



**UNISON**  
**Pay & Reward Specialist**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

Grade: 4  
Hours: 35  
Location: UNISON National Centre  
Reports to: Head of HR

**JOB SUMMARY**

The postholder will lead a strategic project to examine the effectiveness and fairness of UNISON's current pay and reward arrangements. Their work will include a robust pay benchmarking exercise, and conduct a review of our pay structures, policies and processes.

Using this data, the postholder will identify risks and issues, and make short- and long-term recommendations for how our pay structures, grading processes, and wider reward framework can evolve within realistic financial parameters. This may include reviewing the relevance and fairness of our current job evaluation (JE) scheme and exploring options for its development and looking at the data from the latest equal pay audit.

While this is a project-based role, there may be occasions where expertise is needed to advise on live matters, for example on pay awards, job evaluation or on pay related concerns.

**Key Responsibilities**

**Analysis & benchmarking**

- Carry out a structured pay benchmarking exercise, comparing UNISON's salaries and benefits with similar organisations to understand market position.
- Review internal pay data and pay documentation to identify patterns, gaps, or concerns — such as pay erosion or differences between grades or job types, as well as inefficiencies in processes.

## **Equal pay audit follow up & compliance review**

- Review equal pay audit outcomes to identify areas of concern that may influence recommendations.
- Work to implement practical steps stemming from the equal pay audit outcomes.
- Ensure pay scales and structures are legally compliant and meet current best practice.
- Ensure pay practices align with commitments such as the Living Wage Foundation standards.
- Work closely with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer to support reporting and action planning on pay gaps.

## **Job evaluation and grading framework**

- Review the current job evaluation scheme to ensure it is fair, effective, and understood by staff and assess whether it has the confidence of the people who use it.
- Recommend changes, improvements or alternatives to ensure our grading approach is clear and up to date.
- Take part in governance activities (such as the Job Evaluation Technical Advisory Group) to help oversee and support the process.

## **Recommendations & strategic planning**

- Produce a clear, evidence-based report outlining key findings, identified risks, and well-structured recommendations, differentiating between short-term actions and longer-term changes. Present findings in a clear and accessible way, so that people without technical knowledge can understand and use the information.
- Contribute to the development of a pay and reward strategy that reflects UNISON's mission, values, and HR priorities.
- Present proposals to senior leadership and internal governance stakeholders to support informed, strategic decision-making.
- Provide data-driven insight to inform planning for future pay reviews, salary progression, and overall pay and reward alignment.
- Ensure your proposals are realistic, fair, and workable within the organisation's context and finances.

## **Stakeholder engagement & advisory support**

- Engage internal stakeholders, including staff, managers, NEC members, trade union reps, and employee networks to understand diverse perspectives on pay and reward.
- Participate in the Pay Erosion Working Group and help progress its work by contributing insight, advice and practical options.
- Provide occasional advice to HR or managers on pay-related processes or job evaluation queries.

The postholder may need to undertake any other duties as requested, commensurate with the role/grade.

## **Pay & Reward Specialist - Person Specification and Selection Criteria**

UNISON is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnic origin, gender identity, family situation, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age. This person specification is designed to help members of Interviewing Panels judge the qualities of interviewees in a systematic and consistent way and in accordance with UNISON's equal opportunities policy. It is given to all job applicants for information.

### **Knowledge**

- Strong understanding of pay benchmarking methodologies, and external market analysis, ideally in a unionised environment.
- Knowledge of equal pay legislation, pay gap reporting requirements, and wider employment law and regulatory obligations related to pay and reward.
- Knowledge of job evaluation systems and grading frameworks, ideally within a trade union or public sector setting, including how they support internal equity, consistency, and progression.
- Understanding of pay gap analysis, including the distinction between pay gaps and equal pay.
- Familiarity with pay and reward practices in trade unions, not-for-profit, or public sector environments, or demonstrable understanding of how these differ from commercial settings.
- Awareness of how pay structures and reward strategies influence organisational culture, retention, and staff morale.
- Understanding of trade union values and ways of working, with the patience and adaptability to work within traditional or evolving structures.
- Knowledge of UNISON's job roles and organisational structures (or the ability to quickly develop this insight) in order to ensure meaningful and accurate benchmarking.

### **Skills**

- Strong analytical skills, with the ability to interpret and draw insights from complex pay or workforce data using tools like Excel.
- Skilled in writing clear, structured reports and making evidence-based recommendations for a range of audiences.
- Strong communication and influencing skills, with the ability to engage and build trust with diverse stakeholders.
- Able to think strategically and develop proposals that are practical, affordable, and aligned with the organisation's values.
- Organised and self-directed, able to manage a project independently within a fixed timeframe.

### **Experience**

- Experience conducting pay benchmarking exercises with the ability to translate data into actionable insight.
- Experience implementing actions stemming from equal pay audits,

- Experience developing or advising on pay structures, grading frameworks, or reward strategies.
- Familiarity with job evaluation systems, ideally with experience reviewing or applying them in practice.
- Experience working with a range of internal stakeholders (such as managers, trade union reps, or governance bodies) to support policy development or organisational change.
- Experience delivering written and/or verbal recommendations to decision-makers, with the ability to influence outcomes.

### **Qualifications**

- Recognised qualification in HR (preferably CIPD Level 5 or above), or equivalent professional experience gained through internal roles or relevant applied work.