

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NJC PAY PROPOSALS 2014 - 16

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Are you covered by the pay proposals?

Who do the pay proposals apply to?

Everyone on NJC (Green Book) pay and conditions working in councils, schools, academies and other bodies such as ALMOs, Fire and Emergency Planning Authorities and National Parks.

Who don't the pay proposals apply to?

People on craft (Red Book), chief officer, youth and community workers (Pink Book) or Soulbury terms or any pay arrangements other than the NJC Green Book. If there are any developments affecting pay for these groups then you will be notified accordingly.

2. Spinal Column Points (SCPs)

What are Spinal Column Points and how do they relate to me?

The 'NJC pay spine' is the series of salary levels that we negotiate. Each level is called a Spinal Column Point (SCP). The lowest is SCP5 and the highest is SCP49 which is £42,032 per annum. These national spinal column points are used by employers to make their pay grades or pay scales and there are many variations. To see how these proposals affect you, just look at your salary or hourly pay rate on the pay proposal chart to see what you would get.

What if I'm covered by the NJC but my employer uses different spinal column points?

It's not possible for us to calculate every possible variation to the NJC pay spine. However, you will still receive the equivalent percentage increase with effect from 1 January 2015. Please ask your payroll section how the proposals, including the non-consolidated payments, will affect you.

3. Pay Scales

What does abolishing SCP5 mean?

It means that from 1 October 2015 anyone paid at the SCP5 rate will go up to the SCP6 rate. SCP6 will become the bottom scale point. That means that the lowest hourly pay rate will be £7.06 pence – up from £6.50 from 1 October 2014. Your annual pay will increase to £13,614 – pro rata for part-time workers

What would happen to the pay scales in April 2015?

Nothing. The proposals would create scales that would apply until 31 March 2016.

4. Increments

Will I still get an increment in 2014 and 2015?

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

5. Living Wage supplements

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

The percentage increase in the proposals will apply to your basic pay. If your employer pays you a supplement to make up your basic pay to the Living Wage, they are likely to reduce the supplement to keep your total pay at the Living Wage level, **though they don't have to do this**. You will still get the cash lump sum. The NJC does not set the Living Wage but it is expected to rise in November.

6. What do consolidated increases and non-consolidated cash sums mean?

'Consolidated' simply means a permanent increase to basic pay. The non-consolidated cash sum is a one-off amount which is not added to your basic pay.

7. Non-consolidated cash (lump) sums and back pay

If we accept the employers' proposals will I be receiving any back pay for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014?

No. The proposals do not include any back pay. There are non-consolidated lump sums to be paid to everyone in December 2014, with an additional lump sum to those on SCP's 26-49 in April 2015 to ensure that the lump sum and basic pay increase combined do not fall below the level of an equivalent 1% increase from 1 April 2014.

8. Will the non-consolidated payments be subject to the normal tax and national insurance deductions?

Yes, the non-consolidated, lump sum payments that would be paid in December 2014 and, for those on SCP 26-49 also in April 2015, would be subject to tax and national insurance requirements/deductions.

9. Will the non-consolidated payments be pensionable?

Yes, the Local Government Pension Scheme stipulates all earnings are pensionable. For the purpose of calculating final pay under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014, the non-consolidated lump sum payment shall be deemed to be paid on, and relate to, 1 December 2014. **Further advice on LGPS issues will follow.**

10. Lump sums and Scale Points

I am on SCP 5, 6 or 7. Will the £325 that the employers propose to pay me in December 2014 be added to my salary permanently or is it a one-off payment only?

The proposed lump sum payment of £325 in December 2014 is a one-off payment only and will not be added to your basic rate of pay.

I am on SCP 8, 9 or 10. Will the £150 to be paid in December 2014 be added to my salary permanently or is it a one-off payment only?

The proposed lump sum payment of £150 in December 2014 is a one-off payment and will not be added to your basic rate of pay.

I am on SCP 11 – 49. Will the £100 that the LGA proposes to pay in December 2014 be added to my salary permanently or is it a one-off payment only?

The proposed lump sum payment of £100 in December 2014 is a one-off payment and will not be added to your basic rate of pay.

My salary falls below SCP 26 (£22,443). If we accept the employers' proposals, will I get an additional one-off lump sum payment in April 2015?

No. Those on spinal points 5 to 25 will not receive a payment in April 2015 because their lump sum and basic pay increase combined does not fall below the level of an equivalent 1% pay increase.

Is the proposed lump sum payment in April 2015 for those on SCPs 26-49 a one-off payment or is it paid annually or monthly?

The proposed lump sum payment is a one-off payment in April 2015 only. It will not be added to your basic rate of pay.

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 2.2% increase, but the proposals do not include any provision for a lump sum to be paid to those above SCP49.

11. Part-time workers and normal working hours

What about part time workers?

The percentage increase will be applied fully to your basic pay. The cash lump sum would be pro-rata to your part-time hours. For instance, if you work half the normal hours in your workplace you would get half the lump sum.

What are normal working hours?

Normal working hours for NJC workers are 37 – or 36 if you work in a London council or local authority school. But check. Your employer may have reduced (hopefully not lengthened!!) the working week

12. Multiple job holders

I have more than one job. What about me?

The percentage increase is applied in full to your pay for each job. The cash lump sum is pro-rata to the hours for each job.

13. Leavers, people retiring and starters

What about leavers, people retiring and new starters?

Anyone who leaves before 1 December 2014 - before any of these proposals take effect - will not get anything. A leaver in December will get the cash lump sum but not the percentage rise. A leaver in January or later will get the cash lump sum and the percentage increase. A new starter will get whatever is applicable from the day s/he joins.

I'm on official leave, what happens?

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

I am on a temporary contract. How do the pay proposals affect me?

Subject to any other exclusion, the payments 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.

14. Sickness absence

I am on long-term sickness absence. Will I be receiving any payments?

Yes. Payments should be paid to those on long-term sickness absence even if you are on nil pay.

15. Acting-up? Will you be paid according to your acting up rate?

The non-consolidated lump sum payment will be paid to you in accordance with your acting up scale point on 1 December 2014. The same will apply to the increase in your basic pay on 1 January 2015.

16. When will the consultation finish?

Both LGA and unions are consulting councils/members with deadlines to finish on 14 November. If accepted by both sides, payment of the non-consolidated lump sums will be made in the December 2014 payroll.

QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO UNISON MEMBERS AND BRANCHES ABOUT THE UNISON PAY CONSULTATION AND THE SUSPENSION OF THE STRIKE

17. Why was the strike action on 14 October suspended?

The strike action was suspended by all three NJC unions – UNISON, GMB and Unite – because the LGA came forward with these proposals, which all three unions decided to consult members over.

UNISON's NJC Committee voted to suspend the action and consult members over the LGA's proposals. This was the view expressed at the NJC Committee by a majority of Regional representatives. The NJC Committee also agreed to consult members on the basis that the proposals represent the best achievable by negotiation and that only sustained all out strike action could achieve an improved pay offer.

18. Why is UNISON consulting over the employers' proposals if they are not a formal offer?

Although UNISON's pay consultation procedures refer to a pay 'offer', the NJC Committee decided that we should consult members at the same time as the LGA is consulting councils in order to make sure that the proposed increases can be paid as soon as possible if both sides agree to them.

The LGA had consulted councils over their initial March offer, but not the revised proposals. However, the Employers' Side of the NJC and leading councillors have approved them for consultation, so it is unlikely that councils will vote 'no' to them.

19. What happens if councils do not agree the proposals?

As explained in the previous answer, this is unlikely. However, if councils did reject the proposals, the union would have to decide how to respond. Since our strike action is only suspended, it could be triggered again if our NJC Committee voted to do that.

20. I was not balloted for strike action. Can I still vote in the consultation over the pay proposals?

Yes you can – as long as your pay is determined by NJC pay negotiations. All members whose pay is determined by the NJC (the Green Book) can vote – whether or not you were balloted for strike action. Members in other local government bargaining groups cannot vote as these proposals do not apply to them. We were able to ballot them for strike action because the law allows this.

21. Are higher paid members funding the bigger increases for the lower grades?

No. There are fewer employees on the lower grades than in the grades above, so spreading the higher increases for members on the lowest grades across the whole workforce would make very little impact.

22. I work in an isolated workplace/can't attend workplace meetings. How do I take part in the ballot?

Branches have been asked to carry out a ballot of all members wherever possible. Regions have been asked to help them to do this. If you do not receive a ballot paper from your branch, please make sure you contact them and make your view known. If there is a ballot going on and you have not received a ballot paper, make sure you ask for one and complete it.