

National Employers for local government services

Mike Short, Kevin Brandstatter, Clare Keogh
Trade Union Side Secretaries
NJC for Local Government Services
c/o UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY

24 March 2026

Dear Mike, Kevin and Clare

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2026

Thank you to you and your colleagues for taking the time today to meet with the National Employers to discuss your pay claim.

As you know, following receipt of your claim last December, the National Employers consulted councils and met initially on 24 February to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

Having heard the points raised at today's meeting, and recognising the volatility of the economic context, after a lengthy debate they agreed to make a full and final, one year offer. In doing so they hope you can consult your members on it promptly in order to expedite an agreement that mitigates the problems some employees face as a result of receiving back pay when agreement is reached later in the year.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027) offer:

With effect from 1 April 2026:

- **an increase of 3.30 per cent to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 3 to 43 inclusive, and on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (*in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4*¹)**
- **an increase of 3.30 per cent on all allowances (*as listed in the 2025 NJC pay agreement circular dated 24 July 2025*)**

In response to the other elements of your claim:

- ***A minimum pay rate of £15 an hour for the NJC pay spine***
The Employers reject this element of the claim. In order to achieve this objective would require increasing the bottom pay point by 16.73 per cent from its current

¹ The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

hourly rate of £12.85. That, plus the subsequent knock-on effect of increases to all subsequent pay points would be prohibitively expensive for councils at any time, not least during the current difficult financial circumstances.

- ***A two-hour reduction in the working week***

The Employers reject this element of the claim in relation to a proposed 35-hour week (34 in London). Such a reduction would be out of line with norms in local government and would result in an increase in costs that would adversely affect local authority services.

- ***An increase of one day annual leave***

The Employers reject this element of the claim. All NJC employees currently receive a minimum of 23 days' leave (with a further three days after five years' service), plus two extra statutory days, plus public holidays. Many councils have a more generous basic leave entitlement.

- ***The ability for school staff to take a day of paid leave during term time***

The Employers reject this element of the claim. With the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) expected to be reinstated later this year, which will have responsibility for considering changes to pay and conditions for this group, we believe school employers in particular would have concerns about the NJC reaching a national agreement that gave all their non-teaching NJC employees the right to take a day of paid leave during term time. The cost of having not only to pay for that day but also for cover, would be significant at a time when schools are struggling financially.

- ***The abolition of Level 1 Teaching Assistant role and instead all Level 1 role holders be moved onto Level 2***

The employers reject this element of the claim. We believe school employers in particular would have concerns about the NJC reaching a national agreement on this issue ahead of the reinstatement of the SSSNB, which is expected later this year.

We have a duty to balance your claim with the interests of local residents, in terms of the level and quality of services provided by local authorities. The proposed increase, greater than last year's, will again be very difficult to fund in a number of local authorities as this offer is at the limits of most councils' levels of affordability.

The National Employers of course respect that each of your unions will have its own processes and procedures to follow, but we hope you will again be able to synchronise the timing and duration of your membership consultations, as you did helpfully last year, in order that a final agreement is reached and employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary