

Kay White

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Our ref: 26 MAR 2012

Your ref: **HUMAN RESOURCES**
When telephoning please ask for:

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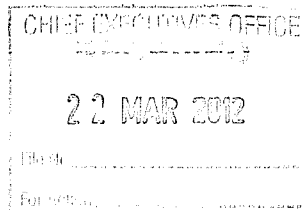
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To: Chief Executives and Leaders of Councils
in England, Northern Ireland and Wales

21 March 2012



Dear Colleagues

NJC Pay 2012 - 13

I am writing to ask you to give urgent consideration to the current state of pay of UNISON members and all those working for your local authority on NJC pay and conditions. I would like your council to join with UNISON in helping to alleviate the hardship many of them are facing.

You will be aware that our members are facing a third year without a pay increase. This third consecutive annual pay freeze means that they will have suffered a 15% pay cut in three years and now earn a shocking 10% less in real terms than in 1996. Not surprisingly, UNISON has rejected the Employers' imposed pay freeze for 2012-2013 with 'anger and dismay'.

The failure of the Local Government Employers – representing most councils - to pay the £250 promised by the Chancellor in his 2010 budget to those earning below £21,000 has made matters far worse for our members.

The Government has for the second year running accepted the recommendations of Pay Review Bodies for public sector pay awards for 2012-13. Public sector workers covered by the Bodies in the civil service, the NHS and teachers earning a full-time equivalent of £21,000 or less will now rightly receive a pay increase of £250 for the second year running.

You may also be cutting pay and conditions further at local level, while our members do the work of employees who have been made redundant. They are now the worst paid and rewarded in the public sector and median earnings for full-time employees are below those in the private sector too.

I recently sent you a copy of our new report, *Living on the Edge: Pay in Local Government*, produced for us by the New Policy Institute. The report shows how many of our members are struggling to survive on low pay and how close many of them are to absolute poverty.



To add insult to injury, the Government is also intending to lift the hours qualification threshold for Working Tax Credit from 16 to 24 for employees in couple households from 6 April. This will mean that some of our members will be deprived of benefits which make the difference between survival and absolute poverty.

UNISON is saying 'enough is enough'. Low and diminishing pay is not only a gross injustice towards our hard-working members and their families. It also has damaging implications economic revival, local economies and for the quality of vital community services now and in the future.

For these reasons, I am writing with urgency to ask you to do three things:

- To pay the £250 promised by the Chancellor to NJC employees in your council from 1 April as a consolidated payment
- To identify part-time employees who may be affected by the change in conditions for Working Tax Credit and seek to enhance their hours to 24
- To resist making (further) cuts to pay, hours and conditions at local level

Councils face a stark choice about the future. They can continue to undervalue and squeeze employees until working for a local authority becomes a 'last resort' employment option and services deteriorate. Or they can recognise that properly treated employees are key to high quality services and reward them with decent pay and conditions for their dedication and loyalty.

UNISON is committed to working with you to support local communities and improve services at this difficult time. I hope you will acknowledge the justice of our case.

I look forward to receiving your response.

With best wishes,



Heather Wakefield
National Secretary
Local Government Service Group



ANNEX A

[name]
[address]

[date]

Dear [name]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2012

I refer to your recent submission of the national pay claim and your request to begin local negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on a pay award for 2012.

As you are aware, this council applies the pay, terms and conditions of the National Agreement ('Green Book') and we therefore are not prepared to move away from national collective bargaining, which we continue to support. We would urge you instead to enter into discussions offered by the National Employers about pay and other issues in future years. We support the National Employers' decision to not make a pay offer this year as it reflected the views of the majority of councils following extensive consultation.

We of course wish to keep working with you and your members to ensure that this council continues to deliver the excellent services that our residents expect and we recognise that this would not be possible without the hard work and commitment of our colleagues in [insert council name].

Yours sincerely,

[name]



**To: Chief Executives in England, Wales and N Ireland
(additional copies for HR Director and Finance Director)
Members of the National Employers' Organisation
Regional Directors
Secretaries of the Local Government Associations**

2 March 2012

Dear Chief Executive,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY

You will be aware of the National Employers' announcement on 23 February that they are unable to make a pay offer to local government employees for 2012/13. The Employers have also declined a request from the unions to refer the matter to arbitration. However, the Employers have invited the unions to begin meaningful discussions on pay and other issues in order to try and avoid a fourth year of a pay freeze in 2013 and over the coming months we will be asking authorities for their views.

Since last week you may also have seen various statements by the unions, and by GMB in particular, that they may seek to achieve a pay increase this year by lodging the national pay claim with individual local authorities. The Employers' decision to not make a pay offer was reached after extensive consultation with councils, the majority of whom told us that they could not afford a pay increase. However, the decision on whether to enter into local negotiations will be a matter for each council.

In responding to a local pay claim you may wish to use the template letter attached at **Annex A**. Please feel free to use this as you wish, adding relevant local information, particularly about financial constraints, where appropriate. It would be appreciated if you were able to send a copy of your letter to us by emailing harry.honnor@local.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Messenger
Head of Workforce