

Tuesday 10 March 2026

NJC pay campaign update – and further resources

(Scotland for information)

The 2026 NJC pay campaign for England, Cymru and Northern Ireland continues. We are meeting the Employers for pay talks on 24 March, and in the meantime it is vital that we continue to put maximum pressure: on the employers to make a decent pay offer, and on the Westminster Government to make sure it is funded.

This bulletin reminds branches of the campaign resources that are available, and highlights further resources that have been produced, including a guide to engaging with elected politicians locally, a model council motion, and a model pay claim for use in employers not covered by the NJC pay award.

The pay claim and negotiations

The NJC unions' pay claim for 2026 for England, Cymru and Northern Ireland calls for a pay increase of £3,000 or 10%, whichever is the greater, and a minimum rate of £15 an hour. The claim also makes clear what the unions would be looking for if the Employers' Side wishes to negotiate around a multi-year settlement.

On Tuesday 24 March the NJC unions' negotiating team will meet with the NJC Employers for pay talks. We will argue strongly for the unions' claim to be met in full. After years of sub-inflation pay increases, the value of our members' pay has fallen massively – meaning they've experienced a real-terms pay cut. In the meantime, workloads and the demands of the job have increased, and workplace stress has sky-rocketed. Our members need and deserve a decent pay increase.

Get campaigning

We need to exert maximum pressure on the Employers to make a decent pay offer, and we need to put maximum pressure on the Government to fund it. Our messages must be that:

- Our members need and deserve a decent pay rise following years of sub-inflation settlements

- Local government is facing a recruitment and retention crisis, and this is down to low pay
- The Government needs a thriving local government sector if it is to meet its own objectives for the country
- If the Government were to fund our claim in full, it would recoup more than half of the outlay through increased tax revenue and reduced spending on benefits and tax credits
- Our claim is affordable. We must be clear that failure to fund our claim is a political choice on the part of the Government, and we need them to change course.