

NJC pay news for local government & school workers

Exposed: Low pay in local government and schools could fall foul of National Living Wage

Letter from Employer reveals extent of low pay.

A letter seen by GMB from the National Employer to Chief Executives shows the many problems now potentially being faced because of low pay for keyworkers. The full letter can be read here [2022 National Pay Negotiations | Local Government Association](#)

When the National Living Wage (NLW) increased to £9.50 per hour in April 2022, thousands of Local Government and School Workers became NLW employees. The Employer stated in 2019 that it wanted to “get ahead” of the NLW but has clearly failed in this. Instead, it now finds itself trying to ensure any pay rise for 2022/23 keeps up with the NLW.

Increasing pay just to meet the requirements of the National Living Wage is not enough though. Any offer from the Employer must be more than making sure they are abiding by the increases forecast to the NLW that will come into effect in April next year. The Employer needs to call on Government for funding for a proper pay rises and recognise the responsibility it bears for the decisions it has taken in the past 10 years which have led to this pay crisis. A response from the National Employer to the NJC unions pay claim is expected towards the latter part of July. GMB members deserve more than the bare minimum and everyone is being affected by the Cost of Living Crisis. The situation of low pay for keyworkers in Local Government and Schools is the result of years of pay freezes and below inflation pay rises and the Employer must now step up and take responsibility for ensuring hard working, loyal and dedicated workers are paid properly.

Campaign News

No.1, June 2022

If the Low Pay Commission forecast is correct and the NLW is £10.32 in April 2023, Local Government and School workers on SCP 1 will need to receive a pay rise of 8.7% just to stay on the NLW. The Employer admits in its letter to Chief Executives that this “bare minimum” pay increase is a challenge but still the Employer has not agreed to support the Joint Unions call for Central Government to fully fund a proper pay rise.

Current pay scales at risk of deletion in order to keep up with National Living Wage

The National Employer admits that if it does not properly increase pay for the lowest paid and just does the bare minimum required to simply remain compliant with NLW Legislation and nothing else in terms of a Pay award, they would need to do the following:

- A bottom rate of £10.50 in 2022 would require deleting SCPs 1-5 on the pay structure
- A bottom rate of £11.50 in 2023 would require deleting SCPs 6-10 on the pay structure

This would **result in 35% of the entire Full Time Equivalent workforce within Local Government and Schools being placed on the new bottom pay point**, all of whom would end up earning the same, lowest rate of pay.

Pay points potentially in scope for removal under this scenario could cover roles such as planning assistants and support officers; legal apprentices, assistants, clerks and secretaries; many roles in schools potentially up to and including teaching assistants; maintenance and cleaning staff. It would be difficult to implement this retrospectively but could be considered by the Employer through a multi-year pay deal.

The Employer is clearly facing challenges because of NLW increases but it is simply not sustainable or fair to keep expecting workers to bear the brunt of insufficient funding. As a country we need to start looking upwards at the decision makers and making them accountable. Working people cannot keep picking up the bill through reduced services and reduced wages.

The NJC pay award is rarely paid on its anniversary date in April each year and given that the new rates of NLW are paid in April, the Local Government Employer is aware that if it does not properly increase pay for the lowest earners this year, it could fall foul of National Living Wage law in April 2023.

***Now is the time to come together
and demand better.***

***Together we are stronger and
together we can make a difference.***

If you would like GMB to visit your workplace to discuss this years pay claim or if you have any questions please contact us at schoolsteamlondon@gmb.org.uk or phone 0208 573 6969