

National Employers for local government services

Jason Poulter
Trade Union Side Secretary
JNC for Craft & Associated Employees
Unite House
128 Theobald's Road
London WC1X 8TN

14 November 2025

Dear Jason,

CRAFTWORKER PAY 2025

The National Employers held their AGM on 30 October and received a detailed update on Craft pay 2025. After a lengthy discussion, members again agreed to reaffirm their offer as full and final, which they noted GMB is ready to accept. Members also noted that the overwhelming majority of directly employed local authority Craftworkers are employed on either NJC 'Green Book' or locally determined pay rates, so will have already received their pay increase for 2025/26.

Regarding Unite's request for a meeting, members are unable to accede as the National Employers do not discuss issues with individual unions in isolation; they can only deal with matters raised by the Trade Union Side, as clearly provided for in paragraph 11 of the JNC's Constitution:

"The Chair shall call a special meeting of the Committee if so requested by either side of the Committee. The requisition, and also the notice summoning the meeting, shall state the nature of the business proposed to be transacted, and no other matters shall be discussed. The meeting shall take place within fourteen days of such a requisition being received by the joint secretaries."

Notwithstanding that only one of the JNC unions is calling for a meeting, members are still unclear as to the composition and allocation of seats on the Trade Union Side of the JNC. The employers look forward to receiving a jointly agreed response on that issue.

The employers' offer letter of 22 April included some details about the responses received from councils to a survey we conducted ahead of this year's pay round. There has been no change in those councils' position since then.

Thank you for sharing a copy of Unite's indicative ballot. We must challenge a few statements within it:

(1) "...creating a reliance on job evaluation to grade workers going forward while eroding craft status as a minimum standard..."

Using job evaluation as a tool to fairly measure and recompense different roles within a council is entirely routine and something which the NJC arm of Unite the Union (including its predecessor incarnations) has encouraged and participated in since Single Status was agreed in 1997. It is also the longstanding position of the National Employers that the

NJC JE Scheme can be used to evaluate Craftworker roles with a view to assimilating them into councils' existing pay and grading structures, as has already happened in many councils in the years since 1997.

(2) "...the employers' proposal to remove the apprentice structure from our agreement?"

The employers have not proposed removing the apprentice structure from the National Agreement. As stated in their offer letter, the National Employers wish to encourage high standards of employment practice in relation to the way in which Craft apprentices are employed. The employers' proposal is merely that the JNC should cease issuing specific rates of pay for JNC Craft apprentices and instead allow individual local employers to set rates of pay for these employees. Local employers will of course ensure they are complying with the statutory requirements of the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage regulations as they relate to an apprentice's age¹ and can apply discretion locally, if they wish, to pay above the minimum rates.

(3) "...the employers' proposal to place the skilled, competent and qualified craft worker with unskilled operatives and new entrants, as a minimum National Standard and job evaluate locally to resolve?"

The deletion of NJC spinal column point 2 formed part of the NJC pay agreement and will go ahead on 1 April 2026. Therefore, the Building Labourer grade rate of JNC pay (currently aligned to NJC spinal column point 2) will by necessity increase to align with NJC spinal column point 3 from that date. The employers' position on job evaluation is as set out at (1) above.

The National Employers again urge Unite to join with GMB in accepting their full and final pay offer.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

cc George Georgiou, GMB
Neil Tasker, Unite

¹ The apprentice minimum wage is £7.55 per hour, which applies to apprentices under 19 and those aged 19 or over during their first year of the apprenticeship. After the first year, apprentices aged 19 or over are entitled to the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage for their age group.