

3 January 2024

## **BACKGROUND TO THE 2024 NJC PAY CLAIM**

### **The 2023 pay settlement**

For NJC 2023, we submitted a claim for an increase of RPI + 2% on all pay points. The Employers offered an increase of £1,925, pro rata'd for part-time and term time only workers (higher in London due to the way London Weighting is incorporated). As branches know, that offer was ultimately accepted and implemented – but UNISON made clear that this did not indicate that members were satisfied with it.

The NJC Committee is therefore proposing that our claim for 2024 should seek an increase that is above inflation, while also addressing the particular continuing challenges for those towards the bottom end of the pay spine.

UNISON members in councils and schools continue to experience a significant cost of living crisis, with food, heating and transport costs continuing to increase. While headline inflation figures have begun to fall, RPI inflation, the inflation measure which UNISON believes is the most accurate reflection of the realities our members face, is currently at 6.1%.

The NJC Committee is therefore proposing a claim for 10%, which is above inflation, to ensure the real value of members' pay does not fall further behind, and begins to catch up on the years of lost earnings.

The £3,000 element of the claim would ensure that members who are paid the least receive the support they need in dealing with the continuing financial pressures they face.

It is hoped that this proposed headline claim is straightforward and clear and can be easily explained to members as our campaign develops.

The claim is based on the national pay spine; if our claim were met, we would expect the rates in London to be adjusted accordingly to take account of the way London Weighting has been incorporated into pay rates.

The claim for a clear move towards a £15 an hour hourly rate is in line with policy agreed at UNISON's Local Government Conference. Local government pay towards the bottom end is in clear need of a 'reset', so that staff are properly rewarded for their work and employers can recruit and retain staff.

The claim also includes clear demands for work on the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, in line with UNISON policy.

### **Local government funding**

There is a funding crisis in local government, with local authorities in the UK facing a combined funding gap of £3.4 billion for the 2024/25 financial year, rising to nearly £7 billion in 2025/26. These figures are based on recent UNISON research. And we know that schools are struggling financially due to the Government's year on year cuts in real terms public spending.

However, throughout the union we are campaigning hard for more funding from the Westminster Conservative Government for councils, and pay must be considered in this context. The Westminster Government can definitely afford to fund a decent pay increase for local government workers if enough pressure is applied. We know that far more can be done to make money available – for example some multi-national companies avoid paying huge amounts of tax, money that could be used for local government pay. The money is there if we can get the Government to fund councils and schools properly.

The UNISON NJC Committee will consider the consultation results, after which UNISON, GMB and Unite will meet to agree and finalise the claim, for submission in February 2024.

Regards

*Christina Sanna*

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Branch Secretary