Joint Negotiating Committee *for* Youth and Community Workers

Trade Union Side Pay and Conditions Claim 2023

Submitted by Unite, Unison, NEU and UCU

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Summary of Claim

The Trade Union Side's headline claims:

- **An increase of RPI plus 2% across all grades**
- **A recruitment and retention payment for all JNC staff of £1,000 per year in place until the completion of the grading matrix review.**
- **Address work-life balance and time off in lieu – by making the current guidance on work-life balance mandatory, to ensure compensatory leave (TOIL) is always accrued for extra hours worked.**
- **Each working week should contain two consecutive days that are designated as non-working days. Any TOIL for residential work will be completely separate from these designated non-working days.**
- **Move to a 35-hour working week without loss of pay - with sufficient time for planning and admin, with a further commitment to work towards a four-day week, without loss of pay, going forward.**
- **Further work and completion of the race and gender pay gaps in youth work review.**
- **Amend the agreement to include youth work employers covered by contracts, grant aid and any other local authority funding arrangements.**
- **Joint working to promote the JNC in the voluntary sector.**

1. Youth services now facing serious and prolonged skills shortages.

1.1 Youth services run by professional youth and community workers are a vital preventative service that can have life changing and lasting benefits to young people by engaging them on their own terms.

1.2 These benefits include:

- improved engagement with school and education
- reducing the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour amongst young people
- improvement in the wider learning and social skills of young people and helping to keep young people safe[1]

1.3 As has regularly been stressed youth work is hugely cost effective in the medium to longer term, as well as being socially beneficial. There is a broad evidence base "*highlighting the value of youth work in a wide range of contexts, covering both the intrinsic purpose and process of youth work and its impact on outcomes for young people and on the benefits for their communities*"[2]. We all benefit, and we could benefit yet more if cost-effective investment were to be made.

1.4 In recent years, Government has made statements about the need to rebuild our youth and community services. That rhetoric has not sadly been matched by sufficient investment to deliver, and the cost-of-living crisis is again leading to cuts in these vital services.

1.5 Our members have watched as their services have been diminished by over a decade of austerity and local government funding cuts[3] and the struggles they went through during the pandemic. These cuts have been comprehensively documented by a variety of sources including by the LGA itself[4]. In 2022, the YMCA published their report "Devalued – a decade of cuts to youth services" based on the submissions sent into the Department for Education by local authorities regarding their spend on youth services[5]. It revealed that not only have funding cuts for youth services now reached £1.1bn (a real-terms fall of 74% since 2010/11) but annual spend per head on 5-to-17-year-olds in England has plummeted from £158 in 2010/11 to just £37 in 2020/21. This has resulted in the loss of nearly 1000 youth centres[6] and thousands of youth work jobs[7].

1.6 The Joint Trade Union Side stress that youth services need rapid investment to rebuild the service and help recruit and retain the professional youth workers the service need.

1.7 The rules of supply and demand remain, and it is impossible to keep doing more with less and less resources. To maintain service levels for the public, local authorities need staff to deliver these services. Historic low pay and rising inflation does not alter that demand for services – and yet low pay in youth and community work means councils and schools are struggling to recruit/retain staff and provide

[1] Full overview of the benefits of youth services and the wide evidence base is given in *Future of Youth Work*, Unite the Union, 2013
[2] *Benefits of youth work*, Unite the Union and Lifelong Learning UK, 2010
[3] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jan/20/youth-services-suffer-70-funding-cut-in-less-than-a-decade?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other&fbclid=IwAR3q9UpbT7VB9iXQOYZk6ryAkZiD0-tmeZQJdWwzDTl0ZaubWzMDJNHDQQg
[4] https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/youth-services-funding-reduction-could-pay-over-1000-youth-workers-lga
[5] https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ymca-devalued-2022.pdf
[6] https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2019/12/shocking-picture-austerity-cuts-local-services-revealed-unison/
[7] Youth Services at Breaking Point, UNISON, 2018

expected levels of service. 81% of local authorities now say they are concerned about their capacity to deliver services due to their ability to recruit and retain staff.

1.8 This trend is having a huge impact on youth and community work as a profession with training courses now struggling to recruit enough people even to study towards the profession.

1.9 Despite rampant inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, unemployment in the UK remains at an historic low. If youth and community workers feel underpaid and undervalued, it's now easier than ever for them to find better paid, less stressful work elsewhere.

1.10 As JNC has continued to fall behind rates in the wider labour market, it has become increasingly difficult to attract new applicants. The long-term result of this is devastating for the service and the profession.

1.11 Most youth and community workers have seen near 40% wiped from the value of their pay since 2009 and the rapidly rising cost of living over the last year is significantly eroding the value of our members' wages.

1.12 Youth and community workers ARE their services and if we are to rebuild the support that our young people need, these vital key workers need and deserve more recognition.

1.13 Only a significant restorative pay award can begin to redress a lost decade of cuts, austerity and crisis - and go some way towards recognising the value of youth and community workers and rewarding their continued dedication to their jobs at this incredibly challenging time.

1.14 As a result of long-term cuts, it has become abundantly clear that the current pay structure needs a full review, with grading matrixes fully re-assessed to incentivise more applicants to the sector.

1.15 To support that process the Trade Union Side is calling for:

- **A restorative pay rise of at least RPI plus 2% to begin to repair the damage caused by over a decade of cuts.**
- **The introduction of a recruitment and retention payment for all JNC staff of £1,000 per year in place until the completion of the grading matrix review.**

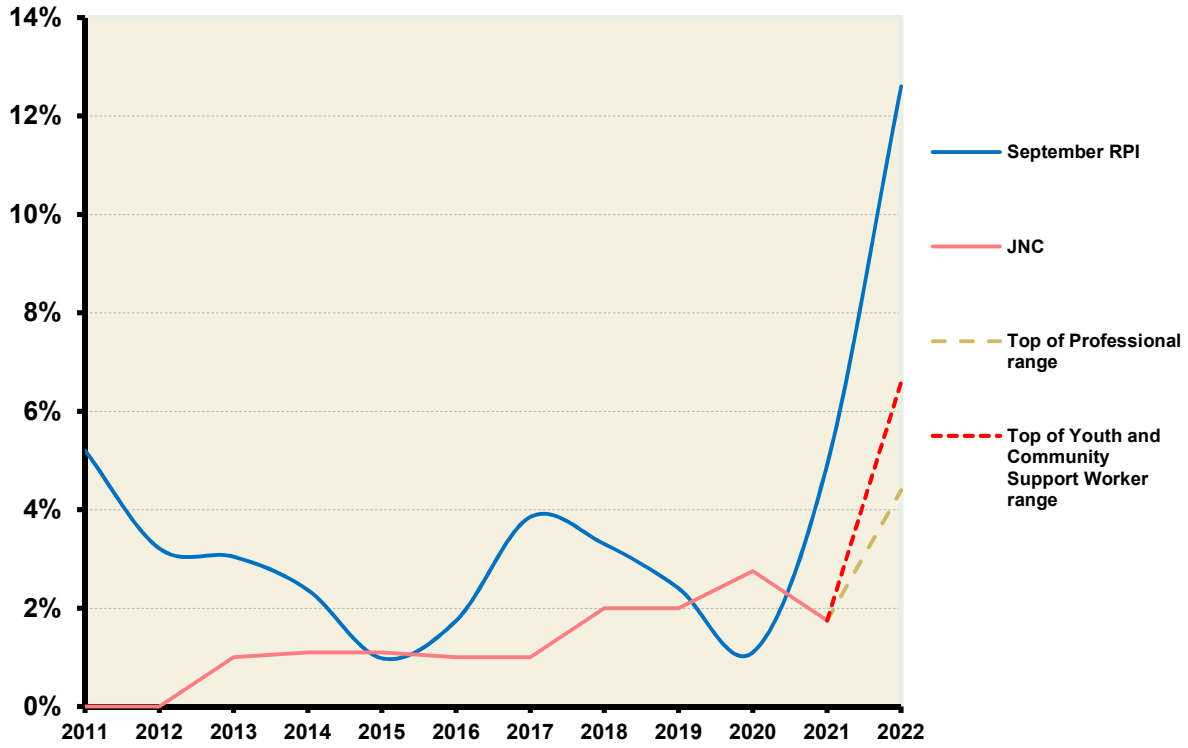
2. Over a decade of real terms pay cuts

2.1 The last 18 months has seen working people face soaring costs, with inflation reaching levels not seen for decades. High inflation, driven by sharp rises in basic necessities like fuel and food prices have hit ordinary people hard. This cost-of-living crisis has compounded over a decade of pay cuts and workload increases that have youth and community workers have faced. The result is that we are facing the worst cost-of-living crisis for generations.

2.2 Since 2009, pay increases for the majority of youth and community workers covered by the JNC have nearly all been below the level of inflation – resulting in a staggering decline in real terms pay of around 40% between September 2009 and 2022 (illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 3 below).

2.3 Figure 1 below illustrates that inflation has outstripped pay rises for the vast majority of the last decade. Due to the collapse in inflation during the pandemic, the 2020 rise made a small amount of progress to catch up the value of their pay but the huge rises in inflation since have quickly reversed that. The Trade Union Side remains adamant that action must be taken now to stop the loss of earnings, prevent the cost-of-living crisis further eroding public sector pay. Such a move would rebuild confidence in youth and community work as a career choice for young people and reverse the recruitment and retention crisis the sector faces.

Figure 1: JNC rises compared to RPI inflation (September 2011 - 22)



Source: ONS

Table 1: Pay Scales – Loss of earnings since September 2009

		Pay Spine Sep-2009	Pay Spine Sep-2022	Pay in 2022 had it matched RPI inflation since 2009	Loss of earnings 2009 - 2022	Real terms loss % 2009 – 2022
Youth and Community Support Worker Range	1	£14,143	-	£ 22,834	-£ 3,526	-8.9%
	2	£14,733	-	£ 23,786	-£ 4,478	-15.0%
	3	£15,324	-	£ 24,740	-£ 5,432	-20.7%
	4	£15,917	-	£ 25,698	-£ 6,390	-25.9%
	5	£16,509	£21,571	£ 26,654	-£ 7,346	-30.8%
	6	£17,100	£21,900	£ 27,608	-£ 7,977	-33.4%
	7	£17,697	£22,196	£ 28,572	-£ 8,650	-36.0%
	8	£18,291	£22,874	£ 29,531	-£ 8,942	-36.4%
	9	£19,047	£23,739	£ 30,751	-£ 9,312	-36.8%
	10	£19,636	£24,416	£ 31,702	-£ 9,598	-37.1%
	11	£20,591	£25,509	£ 33,244	-£ 10,066	-37.6%
	12	£21,525	£26,576	£ 34,752	-£ 10,524	-38.0%
Professional Range	13	£22,489	£27,681	£ 36,308	-£ 10,995	-38.4%
	14	£23,485	£28,825	£ 37,916	-£ 11,479	-38.7%
	15	£24,166	£29,603	£ 39,016	-£ 11,814	-39.0%
	16	£24,875	£30,416	£ 40,160	-£ 12,159	-39.2%
	17	£25,574	£31,216	£ 41,289	-£ 12,502	-39.4%
	18	£26,279	£32,021	£ 42,427	-£ 12,848	-39.6%
	19	£26,975	£32,820	£ 43,551	-£ 13,187	-39.8%
	20	£27,673	£33,622	£ 44,678	-£ 13,526	-40.0%
	21	£28,461	£34,522	£ 45,950	-£ 13,914	-40.2%
	22	£29,352	£35,542	£ 47,389	-£ 14,350	-40.4%
	23	£30,219	£36,536	£ 48,788	-£ 14,773	-40.5%
	24	£31,091	£37,534	£ 50,196	-£ 15,199	-40.7%
	25	£31,968	£38,540	£ 51,612	-£ 15,627	-40.9%
	26	£32,847	£39,545	£ 53,031	-£ 16,058	-41.1%
	27	£33,726	£40,550	£ 54,450	-£ 16,489	-41.2%
	28	£34,613	£41,568	£ 55,882	-£ 16,921	-41.4%
	29	£35,496	£42,577	£ 57,308	-£ 17,355	-41.5%
	30	£36,377	£43,588	£ 58,730	-£ 17,783	-41.6%

2.4 As can be seen from the tables below, when the basket of goods is broken down it is clear that several of the elements that are driving the rises in the RPI relate to key basics like travel, clothing and fuel prices and food costs which have been rising at the fastest rates in 45 years[8].

[8] https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costoflivinginsights/food

Table 2: 6 of the 14 groups in the RPI basket of goods increased by 12.6% or more in September 2022

Broad Categories	% annual increase
Fuel and light	72.2
Fares and other travel costs	19.2
Clothing and footwear	15.2
Food	14.3
Household goods	13.8
Motoring expenditure	13.4
Catering	10.7
Housing	8.8
Tobacco	8.5
Leisure services	7.5
Personal goods and services	6.3
Household services	5.9
Leisure goods	5.5
Alcohol	3.9

Source: ONS October 2022

Table 3: 5 of the 14 groups in the RPI basket of goods increased by 10.7% or more in June 2023

Broad Categories	% annual increase
Fuel and light	23.4
Food	17.1
Clothing and footwear	14.9
Fares and other travel costs	11.9
Tobacco	11.7
Catering	9.9
Household goods	9.8
Housing	9.4
Leisure services	8.3
Alcoholic drink	8.0
Personal goods and services	7.1
Leisure goods	6.6
Household services	6.4
Motoring expenditure	5.7

Source: ONS July 2023

2.5 Other relevant costs such as childcare[9] and housing[10] also continue to rise fast in many parts of the county. E.g. Homelet reports that every region new rents has seen annual increases, across the UK at 10.4% and 12.5% in Greater London.[11]

2.6 For the value of staff wages not to fall back even further, they must at least stay well ahead of predicted rises in the cost of living, which the Treasury's summary of city and independent forecasts puts at a

[9] Childcare Survey, Coram Family and Children Trust updated annually, published March 2023. **https://www.coram.org.uk/resource/coram-family-and-childcare-survey-2023**

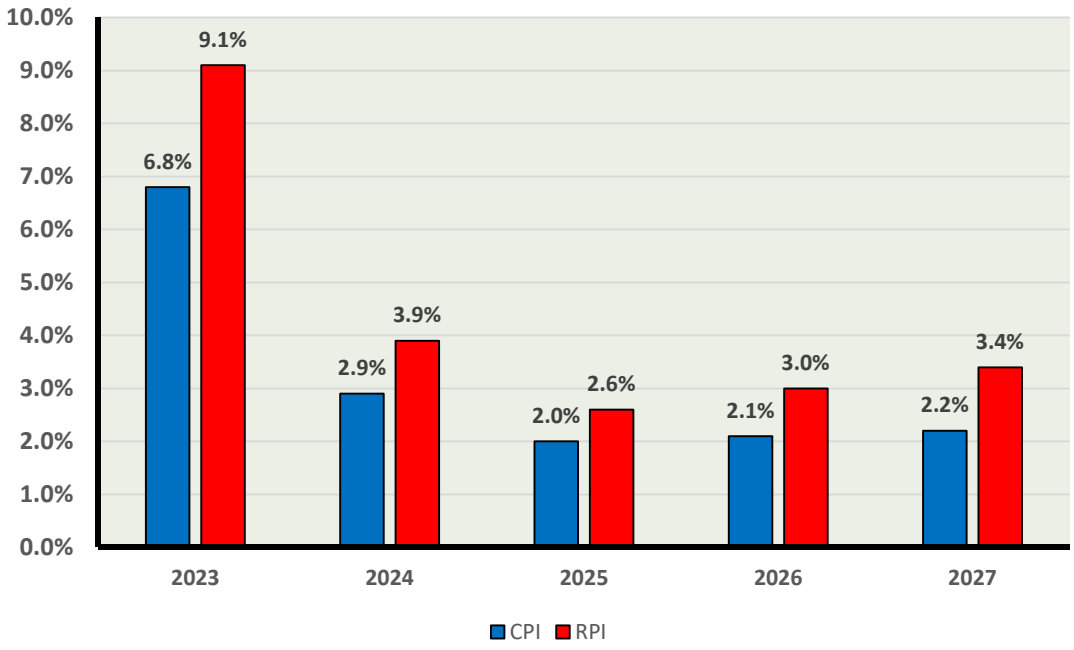
[10] ONS UK House Price Index February 2023, published April 2023

[11] Homelet New Rent index: **https://homelet.co.uk/homelet-rental-index**

median of 9.1% in 2023 and 3.9% in 2024[12]. The full 5-year forecasts are shown in the graph below. It should be stressed that forecasts have been pretty unreliable with the same Treasury summary last year predicting that RPI would be around 3.5% in 2023.

2.7 Historically, periods of wage constraint have been followed by periods of 'catch-up'. The alternative is a permanent devaluation of youth and community workers' wages. Against this backdrop, we believe that the Trade Union Side's claim for PRI plus 2%, whichever the greater, on all pay points is both measured and reasonable.

Figure 2: Forecast annual increase in cost of living (RPI and CPI)

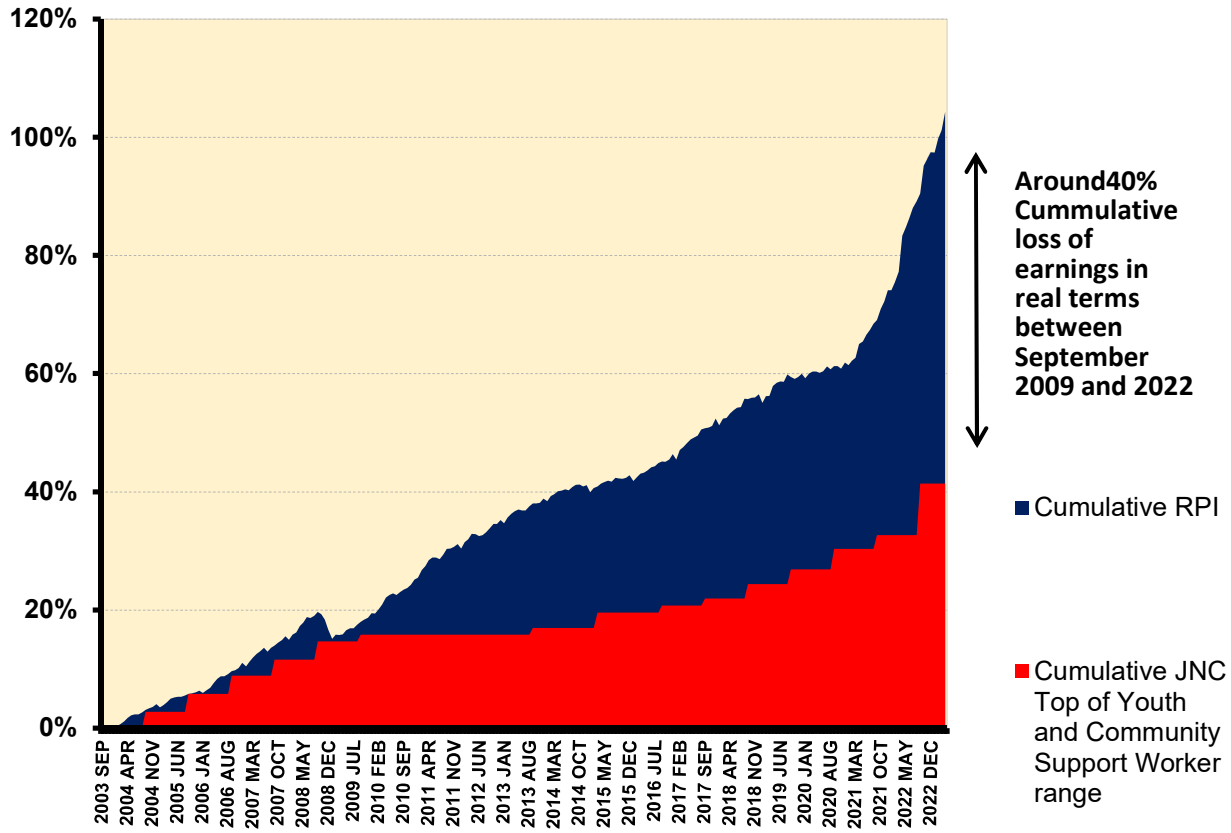


Source: HM Treasury Forecasts for the UK Economy, May 2023

2.8 The graph below shows the cumulative loss of earnings since 2010, with most JNC rates having lost around 40% between the agreement in September 2009 and September 2022.

[12] HM Treasury, Forecasts for the UK Economy, March 2023

Figure 3: Cumulative loss of earnings from the JNC compared to RPI



Source: ONS

2.9 The real pay cuts experienced since the Conservatives entered government have had a significant impact on the purchasing power of youth and community workers. If the pay of youth and community workers had kept pace with RPI inflation[13] since September 2009 then the vast majority would now be earning several thousand pounds more each year. This is just the amount their pay should have increased by in order for their living standards to stand still, rather than improve. By increasing the 2009 salary rates by inflation each year, the figures in Table 1 illustrate the deep inroads that have been made into the personal budgets of youth and community workers and their families due to government cuts and intransigence from employers.

2.10 Trade union side wishes to stress that even those who would have been on the lowest pay bands in 2009 would now be facing real term reductions in their pay, eroding progress made to eradicate poverty pay.

2.11 Trade Union Side recognises that catching up on large losses of earnings over the decade would require a longer period than simply one or two years, but believes that now is the time to start to recoup this loss.

[13] The Trade Union Side consider the Retail Price Index to be the appropriate measure of inflation. The Government still refers to RPI as its preferred measure when considering student loans, private pension uprating and index linked gilts and bonds. RPI is still widely used as the preferred measure in private sector pay settlements. Significantly, unlike other measures, the RPI includes housing costs, which are clearly a major component of workers' expenditure.

2.12 **The Trade Union Side is therefore recommending an increase of RPI plus 2% across all pay points.**

3. Pay comparators

3.1 There is a wide public consensus on the need for youth and community services, but the ability of local government to attract and retain staff is being badly damaged by the pay of its staff falling behind the going rate in the wider labour market. This has been confirmed by data from youth and community courses that highlights that they are now struggling to recruit people to train for the profession.

3.2 This table shows how a decade of below average JNC pay awards have caused youth and community staff to fall behind their equivalents in the private sector and wider economy.

Table 4: JNC pay awards Vs those in the wider economy since 2010[14]

Year to September	Median Across economy	Median Private services*	JNC Pay Award
2010	2%	2%	0%
2011	2.5%	2.7%	0%
2012	2.5%	2.8%	0%
2013	2.5%	2.5%	1%
2014	2.5%	2.5%	2.2%
2015	2.2%	2.4%	
2016	2%	2%	1%
2017	2%	2.2%	1%
2018	2.5%	2.5%	2%
2019	2.5%	2.5%	2%
2020	2.3%	2.2%	2.75%
2021	2.0%	2.32%	1.75%
2022	5%	5.8%	Between 4.4% – 9.8%

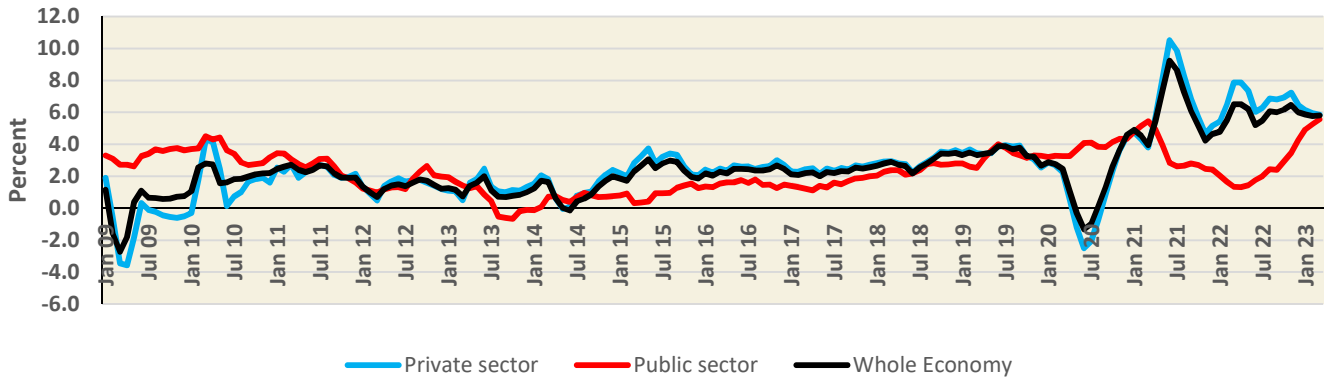
***Does not include manufacturing and primary, as these are less accurate comparators**

3.3 As in the case of pay settlements, a gap between public and private rates has been a persistent feature of the economy over the last decade and even though private sector average earnings fell sharply over the pandemic, it recovered and rose far beyond rates seen throughout the last decade.

3.4 The graph below shows trends in average earnings growth over the last decade. There was a sharp acceleration of private sector rates as the UK came out of the Covid-19 pandemic was not matched by public sector employers, which have only just started to catch up following a year of industrial strife in many parts of the public sector.

[14] Labour Research Department, settlements year to September 2022

Figure 4: Average Weekly Earnings - total pay, % changes year on year, 3-month average



Source: ONS

3.5 The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2022 provisional results record the median annual gross pay of youth and community workers[15] as £24,153 and the mean as £24,283. The median pay of a full-time youth and community worker is £27,936 while for those working part-time the median annual pay is £12,194. A quarter of all youth and community workers are recorded as earning £16,131 or less and 80% earning £31,258 a year or less. For youth work professionals[16] the median is £35,110 and the mean is £34,655.

3.6 The same ASHE 2022 occupational data gives the median pay for all social workers[17] as £36,676, and the mean at £35,642. The median for full time social workers is £39,053. For teachers, the ASHE 2022 occupational data states that the median for all teaching and educational professionals[18] is £37,017 and for full time workers it is £40,878.

3.7 When we consider the classroom teachers pay rates 2022 (Tables 5 sets out the joint union recommended pay structures[19]) we can see that this is broadly comparable to the professional range of the JNC. However, teachers with management responsibilities can expect to be paid significantly above these scales. More striking are the significantly better London Area Allowances teachers receive compared to the JNC (Table 6).

[15] ASHE 2022 Provisional data, Table 14.7a Annual Gross Pay, SOC 3231
[16] ASHE 2022 Provisional data, Table 14.7a Annual Gross Pay, SOC 2464
[17] ASHE 2022 Provisional data, Table 14.7a Annual Gross Pay, SOC 2442
[18] ASHE 2022 Provisional data, Table 14.7a Annual Gross Pay SOC 23
[19] https://neu.org.uk/pay-scales

Table 5 Joint Union Teacher Pay Scales for Qualified Classroom Teachers (from 1 September 2022)

	England	Wales	Inner London	Outer London	London Fringe
	01-Sep-22	01-Sep-22	01-Sep-22	01-Sep-22	01-Sep-22
Main Pay Range	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.
1 (minimum)	£28,000	-	£34,502	£32,407	£29,344
2	£29,800	£28,866	£36,141	£34,103	£31,126
3	£31,750	£31,184	£37,857	£35,886	£33,055
4	£33,850	£33,587	£39,655	£37,763	£35,151
5	£35,990	£36,232	£41,892	£40,050	£37,264
6 (maximum)	£38,810	£39,873	£44,756	£43,193	£40,083
Upper Pay Range	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.
1 (minimum)	£40,625	£41,337	£49,320	£44,687	£41,858
2	£42,131	£42,869	£51,743	£46,340	£43,360
	£43,685	£44,450	£53,482	£48,055	£44,919

Table 6: Annual London Allowances

Teachers Main Pay Range	Inner £ p.a.	Outer £ p.a.	Fringe £ p.a.
1	£6,502	£4,407	£1,344
2	£6,341	£4,303	£1,326
3	£6,107	£4,136	£1,305
4	£5,805	£3,913	£1,301
5	£5,902	£4,060	£1,274
6	£5,946	£4,383	£1,273
Teachers Upper Pay Range			
1			
2	£8,695	£4,062	£1,233
3	£9,612	£4,209	£1,229
Youth and Community workers (JNC)	£3,385	£2,224	£867

3.8 The Trade Union Side believes that an increase of RPI plus 2% across all pay points and allowances would help to reduce the pay differential between youth and community workers and other comparable professions.

Table 7: Trade Union Side Claim

		Pay Spine Sep-2009	Pay Spine Sep-2022	2023 claim RPI plus 2% (using Treasury* medium term forecast of 9.1% for 2023)
Youth and Community Support Worker Range	5	£16,509	£21,571	£23,965
	6	£17,100	£21,900	£24,331
	7	£17,697	£22,196	£24,660
	8	£18,291	£22,874	£25,413
	9	£19,047	£23,739	£26,374
	10	£19,636	£24,416	£27,126
	11	£20,591	£25,509	£28,340
	12	£21,525	£26,576	£29,526
	13	£22,489	£27,681	£30,754
	14	£23,485	£28,825	£32,025
	15	£24,166	£29,603	£32,889
	16	£24,875	£30,416	£33,792
	17	£25,574	£31,216	£34,681
Professional Range	18	£26,279	£32,021	£35,575
	19	£26,975	£32,820	£36,463
	20	£27,673	£33,622	£37,354
	21	£28,461	£34,522	£38,354
	22	£29,352	£35,542	£39,487
	23	£30,219	£36,536	£40,591
	24	£31,091	£37,534	£41,700
	25	£31,968	£38,540	£42,818
	26	£32,847	£39,545	£43,934
	27	£33,726	£40,550	£45,051
	28	£34,613	£41,568	£46,182
	29	£35,496	£42,577	£47,303
	30	£36,377	£43,588	£48,426

***Source:** HM Treasury Forecasts for the UK Economy, May 2023

4. Work-life balance and well-being

4.1. The JNC was originally designed to meet the needs of youth and community workers to effectively plan their time, ensure they are rested and to enjoy life outside of work as well as being able to deliver the youth service a local community deserves.

4.2. A decade of youth service cuts removing in excess of £1bn from the service[20] has meant workers have seen expanding responsibilities and redundancies leading to increased workloads and an unsustainable culture of long hours, as staff prop up the service. This in turn has meant that stress and mental ill-health are a growing challenge for youth and community workers.

4.3. Long hours and overtime are endemic in the sector, and these can lead to serious and long term mental and physical ill health, stress, fatigue and increases in workplace accidents[15], decreasing productivity within organisations[21], lowering morale and leading to increased staff turnover[22].

4.4. The Trade Union Side continues to believe that rising workloads due to job cuts mean that increasingly youth and community workers are expected to work overtime that is unpaid and they are not able to take the time back as TOIL. In some cases, this is because of increased numbers of evening shifts or weekend shifts.

4.5. This enormous goodwill contribution must be recognised. The Trade Union Side strongly believes that workers should be paid for all the hours they work and that employers must get a grip on unpaid overtime.

4.6. Analysis by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of Labour Force Survey statistics shows that stress, depression or anxiety accounts for over 50% of all work-related ill health cases. The predominant cause of work-related stress, depression or anxiety from the Labour Force Survey was workload, in particular tight deadlines, too much work or too much pressure or responsibility - the biggest single cause of sick leave by some distance. That same analysis showed that this is an acute issue within local authority services with human health and social work, public administration and education all accounting for some of the highest levels of average rates of stress, depression or anxiety[23].

4.7. The Trade Union Side therefore restates its belief that this trend is having a harmful effect on individual youth workers and a detrimental impact on the quality of the youth service delivered, as the ability of youth and community workers to plan their time appropriately is eroded. Joint work is ongoing on this crucial issue, but Trade Union Side unions are clear that a meaningful pay rise and improvements to workload and working time must play a central role in tackling this epidemic.

4.8. The Trade Union Side believes that now is the time for the working week and leave entitlement of staff to be improved nationally and is therefore calling for:

[20] https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/youth-services-cuts-exceed-1bn-in-a-decade
[21] http://ftp.iza.org/dp8129.pdf
[22] https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/352.pdf
[23] HSE Health and safety at work, summary statistics, 2022: https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/overall/hssh2122.pdf

4.9. Improved compensation to recognise the growing demands for overtime including:

- **Making the current guidance on work-life balance mandatory, to ensure compensatory leave (TOIL) is always accrued for extra hours worked.**
- **Each working week should contain two consecutive days that are designated as non-working days. Any TOIL for residential work will be completely separate from these designated non-working days.**
- **The introduction of a 35-hour working week without loss of pay, while ensuring there is sufficient time for planning and admin, with a further commitment to work towards a four-day week, without loss of pay, going forwards.**

5. Equality impact and pay gaps

5.1. The Trade Union Side recognises the welcome work that has been undertaken to research the pay gaps in youth and community work. This data gathering exercise has been a useful start in the process, but now concrete action is needed to tackle the problem.

5.2. The Trade Union side believe that cuts to real pay, terms and conditions, and employment totals by JNC employers have had a disproportionate impact on workers who share protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act.

5.3. Public sector employers have a legal obligation to 'remove or minimise disadvantages' faced by workers who share a protected characteristic. Raising pay in real terms, after many years of decline, would be in line with at least the spirit of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In the Trade Union Side's view, continued cuts would clearly be contrary to it.

5.4. The Trade Union Side wish to restate that simply understanding the problem is not sufficient and what is needed is concrete actions to be taken. This could include service level reporting of the issue, the development of a JNC toolkit to help authorities carry out equality audits and good recruitment and retention practice, as well as national guidance for local authority employers.

5.5. Recruitment of under-represented groups into the service and up to senior roles is also important and work should be done to develop JNC apprenticeships to help fund new qualified youth and community workers that is targeted at specific communities and demographics.

5.6. The Trade Union Side is calling for further work and completion of the race and gender pay gaps in youth work review.

6. Extending the JNC to not for profit providers of youth and community services

6.1 The Joint Trade Union Side remain steadfast and unanimous in our support for the JNC Pink Book as the best pay and terms agreement for the promotion of professional youth and community work across the UK. Investment in youth services must continue to recognise the JNC agreement and commit to maintaining it for all youth and community work staff, both in local authorities and community, not for profit and voluntary sector providers.

6.2 Over the last decade there has been an increasing move to contract out youth service activity to community and not for profit providers. Many of these employers are not covered by JNC terms and conditions and the result has been a reduction of both the quality of youth work provided and the pay and terms of staff in the service.

6.3 Evidence shows that pay in the not-for-profit sector overall now falls substantially behind other sectors of the economy. A recent report by Pro Bono Economics[24] found a 7.0% hourly wage gap between the voluntary sector and other sectors of the economy after accounting for differences in personal (e.g. age and qualifications) and job (e.g. industry and occupation) characteristics between those working in the charity sector and the rest of the economy. This gap widens as people progress through their careers, peaking at 9.4% for those aged 46 to 50. People with higher levels of qualifications experience a bigger difference in their pay than those with lower levels of qualifications, earning an average £40,000 less over their working lifetimes than their similarly qualified peers in the rest of the economy.

6.4 Low pay and the gap in wages and conditions, when compared to other sectors of the economy, is driving recruitment problems for the sector. This has been recognised by not-for-profit chief executive organisation Acevo, which claimed that "*the key drivers behind the retention issues and job candidate shortages facing charities are of course many and varied, but average pay levels are certainly a big factor.*"[25]

6.5 A key reason why many not-for-profit employers are not covered by the JNC is that the wording of the agreement currently only covers those employers that are grant aided in the sector. That is increasingly a minority of employers as funding arrangements are now typically made through contracts and competitive tendering processes.

6.6 Trade union side is therefore calling for amendment of the JNC agreement (point 2.1(a) to include youth work employers covered by contracts, grant aid and any other local authority funding arrangements.

[24] https://www.probonoeconomics.com/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=06cde62a-a1f7-4c1c-8463-f08dfc142c7b
[25] https://www.acevo.org.uk/2022/09/facing-up-to-the-recruitment-and-retention-challenge/

6.7 Trade union side also calls for joint working to promote the JNC in the voluntary sector, including making JNC terms and conditions a condition for all youth work contracts commissioned from local authorities.

7. Conclusion

7.1. In this pay claim the Trade Union Side have clearly laid out the case for a significant real terms pay rise for youth and community workers to address the recruitment and retention issues within the sector.

7.2. With the continued cost of living crisis still impacting staff, it is more important than ever that the employers act to tackle the falling wages of youth and community workers. Such action will send the message that their work is valued and would acknowledge the important role they play over the long term while helping to address the significant recruitment and retention issues within the sector.

7.3. An increase of RPI plus 2% on all pay rates would begin to reverse the fall value of existing youth and community work pay, while an additional one-off payment of £1,000 will help to keep people working in the service while concrete work is done to complete the vital grading matrix review.

7.4. New systems for time off in lieu (TOIL), working hours and work-life balance would deliver real improvements to the well-being of staff, and consequently to the quality of youth services provided.

7.5. Continued joint work on pay gaps would also bring crucial equality assurance to the pay JNC pay structure.

7.6. The youth and community workforce delivers huge benefits to local communities and wider society; it is a skilled and dedicated workforce, and they are not being recognised and valued as such. Trade Union Side therefore seeks full and open negotiations on all the points that we have raised above.