



**LG/17/2015**

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**To:** Secretaries of Local Government Branches in England,  
Wales and Northern Ireland (Scotland – for information only)  
Regional Heads of Local Government

17 March 2015

**2016 - 17 NJC Pay Claim: Branch consultation**

**This circular contains UNISON's proposed NJC pay claim for 2016/17, together with some background analysis. The proposed claim was discussed and agreed by the UNISON NJC Committee on 9 March 2015. Branches are asked to consult members as widely as possible on the proposed claim and submit responses to their Regional Head of Local Government by 5 pm on Friday, 24 April.**

As branches are aware, the UNISON NJC Committee agreed last November to submit the NJC pay claim for 2016/17 earlier in councils' budget setting cycle to ensure that they allocate sufficient funding to provide for a decent pay increase in 2016/17.

The UNISON NJC Committee met on Monday 9 March 2015 to discuss the contents of the NJC pay claim for 2016/17, having taken soundings from Regional Local Government Committees, who were asked to discuss the content of the claim in order to inform this consultation.

In considering the proposed claim for 2016/17, the NJC Committee was mindful of a number of factors which needed to be taken into account:

- The difficulties surrounding the 2014/16 negotiations
- The ongoing decline in our members' pay

- The ongoing and deepening cuts in local government funding and increased pressure on schools
- The need to carefully consider our potential response to any offer from the LGA for 2016/17
- Developments surrounding the Living Wage
- A possible change of government
- The claim needs to be easily understood
- The Greater London context and the different pay levels in London

The Committee agreed that our core objectives must continue to focus on the restoration of decent pay levels and ensure the Living Wage becomes the basic rate of pay in local government. The NJC Committee did not believe that UNISON should move away from the Living Wage as a target. There are very few other public sector workers who earn less than the Living Wage, while almost half a million local government and school employees are paid below it. The Living Wage outside London is now £7.85 an hour and £9.15 in London. The bottom NJC rate will become £7.06 in October 2015.

The Committee did acknowledge that it would be difficult to achieve the Living Wage in one year, but that it must remain our aim. It was felt that we should also seek to ensure that it becomes the bottom rate of the NJC pay spine and therefore applied to all, not locally implemented through supplements or cuts to other conditions.

### **Proposed Pay Claim 2016/17**

In order to achieve these objectives, the Committee is proposing the following claim for 2016/17:

**Deletion of NJC pay points which fall below the level of the Living Wage - £7.88 per hour (scp 6-10) - and a flat rate increase of £1 per hour on all other pay points.**

### **How the claim would apply to London pay rates**

The Greater London Provincial Council has agreed to delete Inner London pay points 3-5 from October 2015. This means both Inner and Outer pay spines will start at pay point scp 6. The claim would apply the deletions to NJC pay points to the GLPC pay spine – i.e. to delete Inner and Outer pay points scp 6-10.)

A table is attached to this circular setting out current NJC and GLPC rates and showing the impact of £1 an hour increases.

The economic background paper considered by the Committee is also attached and highlights:

- The recent decline in inflation
- The Treasury's average of independent inflation forecasts (RPI)
- The growing gap between public and private sector pay settlements over the last year, with those in the private sector currently averaging 2.5%, compared to 1% in the public sector.
- Median pay awards of 1.5% in opted out councils
- A very tight local government settlement, resulting in significant cuts up to 2020.

### **Consultation Timetable**

Branches are asked to carry out as wide a consultation as possible on the contents of the proposed claim and return their results to **your Regional Head of Local Government by 5 pm on Friday, 24 April 2015**. A pro forma is attached. **It is very important that the NJC Committee gets a view from as many branches as possible and that members are engaged at this stage in the claim.**

Regions are being asked to return the results to the local government section by **noon on Tuesday, 28 April 2015**

The UNISON NJC Committee will meet on 30 April 2015 to consider the results of the branch consultation and to agree UNISON's proposals for the 2016/17 pay claim. In the meantime, GMB and Unite are also consulting their members on what they would like to see in the claim. The intention is for the Trade Union Side to agree the claim in May and to submit it to the Local Government Association (LGA) in June.

This will provide maximum time possible for campaigning and political lobbying around the claim before the start of the budget planning process, which most councils begin from September onwards. The LGA has indicated that it will consult councils on our claim over the summer.

With best wishes



Heather Wakefield  
National Secretary  
Local Government Service Group