't stop councils from making cuts anyway
- The decision of the Local Government Association (LGA) and Local Government Employers (LGE) is largely a political choice – not an economic necessity, with little relationship to the recession

- There is no 'offer' on the table –just an imposed freeze, without negotiation
- Since there is no offer, members have nothing to lose by a campaign, which will need to continue beyond this year
- The forthcoming local and General elections provide us with a perfect opportunity to run a high profile campaign, achieve an increase for members and raise their public profile
- The campaign will bring together the issues surrounding pay, LGPS, redundancies and cuts and centre on the longer-term fight for good local services and decent local government jobs

What are the immediate objectives of the campaign?

We want to:

- Get the employers to the negotiating table. Until they meet us, we can't make progress!
- Engage with members to explain why they shouldn't settle for a pay cut
- Know what members and activists think about the pay cut and get their views and suggestions on the way forward
- Make sure that all three NJC unions – UNISON, GMB and UNITE - work together at local level
- Give stewards the information needed to understand the real picture of local government finances and why an increase is affordable
- Ensure that members and branches engage councillors and make them accountable for the decision to cut your pay
- Make sure that MP's, AM's, MLA's are lobbied and written to and raise the unfair treatment of the lowest paid public service workers
- Make NJC pay an election issue in the local and General elections

Action Plan

An action plan for the campaign was agreed by the three NJC trade unions. So far we have:

- Written direct to all Councillors, MP's, AM's and MLA's
- Written to request meetings with John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and appropriate politicians in Wales and Northern Ireland plus the four LGA Group Leaders

- Called on the employers to attend a meeting of the NJC Executive to start negotiations

BRANCH 'TO DO' LIST

We would like all branches to do the following by 3 March:

1. Order the joint union members' leaflet and distribute it

A joint trade union leaflet (stock order number 2866) is at the printers and will be available from 9 February 2010. **Please order your branch supplies now!** Branches can order using the attached order form, via the online catalogue or via stockorders@unison.co.uk. **Make sure every member gets a copy!**

2. Get your activists and contacts together

A stewards' briefing is attached to this circular. Please ensure it is passed on to all activist and contacts. If possible, organise a meeting with them to pass on the information to members

3. Contact GMB and UNITE

Meet with GMB and Unite representatives and plan how you will work together locally

4. Hand out leaflets and talk to members

We need to know members' views and if they have any suggestions for the campaign

5. Give model letters to members to write to Councillors and MP's, AM's and MLA's

The political campaign is crucial at this stage in the campaign. We want to make the pay freeze an election issue and we need to maximise pressure on Councillors to get the employers to negotiate. Encourage members to send model letters and make sure the branch sends one too!

6. Involve your local press or radio

Work with your Regional Office to ensure we are getting the message across about the pay freeze and that cuts to services are highlighted in the local media at the same time. Keep your local politicians on their toes!!! They are making these decisions and local people should know what the consequences are

7. Involve community and service user groups

Make sure you involve service users and community groups in the campaign. This is about them too!! The pay 'freeze' is the result of thinking which is also leading to cuts and redundancies

8. Recruit and organise!

There is no better time to engage with our members – and non-members – in local government staff. We want to build a broad campaign which will highlight the vital services local government workers deliver, but also highlight the raw deal they are getting. A recruitment leaflet will be ready soon

9. Keep an eye on the UNISON and Local Government web sites

We will be updating the web sites on the campaign regularly. Make sure you keep an eye on them

Where next?

Regions have been asked to convene meetings of all local government branches before 3 March if possible to get feedback and to inform the next meeting of the UNISON NJC Committee on 3 March, 2010. We will also be producing a branch newsletter template and a campaign bulletin with regular updates and information. Let us have any ideas you have too.

With best wishes,

Heather Wakefield
National Secretary
Local Government Service Group

JOINT TRADE UNION PAY LEAFLET

HOW TO ORDER:

If you wish to order further copies, complete the form below and send it to the Communications Unit.

You may also order via the internet from Communications Online Catalogue at www.unison.org.uk/resources/publicity.asp

You can fax your order on 020 7551 1461 or e-mail stockorders@unison.co.uk

● PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND RETURN to:
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