



Joint Negotiating Committee *for* Youth and Community Workers

Trade Union Side Pay and Conditions Claim 2021

Submitted by Unite, Unison, NEU and UCU

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Summary of Claim

The Trade Union Side's headline claims:

- i) A 10% increase across all grades**
- ii) 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**
- iii) 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.**
- iv) Formally define an evening session as any session that finishes after 6pm.**
- v) Move to a 35-hour working week without loss of pay - with sufficient time for planning and admin.**
- vi) Joint work on race and gender pay gaps in youth work.**

1. Youth Services during the Pandemic

- 1.1 Youth and community workers, along with other local government professionals, have played a significant role in supporting communities during the Covid-19 crisis. The pandemic has put a huge strain on young people, with many struggling with their mental health, cut off from support networks, from friends and family, facing social isolation, a loss of routine and a breakdown in formal and informal support. In these challenging times, youth and community workers have stepped up, adapted and changed and have ensured they are able to continue delivering vital youth work services critical to those young people. Our members have been on the front line of this delivery, as keyworkers, offering one to one support to vulnerable young people, ensuring young people's voices are heard and delivering detached youth work out in communities wherever young people are. It is youth and community workers who have supported young people throughout this pandemic. Every single day, our members have continued to put themselves into harm's way on the front lines of this crisis – supporting young people to cope with the new reality that has engulfed their lives in a safe, clean and accessible way. It is only right that their contribution at the forefront of the national effort against Covid-19 is recognised.
- 1.2 The Covid-19 crisis has shown (once again) that our youth and community workers are an invaluable resource to the communities they serve. Like other council and school staff, youth and community workers have been the unsung heroes of our communities for far too long. Their efforts over the last 15 months should be recognised. They deserve a substantial real terms pay rise and better working conditions.
- 1.3 Most youth and community workers have seen over 24% wiped from the value of their pay since 2009. Substantial increases in the cost of living over recent years have significantly reduced the value of our members' wages. And during this time of national crisis, the morale of staff in their crucial roles is at an all-time low.
- 1.4 Average pay settlements across the economy have been running ahead of those received by local government staff for more than a decade, increasing recruitment and retention problems in the long term – even when Covid-19 has been defeated.
- 1.5 In March 2020 at the outset of the Covid-19 crisis, the government said: *"This government stands with local councils at this difficult time,"* and that *"the government will do whatever is necessary to support these efforts."* The Government's promised support has not yet fully materialised and Trade Union Side continues to press the case that government must honour its promise. The JNC unions don't accept the Government's "pay pause" and welcome the statement made by the Chair of the LGA recognising the contribution Local Government workers have made throughout the pandemic – local government workers who have selflessly defended our communities throughout this crisis.
- 1.6 The pandemic has tragically hit just as there appeared to be a growing political consensus of the need to rebuild youth services for young people after a decade of cuts¹. Those cuts had resulted in the loss of

¹ 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-tmeZQJdWwzDTI0ZaubWzMDJNHDQQg

940 youth centres² and more than 4,500 youth work jobs³. The loss of youth services coincided with a dramatic rise in knife crime back to peak levels⁴ before the Pandemic hit.

1.7 Social distancing, lockdowns, school closures and home schooling have made contact with young people harder than ever. Tragically the pandemic has also led to a huge rise in safeguarding concerns for young people and their families. The Covid lockdowns have led to a significant rise in domestic abuse⁵ and child abuse⁶, with young people facing new and severe pressures on their mental health and wellbeing.⁷

1.8 Youth services have had to adapt to this new reality too, and where youth centres have been forced to close due to social distancing measures, youth and community workers have continued to find ways to work with young people where they are (e.g. through detached youth work). While it would be naive to think that youth services alone can solve these problems, their contribution as responsive preventative services that support young people towards better futures of their own choosing has been invaluable.

1.9 The positive impacts of youth work 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 safe⁸

1.10 In essence the staff are the youth service, and the work that our youth services have done over this unprecedented time should not be underestimated with staff going over and above the call of duty. Unsurprisingly many are suffering burnout and trauma from this experience as they worked under extreme pressures, stress, and anxiety with substantial rises to their workloads while the services and their pay have declined.

1.11 Investing in public sector staff helps the economy as a whole. Analysis by the IPPR found that 43% of the cost of raising public sector pay would be returned to the Treasury through taxation and lower social security costs.⁹

² <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2019/12/shocking-picture-austerity-cuts-local-services-revealed-unison/>

³ Youth Services at Breaking Point, UNISON, 2018

⁴ <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN04304>

⁵ [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicenglandandwales/november2020#:~:text=As%20the%20lockdown%20measures%20eased,domestic%20abuse%2Drelated%20decreased%20slightly.&text=The%20police%20recorded%20206%2C492%20violence,in%202019%20\(Figure%202\).](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicenglandandwales/november2020#:~:text=As%20the%20lockdown%20measures%20eased,domestic%20abuse%2Drelated%20decreased%20slightly.&text=The%20police%20recorded%20206%2C492%20violence,in%202019%20(Figure%202).)

⁶ <https://www.bmj.com/company/newsroom/surge-in-domestic-child-abuse-during-pandemic-reports-specialist-uk-childrens-hospital/>

⁷ <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/>

⁸ Full overview of the benefits of youth services and the wide evidence base is given in *Future of Youth Work*, Unite the Union, 2013

⁹ IPPR, *Uncapped Potential: The Fiscal and Economic Impact of Lifting the Public Sector Pay Cap*, November 2017, <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-11/uncapped-potential-november2017.pdf>

2. Economic benefits of youth work

- 2.1 The government's own figures show that the post-2010 austerity was a failure – in terms of both reducing debt and recovering economic growth. More austerity in the form of a new pay freeze for public sector workers, or a low pay increase, is the wrong answer and will be fiercely resisted by trade unions. In contrast, and demonstrated within our claim, an increase in local government pay would reduce government expenditure on benefits, tax credits, and Universal Credit – and increase revenue from National Insurance and income tax - plus provide a much needed spending boost to local economies.
- 2.2 Youth work itself is also 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”*¹⁰. In short, we all benefit, and we could benefit yet more if cost-effective investment were to be made.
- 2.3 The Joint Trade Union Side Unions 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 also 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.
- 2.4 Only a significant and appropriate pay award can begin to redress a lost decade of cuts, austerity and crisis - and go some way towards recognising the value of local authority workers and rewarding their continued dedication to their jobs at this incredibly challenging time.

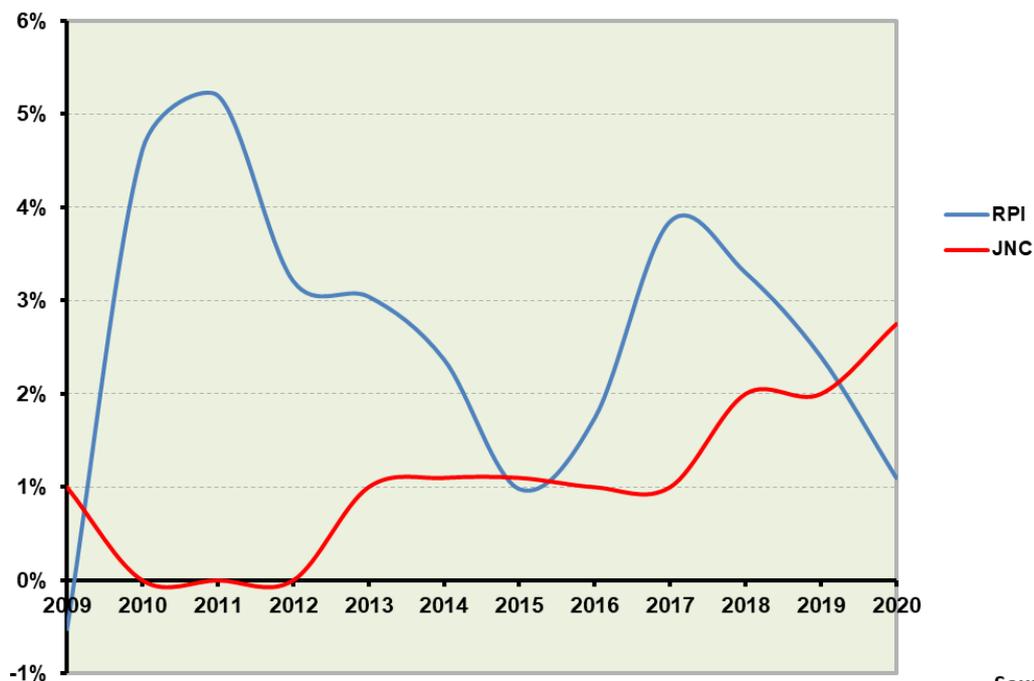
¹⁰ *Benefits of youth work*, Unite the Union and Lifelong Learning UK, 2010

3. Impact of real terms pay cuts

3.1 Over the last decade, 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 substantial decline in real terms pay of over 24% (illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 3 below).

3.2 Figure 1 below illustrates that inflation has outstripped pay rises for the vast majority of the last 10 years. 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. The Trade Union Side is adamant that that progress must be maintained and extended and the employers should not follow the government’s lead by renewing pay cuts this year.

Figure 1: JNC rises compared to RPI inflation



Source: ONS

Table 1: Pay Scales – Loss of earnings since 2009

		Pay Spine Sep-2009	Pay Spine Sep-2020	Pay in 2020 had it matched RPI inflation	Loss of earnings 2009 - 2020	Real terms loss %	
Youth and Community Support Worker Range	1	£14,143	-	£19,332	-£24	-0.2%	
	2	£14,733	-	£20,139	-£831	-5.6%	
	3	£15,324	-	£20,946	-£1,638	-10.7%	
	4	£15,917	-	£21,757	-£2,449	-15.4%	
	5	£16,509	£ 19,308	£22,566	-£3,258	-19.7%	
	6	£17,100	£ 19,631	£23,374	-£3,743	-21.9%	
	7	£17,697	£ 19,922	£24,190	-£4,268	-24.1%	
	8	£18,291	£ 20,589	£25,002	-£4,413	-24.1%	
	9	£19,047	£ 21,439	£26,035	-£4,596	-24.1%	
	10	£19,636	£ 22,104	£26,840	-£4,736	-24.1%	
	11	£20,591	£ 23,178	£28,146	-£4,968	-24.1%	
	12	£21,525	£ 24,228	£29,423	-£5,195	-24.1%	
	13	£22,489	£ 25,313	£30,740	-£5,427	-24.1%	
	14	£23,485	£ 26,437	£32,102	-£5,665	-24.1%	
	15	£24,166	£ 27,202	£33,033	-£5,831	-24.1%	
	Professional Range	16	£24,875	£ 28,001	£34,002	-£6,001	-24.1%
		17	£25,574	£ 28,787	£34,957	-£6,170	-24.1%
18		£26,279	£ 29,579	£35,921	-£6,342	-24.1%	
19		£26,975	£ 30,364	£36,872	-£6,508	-24.1%	
20		£27,673	£ 31,152	£37,826	-£6,674	-24.1%	
21		£28,461	£ 32,036	£38,903	-£6,867	-24.1%	
22		£29,352	£ 33,039	£40,121	-£7,082	-24.1%	
23		£30,219	£ 34,015	£41,306	-£7,291	-24.1%	
24		£31,091	£ 34,997	£42,498	-£7,501	-24.1%	
25		£31,968	£ 35,985	£43,697	-£7,712	-24.1%	
26		£32,847	£ 36,973	£44,899	-£7,926	-24.1%	
27		£33,726	£ 37,961	£46,100	-£8,139	-24.1%	
28		£34,613	£ 38,961	£47,313	-£8,352	-24.1%	
29		£35,496	£ 39,953	£48,519	-£8,566	-24.1%	
30		£36,377	£ 40,947	£49,724	-£8,777	-24.1%	

3.3 It must also be recognised that while inflation had fallen over 2020 this was mostly driven by big declines in oil prices and travel costs caused by the closure of economic activity world-wide. When the basket of goods is broken down we see that many of the other elements within the RPI were rising significantly faster and put the modest gains in the JNC into greater perspective.

Table 2: Nine of the 14 groups in the RPI basket of goods increased by more than 1.1% (September 2020)

Broad Categories	% annual increase
Clothing and footwear	4.5
Tobacco	3.9
Leisure goods	3.5
Leisure services	3.0
Household services	2.6
Personal goods and services	2.5
Fares and other travel costs	2.1
Housing	1.3
Alcoholic drink	1.2
Catering	0.9
Household goods	0.8
Food	-
Motoring expenditure	-0.1
Fuel and light	-7.7

Source: ONS October 2020

3.4 Even after the large jumps in inflation in April this trend has continued, with nine of the 14 groups in the April 2021 basket of goods increasing faster than the rate of RPI.

Table 3: Nine of the 14 groups in the RPI basket of goods increased by more than 2.9% (April 2021)

Broad Categories	% annual increase
Clothing and footwear	8.3
Fares and other travel costs	6.2
Household goods	3.7
Housing	3.6
Leisure goods	3.3
Leisure services	3.3
Tobacco	3.2
Fuel and light	3.1
Household services	3.1
Personal goods and services	2.9
Motoring expenditure	2.6
Alcoholic drink	1.7
Catering	0.9
Food	-0.3

Source: ONS May 2021

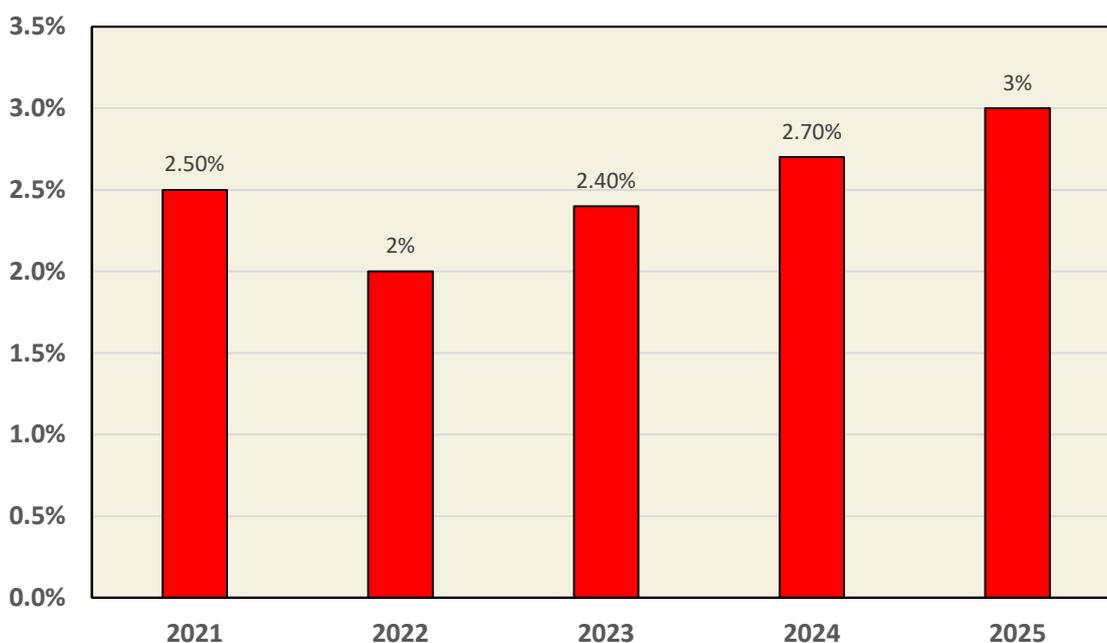
3.5 Other relevant costs are also rising fast with childcare prices having risen above inflation once again¹¹, with a part time nursery place (25 hours) for a child under two costing 4 per cent more than it did a year ago at £138.00 per week, or over £7,000 per year. For a child aged two, it now costs 5 per cent more.

3.6 Housing also continues to rise with average rents in March rising at 1.3% UK wide, but with above RPI inflation in 5 of the 8 English regions, and a rise of 3.3% in Northern Ireland.¹²

3.7 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 independent forecasts puts at 3.2% in 2021 and 2.9% in 2022¹³ and then run at in excess of 3% for the following three years, in line with the pattern shown in the graph below. The OBR forecasts that the RPI rate will rise by 2.5% in 2021 and by 2.1% in 2022. These annual rates show the rate at which pay rises would be needed for wages just to maintain their current value.

3.8 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 a 10% increase on all pay points is both measured and reasonable.

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



Source: OBR, *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*¹⁴, March 2021

3.9 Small increases last year do little to reverse the significant cumulative loss of earnings since 2010, with JNC rates having lost over 24% between the agreement in September 2009 and September 2020 for most pay points.

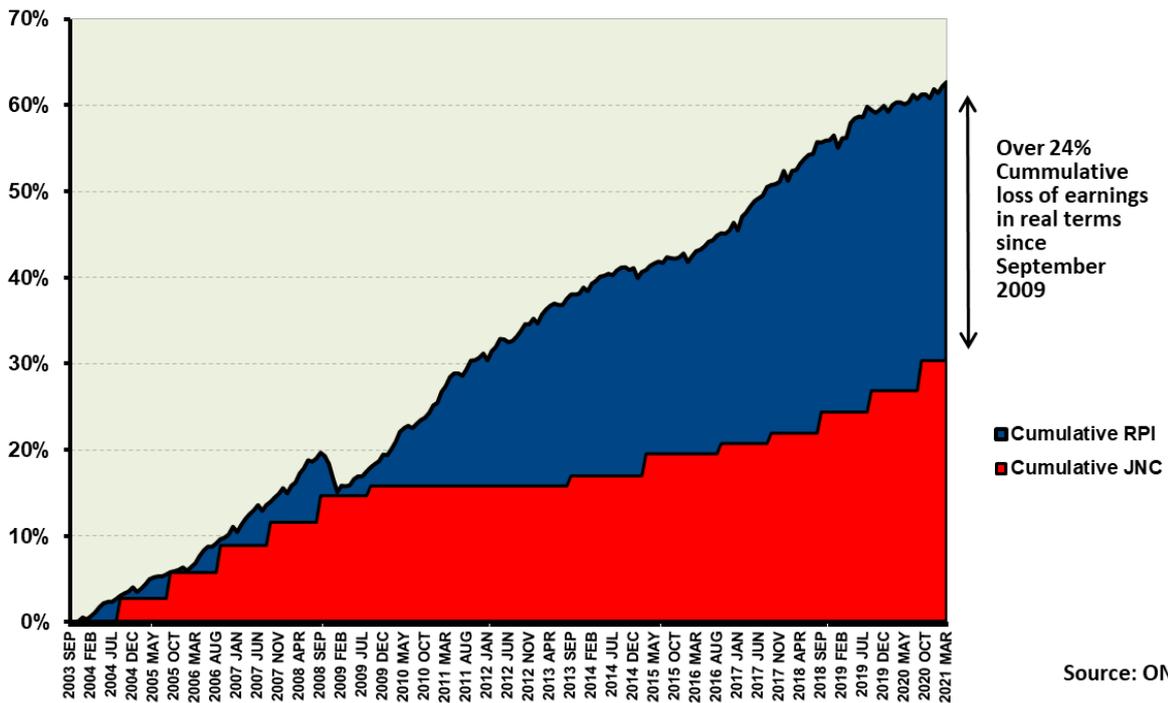
¹¹ Childcare Survey, Coram Family and Children Trust: <https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/childcare-survey-2021>

¹² ONS Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP), published March 2021

¹³ HM Treasury, *Forecasts for the UK Economy*, May 2021

¹⁴ <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2021/>

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



Source: ONS

3.10 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 inflation¹⁵ since 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.

3.11 The 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.

3.12 The Trade Union Side is therefore recommending an increase of 10% across all pay points.

¹⁵ The Trade Union Side still 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.

4. Pay comparators

4.1 The ability of local government to attract and retain staff in the long term will be damaged if the pay of its staff falls behind the going rate in the wider labour market. 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.

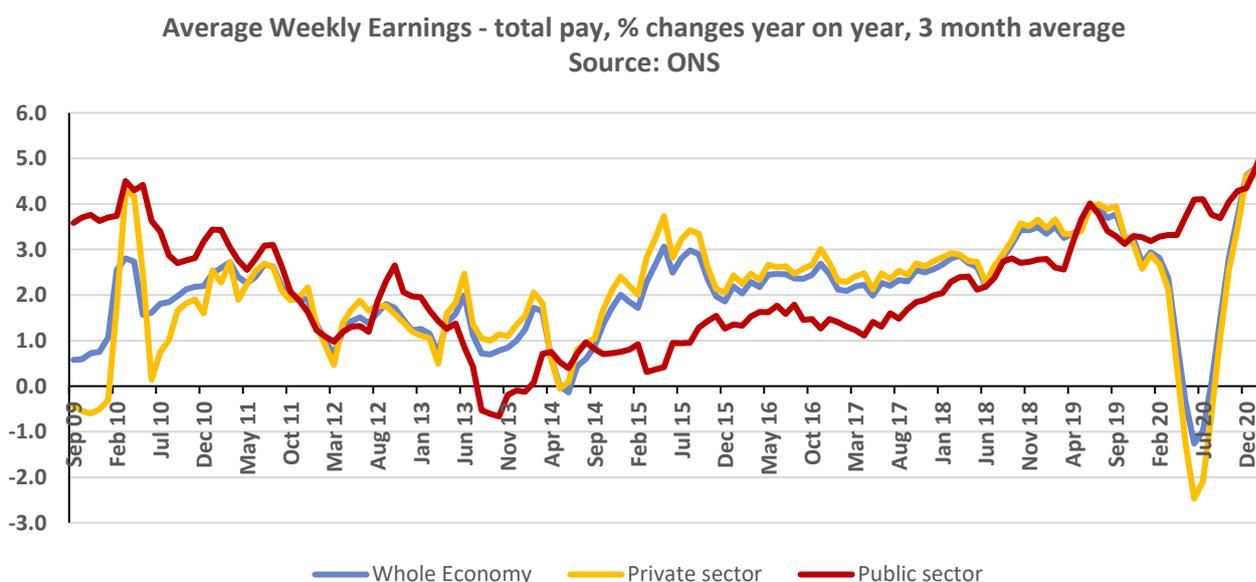
Table 4: JNC pay awards Vs those in the wider economy since 2010¹⁶

Year	Across economy	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%

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

4.2 The graph below shows trends in average earnings growth over the last two years. The acceleration of the general rate to 3.9% in July 2019 took average earnings growth to its highest level in over a decade, but the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy had caused that figure drop sharply.

Figure 4: Average earnings since September 2009



¹⁶ Labour Research Department, settlements year to September 2020

- 4.3 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, recent months have shown it recovering in many sectors.
- 4.4 The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2020 provisional results record the median annual gross pay of youth and community workers¹⁷ as £21,959 a fall of 0.8% since the previous year. The median pay of a full-time youth and community worker is £26,006 while for those working part-time the median annual pay is £11,947. A quarter of all youth and community workers are recorded as earning £13,527 or less and 80% earning £28,940 a year or less.
- 4.5 The same ASHE 2020 occupational data gives the median pay for all social workers¹⁸ as £33,159, and the median for full time social workers is £36,306. When we consider teachers, the ASHE 2020 occupational data states that the median for all teaching and educational professionals¹⁹ is £35,596 and for full time workers it is £40,038.
- 4.6 When we consider the classroom teachers pay rates 2020 (Tables 5 sets out the joint union recommended pay structures²⁰) 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).

Table 5 Joint Union Teacher Pay Scales for Qualified Classroom Teachers (from 1 September 2020)

	England 1 Sept 2020	Wales 1 Sept 2020	Inner London 1 Sept 2020	Outer London 1 Sept 2020	London Fringe 1 Sept 2020
Main Pay Range	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.
1 (minimum)	£25,714	£27,018	£32,157	£29,915	£26,948
2	£27,600	£27,018	£33,658	£31,604	£28,828
3	£29,664	£29,188	£35,226	£33,383	£30,883
4	£31,778	£31,436	£36,866	£35,264	£32,999
5	£34,100	£33,912	£39,492	£38,052	£35,307
6 (maximum)	£36,961	£37,320	£42,624	£41,136	£38,174
Upper Pay Range	£ p.a.		£ p.a.	£ p.a.	£ p.a.
1 (minimum)	£38,690	£38,690	£46,971	£42,559	£39,864
2	£40,124	£40,124	£49,279	£44,133	£41,295
3 (maximum)	£41,604	£41,604	£50,935	£45,766	£42,780

¹⁷ ASHE 2020 Provisional data, Table 14.7a Annual Gross Pay, SOC 3231

¹⁸ ASHE 2020 Provisional data, Table 14.7a Annual Gross Pay, SOC 2442

¹⁹ ASHE 2020 Provisional data, Table 14.7a Annual Gross Pay SOC 23

²⁰ See here: <https://neu.org.uk/pay-scales>

Table 6: Annual London Allowances

Teachers Main Pay Range	Inner £ p.a.	Outer £ p.a.	Fringe £ p.a.
1	£6,443	£4,201	£1,234
2	£6,058	£4,004	£1,228
3	£5,562	£3,719	£1,219
4	£5,088	£3,486	£1,221
5	£5,392	£3,952	£1,207
6	£5,663	£4,175	£1,213
Teachers Upper Pay Range			
1	£8,281	£3,869	£1,174
2	£9,155	£4,009	£1,171
3	£9,331	£4,162	£1,176
Youth and Community workers (JNC)	£3,253	£2,137	£833

4.7 The Trade Union Side believes that an increase of 10% on all pay points and allowances would help to reduce the pay differential between youth and community workers and other comparable professions.

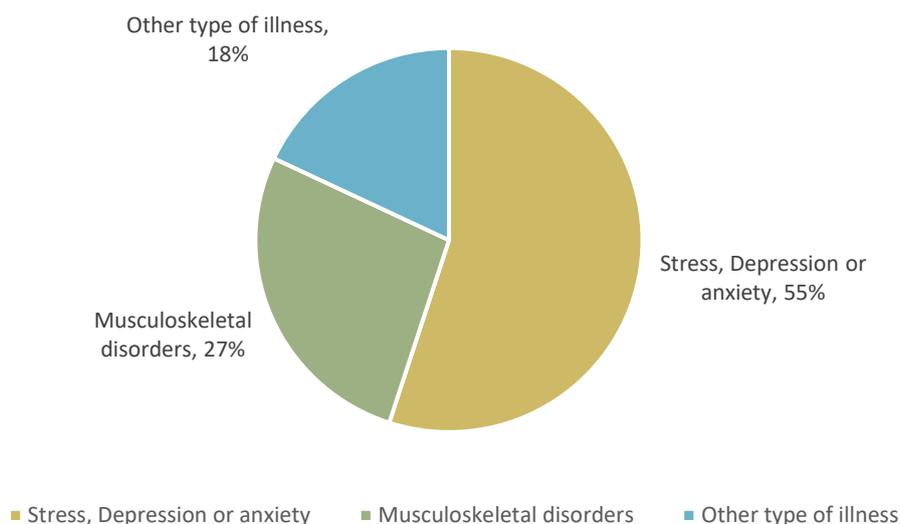
Table 7: Trade Union Side Claim

		Pay Spine Sep-2009	Pay Spine Sep-2020	2021 claim (Minimum of 10%)
Youth and Community Support Worker Range	5	£16,509	£ 19,308	£21,239
	6	£17,100	£ 19,631	£21,594
	7	£17,697	£ 19,922	£21,914
	8	£18,291	£ 20,589	£22,648
	9	£19,047	£ 21,439	£23,583
	10	£19,636	£ 22,104	£24,314
	11	£20,591	£ 23,178	£25,496
	12	£21,525	£ 24,228	£26,651
	13	£22,489	£ 25,313	£27,844
	14	£23,485	£ 26,437	£29,081
Professional Range	15	£24,166	£ 27,202	£29,922
	16	£24,875	£ 28,001	£30,801
	17	£25,574	£ 28,787	£31,666
	18	£26,279	£ 29,579	£32,537
	19	£26,975	£ 30,364	£33,400
	20	£27,673	£ 31,152	£34,267
	21	£28,461	£ 32,036	£35,240
	22	£29,352	£ 33,039	£36,343
	23	£30,219	£ 34,015	£37,417
	24	£31,091	£ 34,997	£38,497
	25	£31,968	£ 35,985	£39,584
	26	£32,847	£ 36,973	£40,670
	27	£33,726	£ 37,961	£41,757
	28	£34,613	£ 38,961	£42,857
	29	£35,496	£ 39,953	£43,948
	30	£36,377	£ 40,947	£45,042

5. Work-life balance and well-being

- 5.1 One of the key reasons why the JNC is the most appropriate set of pay, terms and conditions for youth and community workers is that it allows staff 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.
- 5.2 Universal, open access youth work has an important role to play in the development of all young people. Communities still value open door youth work provision – these mainly take place after the formal school day has ended in the evening and at weekends. This involved a planned youth work provision of awareness and information activities, delivered in a variety of formats and locations. For example, one-to-one basis, detached youth work, group work and holiday projects. The role of youth and community workers is therefore diverse, to enable professional staff to maintain a work-life balance and meet the complexities of the role.
- 5.3 The Trade Union Side believes that rising workloads due to cuts, compounded by the pandemic, 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.
- 5.4 These trends must be seen in the context of an epidemic of stress and anxiety across the UK economy. According to the HSE stress, depression or anxiety accounted for 51% of all work-related ill health cases and 55% of all working days lost due to work-related ill health in 2019/20²¹. 17.9 million working days were lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2019/20 (up from 15.4 million in 2017/18). 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.

Figure 4: Working days lost by type of ill health 2019/20

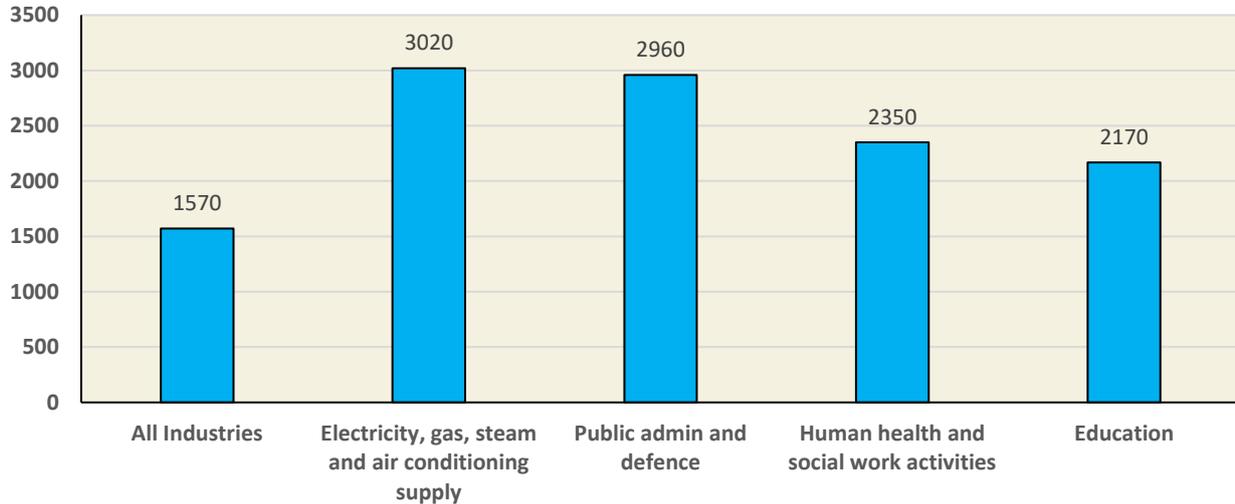


Source: Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

²¹ HSE Annual Statistics Annual Statistics, November 2020

5.5 Analysis by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of Labour Force Survey statistics shows 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 anxiety²².

Figure 5: Prevalence for work-related stress in UK by industry category, per 1000 people in 12 months 2017/19 - 2019/20



Source: Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

5.6 Sickness absence levels can be seen as a proxy indicator for the wellbeing of staff and this has been recognised by the LGA in its 2019 Workforce Focus report²³. That highlights that:

- On average in 2016/17, 4.3% of days were lost due to sickness and 8.7 days per FTE employee.
- By comparison in 2015/16, 4.9% of days were lost due to sickness and 8.8 days per FTE employee.
- The earliest available comparable figures are for 2011/12 when on average 4.2% of days were lost, 8.4 days per FTE employee.
- The most common cause of sickness absence in 2016/17 was 'stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue' (28.9% of days lost).

5.7 Across the whole economy, as a rough comparison the average number of days lost per FTE in 2018 across the whole economy was 4.1. This means that local authority sickness rates are over double those for the economy as a whole.

5.8 In contrast to local authority statistics, the Labour Force Survey²⁴ shows that economy-wide sickness absence has broadly been falling over the last two decades.

5.9 Underlying causes of absences are compounding the challenges of delivering services during the coronavirus pandemic. According to the LGA's figures, half of all staff absences were attributed to COVID-19 in the week ending 11 December 2020²⁵.

²² HSE Health and safety at work, summary statistics, November 2020

²³ LGA, Workforce Focus, April 2019

²⁴ ONS, Sickness absence in the UK labour market, November 2019

²⁵ LGA, COVID-19 Workforce Survey - 11 December 2020

5.10 The 2017 Stevenson / Farmer review of mental health and employers²⁶ for the government found that the cost of poor mental health to government is between £24 billion and £27 billion which includes the costs of providing benefits, falls in tax revenue and costs to the NHS. One of its core recommendations to employers is for them to “*provide employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work life balance and opportunities for development*”

5.11 The Trade Union Side believe 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.

5.12 To compensate for growing overtime, Trade Union Side therefore proposes:

- **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.**
- **Formally define an evening session as any session that finishes after 6pm.**

6. Working time and long hours

6.1. Union members report that 10 years of austerity cuts have taken a huge toll on community and youth worker staff with low pay settlements, expanding responsibilities and redundancies leading to increased workloads and a culture of long hours.

6.2. Unpaid overtime is being worked on an industrial scale. It represents an enormous goodwill contribution by a workforce that is approaching its breaking point. The Trade Union Side strongly believes that workers should be paid for all the hours they work.

6.3. Recent TUC analysis²⁷ shows that public sector employees are responsible for more than a third of all unpaid overtime in the UK - despite making up only a quarter of the workforce.

6.4. The Labour Force Survey²⁸ shows that 28% of local government workers normally work some unpaid overtime - compared to 15% of all employees. If full-time local government workers who regularly work unpaid overtime were remunerated for their additional hours, they would be due an immediate pay rise of approximately 25%.

6.5. The true picture may be even worse - there are grounds for believing that unpaid overtime working may be underreported in the LFS (respondents to the NHS Staff Survey report higher unpaid overtime rates than the NHS subset of the LFS).

²⁶https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658145/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf

²⁷ TUC, UK workers and unpaid overtime, Feb 2020

²⁸ ONS, Labour Force Survey, Aug-Oct 2020

- 6.1 The negative impacts of long hours and high workloads are well documented. Long hours can lead to serious and long term mental and physical ill health, stress, fatigue and increases in workplace accidents²⁹. For example researchers that studied³⁰ the work habits of more than 600,000 people in the US, UK, and Australia, found that people who work more than 55 hours a week are 33% more likely to suffer a stroke and have a 13% greater risk of heart attack than those who work 35-40 hours weekly.
- 6.2 Research also shows the impact that long hours can have in decreasing productivity within organisations³¹, lowering morale and leading to increased staff turnover³².
- 6.3 In contrast studies have found that reducing working time and taking holidays is extremely good for morale and health - it can even prolong lives³³. Researchers who studied 974 vacationers from the Netherlands discovered that even planning for a holiday makes people happier before they go³⁴. Researchers have also shown that more time off improves productivity and is therefore good for employers and the economy as a whole.³⁵
- 6.4 Reducing working time has wider societal benefits too. It give staff more time to contribute to society, supporting family and friends, volunteering or get more involved in the wider community or politics. The New Economics Foundation (NEF)³⁶ has pointed to studies that show that reducing working time is also better for the environment³⁷ and good for gender equality given women shoulder more than 60% of unpaid work³⁸.
- 6.5 Working time practices and norms have not stayed static over time, and it is right that they should be reviewed and updated. NEF modelling has shown that UK working time has lagged behind long term national trends over recent years. If average hours had continued to fall at post-war levels after 1980, then the UK should be on target to reach a 30-hour working week by 2040³⁹.
- 6.6 The Global Workforce Happiness Index⁴⁰ that studies workplace wellbeing also found that the top ten countries make work-life balance a priority with employers enacting strategies to ensure their staff achieve this.
- 6.6. The Trade Union Side is therefore calling for a 35-hour working week without loss of pay, while ensuring there is sufficient time for planning and admin.**

²⁹ http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/hsl_pdf/2003/hsl03-02.pdf

³⁰ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)60295-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)60295-1/fulltext)

³¹ <http://ftp.iza.org/dp8129.pdf>

³² <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/352.pdf>

³³ https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-08/esoc-tav082318.php

³⁴ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11482-009-9091-9>

³⁵ <https://hbr.org/2015/06/are-we-more-productive-when-we-have-more-time-off>

³⁶ <https://neweconomics.org/2018/11/five-reasons-why-nef-supports-the-4-day-week-campaign>

³⁷ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323366145_Working_hours_and_carbon_dioxide_emissions_in_the_United_States_2007-2013

³⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/womenshouldertheresponsibilityofunpaidwork/2016-11-10>

³⁹ <https://neweconomics.org/2019/03/average-weekly-hours-fell-faster-between-1946-and-1979-than-post-1980>

⁴⁰ <https://universumglobal.com/insights/global-workforce-happiness-index-2/>

6.7. The Trade Union Side is also calling for work-life balance and the issue of time off in lieu to be taken much more seriously. The JNC joint guidance on work-life balance was a welcome start, but too many local authorities fail to follow it. The Trade Union Side is therefore calling for this guidance to be incorporated into the Pink Book on a mandatory basis. The Trade Union Side is also calling for time off in lieu to be accrued on a compensatory basis – i.e. that compensatory leave should be guaranteed for all extra hours worked.

7. Equality impact and pay gaps

- 7.1. The Trade Union Side welcomes joint working to conduct workforce surveys following last year's discussions over pay gaps in youth and community work.
- 7.2. ONS Gender Pay Gap data shows a median gender pay gap of 5.3% (16.1% for part time workers)⁴¹ while the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)⁴² in 2020 shows that the median annual earnings figure for women is 20% less than men (around £5,000 less a year) and the mean is 16% less (nearly £4,000 less) in youth and community work. While the data sample is not large enough to provide analysis of the relationship between part- and full-time rates it is likely that the part time to full time gender pay gap is far higher.
- 7.3. While similar data is not currently available for the race or disability pay gap, they are likely to be similarly significant.⁴³
- 7.4. 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.
- 7.5. For measures of protected characteristics that can be directly measured through the Labour Force Survey (LFS), it is clear that local government workers are more likely to share those characteristics in every category other than race. Local government workers are much more likely to be female, and are more likely to be older, disabled, religious, and married or in a civil partnership than workers in other sectors.
- 7.6. It should be noted that, of the protected characteristics that are relevant to the Public Sector Equality Duty, gender reassignment, pregnancy, and sexual orientation cannot be measured by the LFS.
- 7.7. The Women's Budget Group and others have produced clear evidence that low pay and austerity are having a disproportionate impact on women⁴⁴ including most recently through the disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on women⁴⁵.
- 7.8. The Runnymede Trust and others have produced similar reports on the impacts on BME communities⁴⁶.

⁴¹ ONS Gender pay gap 2020, Prov – Table 14.12 – Occupation SOC10

⁴² ONS ASHE 2020, Prov – Occupation SOC10 (4) Table 14.7a Annual Pay – Gross 2020

⁴³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2018>

⁴⁴ <https://wbg.org.uk/resources/women-and-austerity/>

⁴⁵ <https://wbg.org.uk/analysis/reports/a-home-of-her-own-housing-and-women/>

⁴⁶ https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/PressReleases/1%20bme_executive_summary-A3-01.pdf

7.9. 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.

7.10. The Trade Union Side therefore is asking for action to tackle the race and gender pay gaps in youth work.

8. Conclusion

8.1. The Covid-19 Crisis has reinforced how vital youth and community workers are and 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. It is a workforce that 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. The employers need to tackle the falling living standards of youth and community workers. This would send the clear signal their work is valued and would acknowledge the important role they play, especially following this terrible year.

8.2. An increase of 10% on all pay rates would begin to reverse the fall in living standards inflicted upon youth and community workers.

8.3. 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.

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

8.5. Our claim is right and just and the Trade Union Side therefore seeks full and open negotiations on the points that we have raised.