

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

22 April 2025

Dear Jason,

CRAFTWORKER PAY 2025

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 7 February. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and then met initially on 24 March to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The National Employers sought councils' views at the regional pay consultation briefings regarding the unions' request that their offer should not be badged as '*full and final*'. Broadly speaking, whilst there was sympathy with that request for meaningful negotiations, a majority understood the pragmatic reasons behind making a '*full and final*' offer and the imperative of transparency and implementing the pay award as soon as possible and therefore were in favour of that being the approach taken again this year for all the negotiating bodies for which the National Employers have responsibility¹.

Accordingly, the National Employers have agreed that making such an offer would again provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

However, as you will be aware, on 11 June the government will be announcing the details of its spending review, and we are hopeful it will provide councils with a three-year funding settlement. A longer-term settlement would provide more financial planning certainty for councils which in turn could from 2026 onwards enable the employers to consider alternatives to the one-year pay offers of recent years. Multi-year pay offers / deals would by necessity require meaningful negotiations.

The National Employers wish to make the following, full and final one-year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) offer in respect of those employees whose pay is determined by contractual reference to the Craft JNC National Agreement ('*Red Book*'), as follows:

For all Craft JNC employees (regardless of job title and designation) whose rate of pay differs from the salaries set out in the Craft JNC 2024 pay agreement circular (dated 1

¹ NJC for local government services; JNC for local authority Craft & Associated employees; JNC for local authority Chief Officers; and JNC for local authority Chief Executives

November 2024), but is still contractually linked to the annual settlement reached by the Craft JNC, the Employers' final offer is as follows:

- **With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent on basic salary**
- **With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent on all allowances**
(as listed in the 2024 JNC pay agreement circular dated 1 November 2024)

The National Employers believe that an offer constructed in this way is the best method of ensuring that for the majority of Craft employees who are paid in accordance with local pay rates, which are nevertheless contractually linked to Craft JNC settlements, would receive a pay award.

For those few Craft employees who are paid the **specific** annual salaries as set out in the Craft JNC 2024 pay agreement, the Employers' full and final offer is as follows:

With effect from 1 April 2025:

- **3.20 per cent on Building Labourer grade (equivalent to SCP2 on the NJC spine)**
- **3.20 per cent on Heating & Ventilation Mate grade (equivalent to SCP3 on the NJC spine)**
- **3.20 per cent on Building Operative grade (equivalent to SCP3 on the NJC spine)**
- **3.20 per cent on Plumber grade (equivalent to SCP4 on the NJC spine)**
- **3.20 per cent on Engineer & Electrician grade (equivalent to SCP5 on the NJC spine), and**
- **3.20 per cent on all allowances**

Building Labourer grade from 1 April 2026

You will be aware of the principle agreed by the JNC in the 2016-18 agreement to align the five Craft Grades to current pay points 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively on the NJC 'Green Book' pay spine.

This year's offer to the NJC unions includes a proposal to delete SCP 2 from the NJC spine with effect from 1 April 2026. Therefore, as the Building Labourer grade salary is aligned with SCP2 the National Employers propose that employers who apply the JNC pay rates should (in the event agreement is reached with the NJC unions to delete SCP 2), with effect from 1 April 2026, align this JNC Craft grade salary with SCP3 on the NJC spine.

Other elements of your claim:

Working week

The Employers reject this element of the claim in relation to a proposed 35-hour week (34 in London). Such a reduction would be out of line with norms in local government and would result in an increase in costs that would adversely affect local authority services.

Annual leave

The Employers reject this element of the claim. All Craft employees currently receive a minimum of 22 days' leave, plus two extra statutory days, with a further four days after five years' service (28 days). This is equitable to NJC employees' minimum annual leave entitlement of 28 days (after five years' service). Many councils have a more generous basic leave entitlement for both groups of employees.

JNC Craft apprentice pay rates

Following receipt of your claim, we undertook a survey of councils to ascertain how many apply the specific full-time and apprentice pay rates as set out in each year's Craft JNC pay agreement circular.

243 councils responded to the survey of which only 32 said they directly employ Craftworkers on 'Red Book' conditions (eg, Craft specific tool allowances etc). Of those 32 councils, only nine apply the JNC pay rates.

Each year, the Low Pay Commission (LPC) makes its recommendation to government of what it believes the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) rates should be. In recent years, both LPC and government have indicated a wish to move away from age-related pay rates.

Councils are committed to high quality services delivered by a well-trained, motivated workforce with security of employment. With this principle in mind, the National Employers wish to encourage high standards of employment practice in relation to the way in which Craft apprentices are employed.

Therefore, the National Employers propose the JNC should immediately cease issuing rates of pay for Craft apprentices and instead leave such matters to local determination (and in accordance with the employer's legal requirement to apply at least the statutory National Minimum Wage apprentice pay rate of £7.55 from 1 April 2025).

The National Employers hope this final offer can promptly form the basis of an agreement between the two Sides so that Craft employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

cc George Georgiou, GMB
Neil Tasker, Unite