

NJC Pay News for School Support Staff

NJC Support Staff Campaign News

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NJC unions call for review of term-time only contracts

The results of a recent GMB London pay needs survey clearly showed that school support staff members were being hit hard by the cost of living crisis.

Over 80% of members said they were financially worse off than in the previous year and 1 in 3 were either using food banks or thought they would need to use one in the near future. It was clear term time only pay is making the financial difficulties being faced by all, even harder.

GMB adopted a position nationally with the other Unions, that Term Time Only contracts should be reviewed because it is more difficult than ever for many members to make approximately 44 weeks wages stretch over 52.

GMB presented this position to Unison and Unite in discussions to agree this year's joint union pay claim. The final pay claim, as agreed by all three unions, has now been submitted with the Unison and Unite agreeing to the elements of GMB's suggested claim in relation to term time only contracts.

The Employer is due to respond to the pay claim in late July.

Are term-time only contracts outdated and out of touch?

The Green Book which sets out the NJC Terms and Conditions states "TTO working can help attract and retain employees with children of school age or with carer responsibilities who might otherwise be unable to work."

This is clearly out of date and does not reflect that TTO workers are a highly skilled and valuable asset to any school. It points to TTO being a compromise that must be made if you have children or caring responsibilities and fails to acknowledge the new reality that there are plenty of Employers who have flexible working arrangements for their employees who have children, or are a carer, and do not have to lose 8 weeks pay a year because of this.

For members who work in Academies that do not follow NJC Pay: GMB will be submitting the exact same pay claim to those Academies to try and ensure consistency and continuity for all school support staff.

Term-time only pay means school support staff earn less than the National Living Wage over the course of the year

School support staff receive no pay for 8 weeks of the year pushing them below the National Living Wage (NLW) as an hourly rate. The average pay for a Teaching Assistant is £13,900 which over 52 weeks comes out an average hourly rate of £8.35. This is well below the National Living Wage.

It is not the fault of support staff that schools close and it's impossible for them to get another job during the holiday period. This is a large group, of predominantly female workers, who are suffering because of term time only pay. These skilled key workers provide vital support to some of our most vulnerable children and in doing so enable all children to get the best from their education. **For too long they have been undervalued and underpaid and unsurprisingly, they have had enough.**

GMB has requested that when the Employer makes an offer for this year's pay that it illustrates term-time only figures in addition to the usual format. GMB knows how frustrating it has been for Members in schools trying to calculate what any increase means for them and is hopeful the Employer will meet this request.

Low Pay, Low Morale

The hourly rate for NJC workers on SCP 1 is £9.50. Compare this to a starting hourly rate of £10.10 at Lidl, Ikea and Aldi and it is easy to understand the growing recruitment and retention crisis among all school support staff roles.

Teaching assistants were named as the most acute shortage role in late 2020 after HGV drivers, and retention issues are becoming acute for all support staff roles.



***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 school to discuss this years pay claim please contact us at schoolsteamlondon@gmb.org.uk