



Summary of NJC PAY CLAIM 2021-2022

The NJC pay claim for 2021/22 is made by the Joint Trade Union Side (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) to the Local Government Association. The claim covers Local Government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The 2021/22 NJC pay claim is for:

A substantial increase with a minimum of 10% on all spinal column points

Context of the claim

- Local government workers have kept the country going during the Covid-19 crisis
- Local government workers have worked over and above the cause of duty, putting themselves and their families at risk to support the national effort against Covid-19
- The government promised to do “whatever is necessary to support these efforts” and local authorities and their staff expect them to be true to their word.
- More austerity is the wrong answer and will be fiercely resisted by trade unions
- Only a substantial pay award can begin to redress a lost decade of cuts, austerity and crisis
- Local government staff have faced a real term pay cut over the past decade
- Meeting this claim will begin to recognise and reward local authority workers and their continued dedication

Economic background

- Since 2010, NJC staff have lost almost a quarter of the value of their pay versus the cost of living
- Many local government roles hit by long-term low pay are those on the frontlines against Covid-19
- Prices for everyday goods continue to rise as local government wages stagnate
- A decade of below average NJC pay awards have fallen well below private sector equivalents

Comparing NJC pay

- In 2019, NJC pay briefly caught up with the Foundation Living Wage
- As of April 2020, NJC SCP 1 and 2 have dropped below the Foundation Living Wage of £9.50 per hour (outside London)
- Our claim in full would lift NJC SCP 1 to £10.17 per hour, meeting the Foundation rate
- An NJC pay rise of 3.25% a year would be needed to meet government’s 2024 minimum wage target
- Pay in local government is still among the lowest in the public sector

Other pressures on members’ pay

- Union members have reported cuts to overtime, standby payments, annual leave, sick pay, exit payments and more
- Loss of allowances has a real impact on part-time employees
- Sickness absence levels are rising in local authority settings

- The abolition of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) in 2010 has drastically undermined efforts to resolve longstanding issues of pay and terms and conditions
- The most common cause of sickness absence are stress, depression, anxiety, workloads and mental health
- 28% of local government staff work some unpaid overtime - compared to 15% of all employees
- Compensating local government workers for unpaid overtime would require a 25% pay rise
- The governments new exit cap is an additional attack on our members' terms and conditions

Post-Covid economic recovery

- Post-2010 public sector austerity actually delayed the UK's economic recovery from financial crisis
- 51% of the cost of meeting our pay claim would be recovered by taxes and reduced benefits
- More cash in the pockets of local government workers means more spending in the economy

Recruitment and retention pressures building

- More than a third of Councils are still experiencing significant difficulties recruiting
- This is happening in spite of Covid-19 and a rise in job seekers
- Below average pay awards, have made local government uncompetitive and unattractive
- Brexit is also having a negative impact on the labour market

Morale under threat

- Local government staff feel undervalued and unable to deliver the best service possible to the public
- They say this is due to cuts, redundancies and impossible workloads
- Many no longer feel secure in their job and are thinking about leaving

Equality impact

- Cuts to pay, terms and conditions have a greater impact on workers with protected characteristics
- Local government workers are older on average compared to all employees
- They are more likely to be disabled, religious, married or in a civil partnership and to be female
- Central pay policies will impact on women and minority groups more severely

Conclusion

- As the UK begins the economic recovery from Covid-19, it cannot mean more public sector austerity
- Pay Justice together with paying local government staff a proper wage is an investment in local services and the economy
- New money from central government is needed to fund this claim
- The government promised in March 2020 to "do whatever is necessary" to support local authorities
- Local government employers must join us in holding the government to their promise
- Council and school workers urgently deserve a decent and fair pay rise