



FAQ

LGA PAY OFFER: MEMBERS' FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Section 1: UNISON's view of the pay offer and the consultation

1. What is UNISON's view of the LGA's pay offer?

The UNISON NJC Committee is recommending that members **reject** the 2018/20 pay offer. The Committee believes that the offer falls short of our claim. However, the Committee is clear that the offer is the best achievable by negotiation and that nothing short of substantial, all-out strike action could have the potential to improve the offer.

2. What is the LGA's pay offer?

The LGA's two year offer is:

From 1 April 2018:	From 1 April 2019:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On SCP 6, £1,380 (equivalent to 9.191%) On SCP 7, £1,380 (equivalent to 9.130%) On SCP 8, £1,380 (equivalent to 9.052%) On SCP 9, £1,380 (equivalent to 8.976%) On SCP 10, £1,250 (equivalent to 8.006%) On SCP 11, £1,200 (equivalent to 7.592%) On SCP 12, £1,050 (equivalent to 6.512%) On SCP 13, £900 (equivalent to 5.458%) On SCP 14, £900 (equivalent to 5.363%) On SCP 15, £900 (equivalent to 5.272%) On SCP 16, £900 (equivalent to 5.167%) On SCP 17, £900 (equivalent to 5.064%) On SCP 18, £800 (equivalent to 4.427%) On SCP 19, £700 (equivalent to 3.734%) On SCPs 20 and above, 2.0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new NJC pay spine (scp1-43) with a bottom NJC pay rate set at £9 per hour (new scp 1) 2% incremental steps between each new scp 1 & 22 (old scp 6-28) 2% cost of living increase on new scp 23 & above, including those on locally extended NJC pay spines

The members leaflet detailing the offer in full can be downloaded from the UNISON website at <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2018/02/24841.pdf>

3. What am I being consulted upon?

UNISON's consultation on the Local Government Association's pay offer will ask you whether you reject or accept the Employers' pay offer. If you answer "reject" you will be expected to take substantial all-out strike action to improve the pay offer if it is rejected. All-out strike action is all members covered by the offer taking strike action at the same time.

4. How am I being consulted?

Your branch will be consulting you by any of the following methods:

- Balloting members by postal votes
- Consulting members through workplace meetings
- Consulting using electronic voting
- Consulting through a combination of workplace meetings, balloting members and electronic voting.

5. What are the views of the other unions?

Unite is recommending rejection of the offer. The GMB is consulting members on the basis that the offer is the best achievable by negotiation.

6. When will the results of the members' consultation be announced?

The UNISON NJC Committee will consider the outcome of the consultation and decide its course of action based on all the responses to the consultation at its meeting on 16 March. Your branch will be notified of the outcome within 24 hours.

7. Why is important to vote on the pay offer?

It is vital we have a high member turnout in the consultation. So the UNISON NJC Committee has an accurate picture of members' views.

It's **YOUR** union and **YOUR** pay. Have your say!

Section 2: How is my pay negotiated?

8. How is my pay negotiated?

As a worker in local government, most schools, some other public bodies and some private and voluntary sector contractors, your pay and other conditions are determined by a negotiating body called the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. The NJC Trade Union Side is made up of representatives from UNISON, GMB and Unite. The Local Government Association (LGA) represents local authorities in negotiations, with representatives from the Northern Ireland and Welsh LGA's too. NJC terms and conditions are found in the Green Book collective agreement.

9. Am I covered by the LGA's pay offer?

Everyone contracted to NJC (Green Book) pay and conditions working in councils, schools, academies, Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) some private and voluntary sector contractors, Fire and Emergency Planning Authorities and National Parks will be covered by the offer.

10. I work in an academy does the NJC offer apply to me

The overwhelming majority of academy schools implement NJC pay and conditions. If you're unsure check with your local branch

11. My terms and conditions have been changed since the last pay award. Am I still covered by the NJC (Green Book)?

Unfortunately, many councils are changing conditions locally, but unless your council has formally pulled out of the National Joint Council you will remain on NJC pay. This means that you will be covered by the pay offer and are able to vote in the member consultation on it. If you are unsure whether your employer is still part of the NJC, you should check with your UNISON branch.

12. What are NJC spinal column points (scps)? Are they the same as grades?

No. The basic pay of each employee consists of a pay point or points on the NJC pay spine. The bottom of the NJC spine starts at scp 6 and the top is scp 49. At present scp 6 is £15,014 a year and scp 49 is £43,821.

Grades are not agreed by the NJC. Each local authority (or school) uses the NJC pay spine to construct their local grading structure, after jobs have been evaluated using a job evaluation scheme. Some employers start their bottom grade on a scp above scp 6 and many extend the NJC pay spine locally above scp 49.

The pay increase on offer would be applied to the NJC pay spine. UNISON bulletins will refer to NJC pay points or scp's because employers have different grading structures. You should check with your branch how the NJC pay spine applies to your local pay and grading structure.

Section 3: The LGA's pay offer

13. What was the 2018 pay claim?

In June 2017, the NJC Trade Union Side submitted the following one-year pay claim for 2018/19:

- The deletion of NJC pay points SCP 6-9 to reach the Foundation Living Wage of £8.45 (UK) and £9.75 (London) and a 5% increase on all NJC pay points.

What the offer would have been if our claim had been met in full is posted on our website.

14. Can councils and schools afford the pay offer?

The backdrop in terms of local government finance is challenging, with ongoing cuts to council budgets. Neither the English or Welsh local government settlements for 2018-19 included an additional element for the National Living Wage or the pay offer. However, unallocated reserves are still buoyant in many councils - and in some schools too. We wouldn't argue for using unallocated reserves on pay on a regular basis. But as a one off – for pay restructuring – it is a legitimate use of reserves, especially as councils have been asking for it.

We are not letting central government off the hook either! We will continue to campaign for central government to adequately fund local government pay – and other council functions. Research for UNISON by the New Policy Institute shows that almost half the cost of our claim for local government workers would be met from higher tax and National Insurance income for the Government and reduced in-work benefit costs.

15. Will employers cut jobs pay and conditions to fund the offer?

Some employers might try to cut conditions or jobs to fund the pay offer – or not properly apply the new pay spine. In order to stay within the NJC, employers need to implement the value of the offer in full. We are taking legal advice on this issue, which will be available soon.

The NJC Committee agreed that we should have a strategy to fight against any attempt to cut jobs or conditions. Details will be forthcoming after the result of the consultation is known.

16. Why does the pay offer include a new NJC pay spine in 2019?

The 2016 -18 pay settlement included a commitment to review the NJC pay spine. This was triggered by the introduction of the National Living Wage in 2016 and the fact that about 200 councils have voluntarily introduced the real Foundation Living Wage.

Both developments have led to compression at the lower end of the NJC pay spine, with supervisors often being paid only a few pence more than those they supervise and grades no longer reflecting the value of jobs. And pressure is increasing on councils to accommodate future Foundation Living Wage and National Living Wage increases and maintain pay differentials above.

Furthermore, the current pay spine contains unequal steps between scale points and so is neither transparent nor fair.

So there was joint recognition between the LGA and unions that the NJC pay spine needed revising and 'cleaning up'.

An NJC working group met and agreed principles for remodelling the pay spine. Joint technical work followed. The employers decided to include a cleaned up new pay spine in the pay offer. However they have only cleaned up to midway on the NJC pay spine.

If the pay offer is accepted, the unions have made it clear we want to return to cleaning up the whole spine and extending it to address job compression at the top of the pay spine.

17. How will the new pay spine affect my employer's pay and grading structure?

The aim of the NJC pay spine review was to minimise impact on pay structures and avoid the need for full pay and grading reviews at council level. Both sides recognised that doing the bare minimum to comply with the statutory National Living Wage increases would result in pressure to undertake pay and grading reviews, as pay differentials above collapse. This would be unsustainable in the long run

However, unions and employers will need to check how the assimilation to a new pay spine affects their local pay and grading structures and agree the assimilation process to new pay spine to ensure that the value of the offer is met in full.

18. I am paid on the London GLPC pay spine. Does the LGA's pay offer apply to me?

Yes. London has separate Inner and Outer pay scales, based on the NJC pay spine but which consolidate London Weighting into basic pay on each scp. Normally the NJC pay offer would be applied to London pay points. However, given the restructuring of the NJC pay spine, the offer had to be translated into an equivalent London offer.

The Inner and Outer London members' leaflets set out the translation – see question 2.

19. I am not paid on the NJC or GLPC pay spines. Does the LGA's pay offer apply to me?

If your employer regards itself as an NJC employer, hasn't formally left the NJC and has paid recent NJC pay awards, you will get the award. The assimilation to the new pay spine will be more complicated though. We will give advice and support to your branch and regional Organiser to help them with the assimilation.

We would like all NJC councils which have devised their own pay spines to adopt the new NJC pay spine. There is no justification for any employer to devise its own.

20. Increments

Will I still get an increment in 2018 and 2019?

Yes, if you are entitled to increments then they will be paid as normal and not affected by this pay offer.

21. Living Wage supplements

My employer pays me a Foundation Living Wage supplement. What happens to me?

The percentage increases in the offer will apply to your basic pay, not the supplement. If your employer pays you a supplement to make up your basic pay to the Living Wage, they might want to reduce the supplement to keep your total pay at the Living Wage level, **though they don't have to do this**. Premium payments you receive will be increased in line with the pay offer increases as these apply to your NJC scale point.

22. What if I'm within the scope of the NJC but paid higher than SCP49?

Under NJC (Green Book) conditions you would still be entitled to the 2% increase in April 2018 and the further 2% increase in 2019.

23. What about part-time and term time workers?

The pay increases will be applied fully to your basic pay. The cash amounts stated in the offer are for full time workers and will apply pro-rata as hourly rates for part time and term time workers. You can see the hourly increases in the new members' leaflet.

24. Multiple job holders - I have more than one job. What about me?

The pay increases will be applied in full to your pay for each job, providing that you are contracted to the NJC for each of them

25. Leavers, people retiring, new starters and temporary contracts

What about leavers, people retiring and new starters?

Anyone who leaves before 1 April 2018 will not get anything. If you leave after 1 April 2018 and before 1 April 2019, you will get the 1 April 2018 increases.

26. I'm on official leave, what happens?

If you are on maternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave or sick leave the increases will apply to your basic pay. They are not paid to anyone on an unpaid career break.

27. I am on a temporary contract. How does the pay offer affect me?

The pay increases should be paid to all employees whose pay is set in accordance with the NJC for Local Government Services pay arrangements, regardless of whether they are on permanent or temporary contracts.

28. Sickness absence - I am on long-term sickness absence. Will I be receiving any increase?

Yes. You should receive your pay increase.

29. Acting-up? Will I be paid according to my acting up rate?

The increase will be applied to your acting up basic pay scale point on 1 April 2018.