

**Mr S Murphy**  
**Secretary**  
**JNC for Local Authority Craft & Associated Employees**  
**UCATT**  
**177 Abbeville Road**  
**London**  
**SW4 9RL**

21 August 2012

Dear Steve,

**CRAFTWORKER PAY 2012/13**

Thank you for coming to meet with the Lead Members of the Employers' Side and my colleagues yesterday. This meeting was arranged following the submission on 23 March of your 2012/13 pay claim and your request that both Sides say nothing publicly until you and the Lead Members had met in person to discuss this year's pay round.

The National Employers have considered your Side's pay claim and have decided that, as with other parts of local government, they are unable to make an offer on any element of your claim for 2012/13. There is genuine sympathy for the position of the lower-paid but councils have told us that the economic situation is such that any pay award could only be met through further job losses and cuts to services. The National Employers are clear that their priority must be to continue to seek to protect jobs and services in light of the huge budgetary pressures councils are continuing to face.

You will be aware that this is the third consecutive year that the local government workforce has not received a pay offer. This is unprecedented in the public sector. With this in mind, the National Employers would wish to avoid a situation of not being able to make a pay offer for a fourth year in 2013/14.

Therefore, the LGA, and its partner organisations in Wales and Northern Ireland, now has a clear objective to reform the national negotiating machinery in local government. Councils consider it inconsistent that significant parts of the local government workforce, such as social work and school support staff, for example, have no separate machinery while other smaller groups do. My colleagues shared with you the results of a recent survey that showed that there are now approximately 5,000 Craftworkers employed directly by councils in England and Wales. This is a significant reduction from March 2011 when a similar survey returned a figure of 9,500 and in November 2005 when the figure was 12,000 such employees.

Formal discussions with the relevant Trade Union Sides have yet to begin and there is no timescale for reform, but nevertheless it seems appropriate to now inform your Side of what the LGA and the Employers' Side's objective is - a single NJC for local government with sub-groups to consider non-pay related issues that may be relevant only to particular parts of the workforce, such as Craftworkers, or on specific issues such as equalities or training & development, for example. Clearly, we will need to discuss the options for the future with the various Trade Union Sides at the appropriate time.

Although as indicated above we have no detailed proposals, we shall of course keep you informed of developments in the usual way.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Messenger".

**Sarah Messenger**  
**Employers' Secretary**

cc Mr J Allott, Chair  
Mr B Strutton