

FINAL Northumberland County Council Proposed Changes to Terms and Conditions

In 2011 the Council introduced a new set of terms and conditions for staff. Known as 'Single Status' due to a need for all Local Authorities to adhere to employment law around Equal Pay, they have been in place without review for the past 13 years.

Over the past year, the Council and the Joint Trade Unions (Unison, GMB and Unite) have been reviewing the terms and conditions with a view to modernising them and to ensure that we are being fair to our employees.

Although many staff will know the terms and conditions as 'Single Status' due to having been at the Council when they were introduced, that is an antiquated term and the new terms will be called 'Northumberland County Council Terms and Conditions of Employment'.

This is not a complete refresh of our terms. The NCC terms are an add on to the overriding set of terms and conditions that we are governed by which are the 'National Joint Council for Local Government Services', also known as 'The Green Book'. Most of our terms and conditions come from that and need to be adhered to as they are nationally set (i.e. sickness pay and minimum annual leave entitlement) but there are parts that we can agree locally with our Trade Unions, which is what the Northumberland terms cover. For this review we have focused on areas that do not necessarily impact on all staff.

Following a consultation process that ran from 25th November 2024 – 22nd December 2024, a number of queries were raised that led to the Council's People team and the Joint Trade Unions discussing the finer details of some of the proposals.

This has led to some minor

The proposed changes are as follows;

1. All staff up to Band 11 can now be paid enhanced rates of pay for overtime, evening, weekend and Bank Holiday working. This will be backdated to 1 April 2024.
2. The 'standby' rate of pay will increase to £28 for Monday - Friday, with time and a half payable for Saturday and Sunday (£42) and double time for all Bank Holidays (£56), backdated to 1 April 2024.
3. Double time for hours worked now applies to all Bank Holidays backdated to 1 April 2024.
4. Staff on standby that are required to leave their home to attend a call can claim a minimum payment of 2 hours for their first call (though if called a further time within the two hour window, this instance is also covered by the payment for the first call), then to the minute if out longer than 2 hours.

5. Staff on standby that are NOT required to leave their home to deal with a call can claim a minimum payment of 1 hours for their first call (though if called a further time within the one hour window, this instance is also covered by the payment for the first call), then to the minute if the call is longer than an hour.
6. For subsequent calls for those staff required to leave their home to attend, they can claim a minimum payment of 30 minutes, then to the minute after that.
7. For subsequent calls for those staff NOT required to leave their home to deal with the call, they can claim a minimum payment of 15 minutes, then to the minute after that.
8. For the purposes of standby and double time rates of pay, each day is deemed to start at 8:30am and runs until 8:29am the following day. For Bank Holidays this means that the double time rate of pay starts at 8:30am on that day (i.e. 1st January) and runs until 8:29am the following morning (i.e. 2nd January).
9. For staff who work on a Bank Holiday, if it falls on a scheduled working day, a normal days leave will be deducted from their balance at the start of the year, but then either a full or half day added back on after it has been worked.
10. Overall allowance will cease from 1 February 2025.
11. The following parts of the agreement will be removed; *Home as Office, 5 over 7 working*

Trade Unions will ballot members in January 2025 will a view to seek acceptance of the proposed terms for them to become 'live' from 1 February 2025.

23 December 2024