

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

18 August 2022

Dear Jason,

CRAFTWORKER PAY 2022

On behalf of the small number of councils that still directly employ local authority Craftworkers on '*Red Book*' conditions, the National Employers wish to register their immense dissatisfaction with the approach the JNC unions took to the 2021 pay round. The National Employers tabled their full and final offer on 27 July 2021. Apart from notifying us on 6 October 2021 that the offer had been rejected, there was barely any further contact from the Trade Union Side until yesterday when we were informed that the employers' offer had at long last been accepted.

It is enormously unfair that as a result of the JNC unions' actions, this part of the workforce has been denied, until now, the 2021 pay award that their counterparts in local government received months ago. The National Employers hope for the sake of the JNC's reputation, we can all work together from now on to avoid another lengthy process that unnecessarily delays the implementation of a pay award to local authority Craft employees.

Notwithstanding the comments above, the National Employers have agreed to respond formally to your Side's 2022 pay claim.

The National Employers wish to make the following, final one-year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023) 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 2021 pay agreement circular (dated 18 August 2022), 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 2022, an increase of £1,925 on basic salary**
- **With effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances**

The National Employers believe that an offer constructed in this way is the best method of ensuring that those Craft employees on 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 2021 pay agreement, the Employers' offer is as follows:

With effect from 1 April 2022:

- **£1,925 on Building Labourer grade (equivalent to SCP2 on the NJC spine)**
- **£1,925 on Heating & Ventilation Mate grade (equivalent to SCP3 on the NJC spine)**
- **£1,925 on Building Operative grade (equivalent to SCP3 on the NJC spine)**
- **£1,925 on Plumber grade (equivalent to SCP4 on the NJC spine)**
- **£1,925 on Engineer & Electrician grade (equivalent to SCP5 on the NJC spine), and**
- **4.04 per cent on all allowances**

These increases would continue 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.

Other elements of your claim:

An annual retention payment

Whether to apply retention payments is entirely a matter for local determination, rather than the JNC. Local employers will each adopt their own approach to retention payments, market supplements etc, having taken account of other issues such as equal pay and local labour market conditions. Therefore, the Employers reject this element of the claim.

Reduction in working hours to a 35-hour week, with no loss of earnings

The Employers reject this element of the claim in relation to a proposed 35-hour week. 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.

Minimum standby payment across all councils

As set out in the National Agreement Part 3 Para 1.4(e)(v), standby payments are a matter entirely for local determination, not the JNC. Therefore, the Employers reject this element of the claim.

One additional annual leave day for all operatives, plus one further day on all other holiday rates that depend on service

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).

The employers' final offer to the NJC unions includes an increase of one day to employees' annual leave entitlement. This would have the effect of the minimum annual leave entitlement in the 'Green Book' increasing to 28 days (after five years' service). This would be made up of 23 days' leave, plus two extra statutory days, with a further three days after five years' service. This would at last achieve equity between the two

groups by ending the historical disparity that saw JNC Craftworkers having a higher minimum annual leave entitlement.

100 per cent increase on Tool Allowance and Increase in Tool insurance

The Employers' offer is set out above; namely that tool allowance is increased by 4.04 per cent with effect from 1 April 2022. Similarly, in relation to tool insurance, the Employers' offer is that it is increased by 4.04 per cent with effect from 1 April 2022.

Compulsory CSCS Training for all Red Book Operatives

The Employers believe that it should be for individual authorities to decide whether to require their employees to be registered with the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS). Local authorities should also have the discretion to decide whether to pay the registration fee on behalf of employees or to ask staff to meet the cost themselves. Therefore, the Employers reject this element of the claim.

Maintain and improve Red Book Terms and Conditions

The Employers believe that Craft roles can be, and widely are, properly remunerated through other pay and grading structures. However, they are currently content to retain the national bargaining arrangements whilst some councils continue to directly employ Craftworkers on JNC conditions.

Payment for charging Phones, Laptops, Power Tools, Cars

The Employers consider the use of technology to be an increasingly common practice in the modern workplace that does not merit additional recompense. Therefore, the Employers reject this element of the claim.

The National Employers hope this final offer can quickly 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 a pay rise as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

cc George Georgiou, GMB
Andy Jones, Unite