



# PRESS RELEASE

14 November 2013

## **“Union Open Letter to Councillors”.**

**To:** All councillors in the North East and Cumbria

Dear Councillor,

The NJC Trade Union Side negotiates pay and conditions for local government workers covered by the National Joint Council with the Local Government Employers (LGE).

On 5 November the Trade Union Side formally lodged our 2014-15 pay claim for local government workers with the LGE. It is attached and we hope that you will take time to read it carefully and speak to your executive leadership about it. The document lays out the case for our claim, which is for:

**A minimum increase of £1 an hour on scale point 5 to achieve the Living Wage and the same flat rate increase on all other scale points  
Our members’ pay has fallen by 18% in real terms since 2010**

**Half a million NJC workers earn less than the new Living Wage rates of £7.65 outside London**

Over 1 million NJC workers (two thirds) earn less than £21,000 a year.

That’s over £5,500 less than annual median earnings in the economy in 2012...and below the Coalition’s ‘low pay’ threshold of £2.

In comparison, only 22,000 NHS and 4,000 Higher Education workers earn less than the Living Wage.

Local government pay (NJC) is the lowest in the public sector – from top to bottom of the pay spine.

On top of the decline in basic earnings, local cuts to conditions like unsocial hours payments are hitting pay packets hard.

Politicians from all political parties are calling for action to end low pay and the Living Wage in the private sector. Meanwhile, 1.6 million local government workers face unprecedented financial hardship because of poverty pay and declining earnings. Many of our members can only make ends meet through loans from friends and family, food banks, in-work benefits and welfare support from us - their trade unions.

We do understand that our claim is set against a backdrop of unprecedented cuts in local authority funding by central government. However, this squeeze on our members’ living standards is damaging the chances of economic recovery, alongside their ability to make ends meet. We need a rise in local government pay levels which recognises our members’ vital contribution to your local economy and local services and helps boost consumer confidence and the wider economic revival. They are continuing to keep local services going with over 450,000 jobs lost and their commitment deserves to be recognised.

### **So what can you do?**

**GMB Northern Region, 1 Mosley Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE1 1YE**

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Read our claim and discuss it with other councillors  
Please reply to us at [NJCPay2014@unison.co.uk](mailto:NJCPay2014@unison.co.uk). Please copy GMB and Unite into your message by including [Brian.Strutton@gmb.org.uk](mailto:Brian.Strutton@gmb.org.uk) and [Fiona.Farmer@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Fiona.Farmer@unitetheunion.org)

Make sure that our claim is discussed formally within your council.

Use the model motion attached to get support for our claim.

Talk to our local union reps and members about how the pay squeeze is affecting them

Speak up for your workforce! Many of them are also your local constituents and deserve your support. You can speak up for them on Twitter and Facebook, as well as in your local papers.

The Local Government Employers are currently holding regional consultations on this year's NJC pay offer. **Please ensure that attendees from your council understand our claim and are reflecting the views of elected members.** The employers are in the process of agreeing dates.

Those publicised so far are below:

<b>Dates for regional employer consultations:</b>	
East Midlands	6 December 2013
West Midlands	17 January 2014
Yorkshire and Humberside	23 January 2014

**If your regional date has not been fixed yet, ask your council to keep you in the picture and let you know.**

We look forward to hearing from you and to your support.

With best wishes,



Heather Wakefield

Brian Strutton

Fiona Farmer

Joint Trade Union Side Secretaries

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**NOTES TO EDITORS that GMB will have a name and shame policy**



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