



**20 March 2013**

**Issue No.5**

## **MAINTAINING PRESSURE ON LOCAL COUNCILLORS OVER PAY**

**Councillors have been asking us for further information about how local government pay compares to other public sector workers' earnings and also for further information on the car allowances and mileage rates that the Employers' are seeking to cut in their pay offer. A further email has been sent today to all councillors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to provide them with some further clarity on the issues that our members are facing. We have again urged them to do everything in their power to convince the LGE and the Local Government Association to make an offer which really does recognise the sacrifices our members have made to keep local government afloat.**

**It is crucial that branches continue to press local councillors, council leaders and executives to put pressure on the LGA to return to negotiations quickly. Your lobbying remains absolutely vital.**

**The content of the email is set out below:**

**To: All councillors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.**

Dear Councillor,

### **National Joint Council (NJC) Pay 2013 – 14**

I would like to thank you for all the supportive responses I've had so far to the email sent to you last week. We are endeavouring to put those of you who were keen to make contact with your local UNISON branch in touch with both the branch and the relevant UNISON regional office.

Councillors have been asking us for further information about how local government pay compares to other public sector workers' earnings and also for further information on the car allowances and mileage rates that the Employers' are seeking to cut in their pay offer.

### **Local Government pay compared with public sector counterparts**

Alongside their counterparts in the public sector, pay for our members working in local government is far lower than the pay for equivalent workers – as it has been for some time. The table below shows how the bottom five pay grades in local government have fallen well below the level of pay for equivalent pay points for police staff, staff employed in higher education, probation and NHS employees. You will see that the bottom pay rate for local government workers is over £2000 a year lower than equivalent NHS and Probation staff receive and more than £2,500 a year less than equivalent Police staff. The Employer's own 2011 Local Government Pay and Workforce Report states that "local government have the lowest average earnings compared to other groups of workers in the public sector".

<b>Table 3. Lowest NJC Pay Points Compared to Equivalent Police, Higher Education and Probation Employees</b>				
<b>NJC</b>	<b>Police Staff</b>	<b>Higher Education</b>	<b>Probation</b>	<b>NHS</b>
<b>(Apr 12)</b>	<b>(Sept 12)</b>	<b>(Aug 12)</b>	<b>(Apr 12)</b>	<b>(Apr 12)</b>
12,145	14,779	13,486	14,325	14,153
12,312	15,163	13,839	14,464	14,508
12,489	15,595	14,202	14,604	14,864
12,787	16,024	14,520	14,752	15,279
13,189	16,417	14,905	14,898	15,694

In light of the impending transfer of public health services to local authorities, the comparison between pay for workers in local government and the NHS is particularly relevant. Local government is in direct competition with the NHS in many local labour markets and low pay in local government will impact on the ability of local authorities to recruit and retain staff and their loyalty in the future.

### **Car allowances and mileage rates under attack**

Currently the Employers are offering our members a 1% pay rise in return for cuts to car mileage rates this year, the arbitration clause in the Green Book and further cuts next year. This includes removing NJC mileage rates from our collective agreement – the Green Book – and replacing them with HMRC rates (45p per mile.) This rate is too low to compensate local government workers properly for use of their cars, especially given the large increases in petrol prices in recent years and the fact that car allowances have been frozen since 2010. NJC car allowances need review but on the basis that our members are properly reimbursed for using their cars for work purposes.

UNISON has proposed to the Employers that the NJC uses the AA guides on motoring costs recently adopted for NHS employees as part of an NJC green travel scheme to include other modes of transport, public transport, car pools and the full costs of running a car. The Employers will only consider this if any resulting policy is voluntary.

Implementation of HMRC rates has serious implications for many of our members delivering frontline services. Many local government staff need to use their cars to do their jobs.

A UNISON survey of 14,800 local government members carried out in February found that social workers, environmental health officers, planning officers, trading standards officers and housing officers are being particularly hard hit by local cuts to car allowances.

The table below sets out in full extent to which our members are subsidising their employer. The figures stated have been arrived at by comparing the rate for essential car users allowances, stuck at 2010 levels, with the actual cost of travel in 2012. To obtain accurate figures for the actual cost of travel, UNISON commissioned a technical expert to up-rate the mileage formula for 2011 and 2012. The table below sets out the subsidies according to distance travelled and engine size.

**Essential car user subsidy provided by NJC workers, 2012:**

Mileage	Subsidy (£s) x engine size		
	451 - 999 cc £	1000 - 1199 cc £	1200 - 1450 cc £
1000	82	101	111
2000	116	140	153
3000	150	179	195
4000	184	218	237
5000	218	257	279
6000	252	296	321
7000	286	335	363
8000	320	374	405
8500	337	394	426
9000	348	405	439
10000	369	428	464
11000	390	451	489

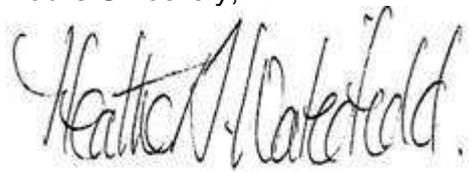
So, an NJC worker travelling 11,000 miles in a 1200 cc engine sized car, is paying £489 from their own wages to simply carry out their job.

I hope that this has provided you with some further clarity on the issues that our members are facing and again I would **urge you to do everything in your power to convince the LGE and your Local Government Association to make an offer which really does recognise the sacrifices our members have made to keep local government afloat.**

Once again I would like to thank those of you for your messages of support and offers to work jointly with us to improve the pay and terms and conditions of the staff fighting to deliver quality local services in these difficult times.

I would welcome a reply from you. You can write to me at UNISON, 130 Euston Rd, London NW1 2AY or e-mail at [NJCPay2013@unison.co.uk](mailto:NJCPay2013@unison.co.uk).

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Wakefield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

Heather Wakefield  
Head of Local Government, Police and Justice