

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5

INTRODUCTION

The Branch continues to represent our members individually and collectively within all employers where we have members and a few examples illustrate the type of interventions the branch makes on behalf of members.

The latest reports on our Local Government Pay Claim are included in this circular and it is clear there is a long way to go on this.

We have heard noises from Government indicating a back track on promises to fund councils as needed to protect our communities.

This must be opposed and public service workers who have played such a key role cannot be expected to continue to be forgotten when it comes to fair pay.

It is good to see a view from one of our young members and new steward on the importance of trade unions.

We need good trade union organisation in the best and worst of times.

Yesterday much of the country acknowledged International Workers Memorial Day which is an annual event to remember workers who have been made ill, been injured or died as a result of their work.

Many people may not have heard of this act of remembrance previously but were drawn to the focus this year on key workers who have been ill or died through their work during the Covid-19 crisis.

UNISON was one of the trade unions who rightly called for that focus and hopes the loss of life of workers as a result of their work is always remembered.

We all need to 'remember the dead and fight for the living.'

Evelyn Doyle
Manchester UNISON Branch Secretary

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5

UPDATE ON NJC PAY OFFER

This circular updates branches on communication between the NJC Trade Unions and the Employers' side since the improved pay offer of 2.75% was made.

As you know, the NJC Employers have made a pay offer of 2.75%, along with one extra day of annual leave on the minimum, and a promise that they would approach government to ask for more money for local government pay. See the UNISON local government branch circular dated 17 April for the Employers' letter along with the Trade Unions' response.

Later on 17 April, the Employers wrote to the unions again. This new letter made it clear that in their view, this was a final pay offer, and they encouraged us to begin consulting on it. They also stated that they wanted to begin discussions about the impact of the increased National Living Wage from 2021, but said they could not do this until 2020-21 pay is settled.

Your NJC Executive members met and agreed to respond jointly with the other unions. The unions' response, dated 20 April, is attached. We made clear that we did not consider the negotiations to be complete. The Employers' Side were still planning to write to the government asking for more money for local government pay. But they had not decided whether to agree to a joint process with the unions to take this forward, and they had not told us what they would be seeking from government.

On 24 April, the Employers wrote to the unions again, and again stated that this was a final pay offer.

It has been agreed to hold a 'virtual meeting' of the UNISON NJC Committee, so that it can discuss the negotiations and decide what course of action it wishes to take with regard to responding to the Employers and consulting members. This meeting will take place on Friday, 1 May, and we will update branches further after that.

With best wishes



Jon Richards
National Secretary
Local Government, Police and Justice Section

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5

RESPONSE FROM NATIONAL EMPLOYERS #1

National Employers for local government services

Jon Richards, Rehana Azam, Jim Kennedy
Trade Union Side Secretaries
NJC for Local Government Services
c/o UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY

17 April 2020

Dear Jon, Rehana and Jim

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2020

Thank you for your exceptionally prompt letter of 16 April in response to the National Employers' final pay offer.

I will respond to each element of your letter in turn but must make very clear from the outset, for the benefit of our respective audiences, that the National Employers' offer, as set out in our letter to you of 16 April, should be regarded as final and will not be revisited. If there is any clarity you need on the final offer, we are of course happy to assist. We welcome the fact that you have not formally rejected our final offer and hope that you will move to consult your members positively as soon as possible in order that local government staff can receive the pay award without undue delay.

As you state, the National Employers have recommended that representations are made to government in order to seek funding for an additional, but separate, amount to be awarded to employees in recognition of their exceptional hard work in the COVID-19 response. The Employers' recommendation was made to the three LGAs from which national employer members are drawn, and it is for these bodies to consider the process and timing of any approach. Therefore, the National Employers are neither in a position to determine the timetable nor impose a deadline as you suggest.

However, your request for a joint employer / union approach is being relayed to the relevant organisations and will be considered by them accordingly.

You will be aware from recent discussions that the National Employers believe that the forecast levels of the National Living Wage over the next few years are likely to dominate our negotiations from 2021 onwards, therefore the Employers are keen to begin informal, without prejudice, joint discussions in order to take forward this agenda. However, such discussions can only commence once agreement has been reached on this year's pay round. We therefore urge you to accept our final offer as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5

JOINT TRADE UNION RESPONSE

20 April 2020

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Side Secretary
NJC for Local Government Services
Local Government House
Smith Square
London, SW1P 3HZ

Dear Naomi,

Thank you for your letter of 17 April.

Like you, we also wish to begin discussions about issues that will become increasingly prominent from 2021 – these will include the National Living Wage but also consideration of the longer term impacts of Covid-19 on the local government workforce. However, first of all we must make sure we deliver a settlement for 2020 that delivers for the local government workforce.

While you state the offer should be considered final, there are clearly two outstanding issues:

1) Annual leave and working hours. The offer on annual leave relies on a curious interpretation of our claim, which we believe was clear and fully understood by the employers. The response to the claim could risk inflaming already considerable concern among local government and school staff and could very well lead to them rejecting the offer and to a further declining of morale on the ground. Once again we urge the employers to reconsider this and add one day's leave to the minima for all staff, however long their service, particularly as we are all very familiar with the fact that the current minimum of 21 days coverage is quite low and in only a handful of LA's.

You also failed to respond to the element of the joint union claim for a shorter working week – either with an offer, or any rationale for rejection or omission.

2) Joint approach to government. In your own response to us you indicated that you would speak to the Employers about a possible joint employer/union representation for a key workers' allowance or a boost to the current 2.75% offer. We feel we need to explore this in full before we start any pay consultation and ballot on the offer. We are keen to understand if the Employers are agreeable to a joint approach as we would like to get this under way as soon as possible. We would also welcome a discussion about what value is being explored above the current 2.75% offer, should extra money from government be forthcoming – and what initial thoughts the Employers have had about how any extra money secured would be used.

In conclusion, whilst you may feel the offer is final, we don't share this view. There are two sides to this bargaining process and we don't think it helpful for one side to close down the bargaining process when issues are outstanding.

We look forward to your response.

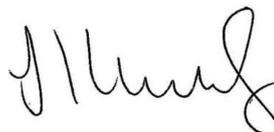
Yours sincerely



Rehana Azam GMB



Jon Richards UNISON



Jim Kennedy UNITE

Trade Unions Side Secretaries

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5

RESPONSE FROM NATIONAL EMPLOYERS #2

Jon Richards, Rehana Azam, Jim Kennedy
Trade Union Side Secretaries
NJC for Local Government Services
c/o UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY

24 April 2020

Dear Jon, Rehana and Jim

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2020

Thank you for your letter of 20 April.

I am able to clarify the Employers' position on the issues you raise, however, I should be clear that the National Employers' offer, as set out in our letter to you of 16 April will not be revisited.

Annual leave and working hours

Your claim very clearly sought, "*A one day increase to the minimum paid annual leave entitlement set out in the Green Book*", which as you know is currently 21 days, and it was on that basis that we consulted councils. Our final offer reflects their views and is part of the Employers' overall offer with the 2.75 per cent increase on all pay points. Any alternative offer relating to annual leave would have been to the detriment of the pay percentage figure offered.

There was no support from councils for a reduction in the working week to form part of this year's pay settlement, hence it was not included in the Employers' final offer. However, in proposing joint discussions to consider how the NJC can meet the challenge of the government's target for the National Living Wage in the coming years, the National Employers would be content for the working week to be considered alongside any other issues that either Side wishes to propose, on a without prejudice basis.

Joint approach to government

The National Employers' final pay offer of 2.75 per cent on all NJC pay points 1 and above is not conditional on the response from government to any request for an additional amount to be awarded to employees in recognition of their response to the COVID-19 emergency. The National Employers have recommended this be considered by the LGA, WLGA and NILGA and that discussion has now moved to those organisations. Your request to make a joint submission with the national LGA bodies has been passed on and is being considered and it will be for them to decide the process, format and timing of any approach and I shall keep you informed of developments.

The National Employers again urge you to move to consult on, and hopefully accept, the final offer as soon as practicable so that employees can receive their pay award as soon as possible while appreciating the challenges the current situation poses for consultation processes.

You will be aware that the task facing local government in the months and years following the current pandemic will be hugely challenging and the National Employers would like to ensure the maximum time for engagement with NJC unions to ensure the best possible approach.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5

CORPORATE CORE

Staff have been working really hard in the **Manchester Community Response Hub** to support residents in need. 6,497 food parcels were delivered to residents last week. Staff including our members have been volunteering to answer the calls on the Hub contact centre, staff have been making up the parcels and delivering them to make sure people are fed during this very difficult time. Manchester Food Banks have been providing the food.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Branch received an email on Friday, 24th April stating that an area team had received instructions that they were moving away from the agreed advice to our members that virtual visits would only take place if there were clear safeguarding concerns. Attached to this email was a clear process for all statutory visits were to be carried out physically.

Members were very concerned regarding this as they felt that at that moment in time the NHS was still under massive pressure from Covid-19 and did not want to put more pressure on the staff in hospitals by carrying out home visits that did not present clear safeguarding concerns and possibly putting them at risk of infection. UNISON immediately raised this with the Senior Management and this was quickly identified as a mistake and virtual visits for statutory visits were put back in place.

VIEW FROM A NEW STEWARD

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to you as a new Steward for Manchester City Council. I thought in these unprecedented times it would be best to not only introduce myself and ensure we stay connected, but also discuss how Covid-19 is a challenge to us all and create a dialogue around the issues that we're facing.

Firstly, my name is Josh and I have been working in the Council since December after graduating from Lancaster University. Becoming a Union member has always been my passion and drive in life. I am a firm believer that you have to be the change you wish to see in the world and UNISON has given me the platform to do that. Unions are the historical backbone to greater societal change. Growing up during austerity in Britain has shown me that now is a more crucial time than ever to get involved with UNISON and do my fair share to help our members make Britain a better place to live and work.

Notably, the greatest challenge at the moment for us all in the workplace is Covid-19. It has affected my working life profoundly and has created issues for me with communication, whether this is using emails as opposed to solving issues face-to-face or virtual meetings where connectivity issues often come in to play. Overall it has halted the normal pace that we are accustomed to working. Moreover, it has also taken out for myself and many of us the best part of work, being with our friends and associates on a daily basis giving us advice, support, laughter and the interactions we need to keep ourselves mentally robust and healthy. Covid-19 has also fractured many of our steward duties. For example, it has cancelled my Steward Training for several months and has placed social distancing barriers between us and our members when they need to confide in us most.

With all of this being said, I want to reassure you that with Unison you will always receive the support that you need, even in the toughest of times. I hope these words help to show you that you're not alone in your struggles and that together through Unison we can overcome these difficulties.

Stay Safe
Josh



Joshua Green - Our new UNISON Steward in Contact Manchester

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5

BRANCH OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS

Corporate Core

Please contact **Jane Slater** - Email: j.slater@manchester.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Services

Please contact **Pete Banks** - Email: p.banks@manchester.gov.uk

Children's Services

Please contact **Eddy Redmond** - Email: e.redmond@manchester.gov.uk

Adult Services

Please contact **Carl Greatbatch** - Email: c.greatbatch@manchester.gov.uk

Schools (Secondary Schools / Special Schools)

Please contact **Cath Baggaley** - Email: c.baggaley@manchester.gov.uk

Schools (Primary Schools - North)

Please contact Jane Wilcox - Email: j.wilcox@manchester.gov.uk

Schools (Primary Schools - South)

Please contact Rena Wood - Email: r.wood@manchester.gov.uk

BRANCH TWEETS THIS WEEK

In order to keep our members informed we are now posting more frequently on our branch Twitter account [@UnisonMcr](https://twitter.com/UnisonMcr). Please consider giving us a follow, if you do not already.

22 April 2020 - [Link to Tweet](#)

Many people are unsure what their rights are when cancelling holidays. Money Saving Expert has some great advice to help ensure that travel companies [#RefundPassengers](#) properly [Link](#)

22 April 2020 - [Link to Tweet](#)

This is so important [#Careworkers](#) ARE [#Keyworkers](#) and they deserve [#PPEForAll](#). Please follow and retweet [@CareVsCov19](#) to show your support [Link](#)

23 April 2020 - [Link to Tweet](#)

The government isn't fully supporting our care workers. [#PPEshortages](#), lack of [#Testing](#) and [#PovertyPay](#) are just 3 examples. This report shows what needs to be done now. [Link](#)

23 April 2020 - [Link to Tweet](#)

[#ClapForCarers](#) has done a great job of highlighting how vital carers are for society. However many carers are on poverty pay, have terrible T&Cs and are working in life threatening environments. This government needs to step up [#PPEForAll](#) [@CareVsCov19](#) [Link](#)

25 April 2020 - [Link to Tweet](#)

We're asking everyone to observe a minutes silence on [#IWMD20](#) to pay tribute to all the [#CareWorkers](#) who have tragically lost their lives protecting us during the [#C19](#) crisis. [@CareVsCov19](#)

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5

FURTHER INFORMATION

Manchester UNISON Contact Information

Telephone Number: **0161 254 7500**

Email Address: unison@manchester.gov.uk

Branch Website: www.unisonmanchester.gov.uk

Twitter Feed: twitter.com/UnisonMcr

Branch Secretary: **Evelyn Doyle** (email: e.doyle@manchester.gov.uk)

Branch Chair: **Pat McDonagh** (email: p.mcdonagh@manchester.gov.uk)

UNISONdirect

The UNISONdirect call centre will be closed from 5pm on 24 March 2020. There are a limited number of staff working from home and they will continue to help members through UNISON's online enquiries form <http://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/online-enquiries>

When members phone UNISONDirect, the greeting message will sign post them to the UNISON website for branch and region information. They will also be directed to UNISON's coronavirus webpage <https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/> that is updated regularly.

Social Media

The social media accounts below are worth following for more information.

[@UnisonMcr](https://twitter.com/UnisonMcr) - our branch twitter account which will have regular updates during the crisis

[@manchesterheal1](https://twitter.com/manchesterheal1) - regular updates for all UNISON health workers in Manchester

[@NorthWestUNISON](https://twitter.com/NorthWestUNISON) - official twitter account of the North West Region of UNISON

[@unisontheunion](https://twitter.com/unisontheunion) - official twitter account for the national union

Mental Health Helplines

If remaining isolated is affecting your mental health, or you are concerned about a loved one who might be suffering themselves then have a look at this list of helplines and support groups that may be able to help: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>

Home Education Resources

The Government recently published a list of high-quality resources that parents and schools can consider to support education at home: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>

Free School Meals Guidance

The Government has also confirmed that it will extend financial support to children eligible for free school meals who are not attending school during the Easter holidays. For more information you should refer to the official guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>

Branch Circular: Covid-19 Update #5



We use this address to send you information core to your membership such as your membership pack, UNISON election information and any information relating to ballots if relevant

We use this to contact you about trade union activities and services

This information helps us find the best UNISON branch to support you and represent your needs

This information helps your employer and us confirm your identity

Your subscription rate is determined by how much you earn

Please return the completed form to:
UNISON Manchester
Peter House
Oxford Street
Manchester
M1 5AN

JOIN UNISON
To be completed by new applicant

RECRUITER Receive a £10 for each member you recruit!
To be completed by the existing UNISON member.
Name: _____
Membership Number: _____

1 Tell us about you

Title First name

Last name

Home address

Postcode

Email

Phone

Date of birth

2 Tell us about your job

Employer's name

Your job title or occupation

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number

NI number

3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions

Annual pay	Core subscription	£14,001 – £17,000	£9.70
£0,000 – £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £1.30	<input type="checkbox"/> £17,001 – £20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £11.50
£2,001 – £5,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £3.50	£20,001 – £25,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £14.00
£5,001 – £8,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £5.30	£25,001 – £30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £17.25
£8,001 – £11,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £6.60	£30,001 – £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £20.30
£11,001 – £14,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £7.85	£35,001 – and over	<input type="checkbox"/> £22.50

Instruction to deduct the subscription from my salary

By signing below I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions from my pay by my employer

Signature Date

This information tells us whether you wish to contribute an additional 5% toward UNISON's campaign fund. This voluntary contribution will be taken annually in October as a single deduction by Direct Debit. Further information is available at www.unison.org.uk/changes

This information is standard direct debit mandate information

Please go to unison.org.uk/privacy-policy to see how we will protect and use your personal information

We are legally required to keep your information up to date. You can amend your details via My UNISON at www.unison.org.uk/my-unison

Email Text Phone
By ticking these boxes, you are giving your consent for UNISON to contact you by these means about how we campaign on your behalf.

4 Campaign fund contribution

UNISON stands up for its members and speaks out publicly on the issues that affect them. To continue this work we ask for an additional voluntary 5% campaign contribution by Direct Debit when you join. Please tick your preference below:

Campaign Fund UNISON Labour Link No thank you
The campaign fund promotes better public services, enables the union to talk with politicians of any party about the work our members do and supports the union's equalities work.

Labour Link campaigns for UNISON policy on the NHS, your employment rights and for quality public services within the Labour Party locally and in Parliament.

I do not wish to contribute to campaigning at the moment. Those who choose not to opt in will not be disadvantaged in any way as compared with members who do opt in.

If you selected 'No thank you' - by ticking this box you are giving consent for UNISON to contact you in future about our campaign funds. We will do this using the contact details you provided on this form.

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit



Please complete the form and send to:
UNISON, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To the manager bank / building society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Account number

Branch sort code

Office use only: Service user no.

Office use only: Membership number

Please pay UNISON Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with UNISON and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account



0161 254 7500



unison@manchester.gov.uk



www.unisonmanchester.org