



# **Your guide to the Future Council Workforce Contract**

**Birmingham  
City Council  
schools  
support staff**

# About this guide

This guide is for schools support staff employed by the council – in community, community special, voluntary-controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units. It tells you why the Future Council Workforce Contract is being introduced and sets out what the proposals are.

## The guide explains:

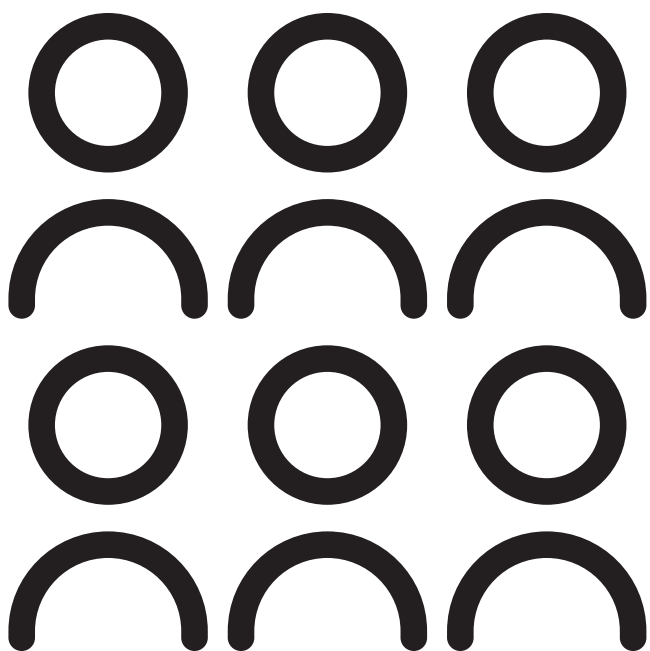
- **who's affected**
- **what the proposals are**
- **what's happened so far**
- **what will happen next**
- **where to get more information**

It also includes explanations of terms and abbreviations, and gives the answers to frequently asked questions.



# Introduction

Over the next four years the council must save around £250 million – on top of the £560 million we've already saved over the past five years. The scale of this challenge means we need to rethink our role. We will need to become a different type of employer, with a different type of workforce – one that's more agile and flexible. In the 2016+ budget consultation document we set out a number of proposals for how we believe we can address this challenge. We grouped these proposals around six broad themes – including one for our workforce.



## The workforce proposals cover three areas:

- better alignment between our workforce and financial plans;
- a more flexible package of benefits for staff;
- changes to terms and conditions of employment.

By introducing the proposed changes, we believe we could save £34 million over the next two financial years.

## Who is affected by these changes?

These proposals will affect Birmingham City Council employees on JNC (Chief Officers) and National Joint Council (NJC) terms and conditions of service, including schools support staff. (NJC is a negotiating body for local government services.)

## What were the initial proposals for the Future Council Workforce Contract?

The first proposals were:

- An increase in contracted working hours (from the current 36.5 for full-time posts to 37 hours)
- Non-payment for the first three days of a sickness absence
- Reduce the length of time staff are paid for a period of sickness to three months' full-pay followed by three months' half-pay
- Freeze on payment of performance-related increments for three years
- Stop paying food and drink (subsistence) allowances for those away on council business
- Revising the hours for night pay to 10pm-6am
- Introducing a standard standby payment of £27.35 per session
- Introducing the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) update service, which means an employee's DBS status (formerly CRB) is kept up to date at a cost of £13 per year for those whose jobs need this
- Review of JNC pay and reward

# Revised proposals

## What are the revised proposals for Future Council Workforce Contract?

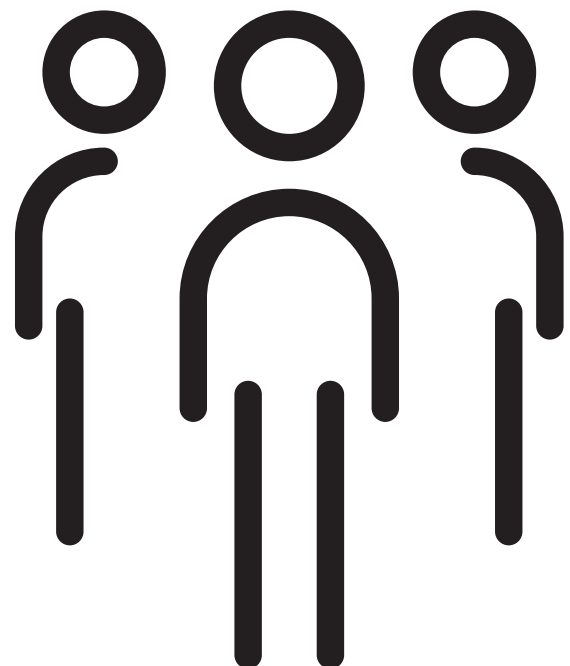
Following a series of engagement events – with a mixture of council-wide employees, plus head teachers, school governors, support staff and consultation with the trade unions – the council has listened to your views and the proposals have been revised as follows:

- In order to bring the council in line with the NJC scheme, we are proposing to harmonise to full time hours of 37 per week which is consistent with many other local authorities.

This will mean:

- All full-time employees will continue to work 36.5 hours per week
- All part-time employees will continue to work their current hours per week
- In future, pay will be calculated as a proportion of 37 hours
- This will mean a 1.35% reduction in pay for all employees
- However, a pay award effective from 1 April 2017 has been agreed as part of this year's pay negotiations. This is 1% across all grades although the increase in the lower grades will be higher
- Employees will continue to receive any nationally negotiated pay awards
- We are committed to the Birmingham Living Wage. The Living Wage determines the hourly rate for staff on spinal points (SCP) 6 to 11 (GR1 and the first spinal point of GR2). Therefore, the 37 hours proposal won't reduce the hourly wage of staff on SCP6 to SCP11
- Allowances and annual leave will remain unchanged

- A freeze on payment of performance-related increments for three years, effective from the date of the new contract
- To stop paying food and drink (subsistence) allowances for those away on council business
- Introducing a standard standby payment of £27.62 per session (where applicable) and removing the enhanced rates for working on the first and second rest day
- Removal of retirement gifts
- Reviewing long service awards and testimonials
- Review JNC pay and reward – potential for a 5% pay cut



# Rewards and benefits

Whilst the council might not be able to offer its employees a job for life, staff will have access to a good rewards and benefits package which will include:

- the opportunity to develop a strong skills and experience portfolio by way of a new career and development offer
- access to an employee benefits package with plans to extend the salary sacrifice scheme beyond childcare vouchers and travel to potentially include mobile phone contracts and a motor car purchase scheme

Further details of the full range of rewards and benefits that will be available to staff in schools will be available in due course.

## Progress and next steps

Further details on the proposals – plus the answers to frequently asked questions – are available. Please see the 'Where to go for more information' section of this guide.

### A new contract of employment incorporating the proposals

The council has to issue a new contract of employment to all employees that reflects the changes to terms and conditions, whether they are directly affected by the changes or not. The new contract will include the final package of rewards and benefits available to staff.

### What has happened so far?

On 9 December 2015, the council issued a S188 notice on the proposed changes – and all employees were told about this. In December 2015, the various Schools Forums were informed of the proposals and support staff in schools received letters in January and March 2016. Engagement events with schools support staff took place in May, and there have been regular ongoing meetings with the unions.

### What will happen next?

Consultation with the trade unions will continue, and is expected to end around September. In addition to this, head teachers (or an appropriate nominated representative) will be holding staff consultation meetings to brief employees and to ask for their views about the revised proposals. There may also be individual consultation meetings with employees who will be affected by a large number of the proposed changes. Details will be made available as soon as possible.

Once the consultation with the trade unions, and council colleagues including schools support staff, is completed, the council's proposals – together with those from the trade unions and individual consultation – will be presented for consideration and a decision by councillors.

Subject to approval and/or reaching agreement with the trade unions, it is anticipated that a revised contract of employment incorporating the approved proposals will be implemented in July 2017 for wider council employees and in January 2018 for support staff in schools.

# Further information

## Where to go for more information

It is really important that you understand how you could be affected by these proposals – there are a number of ways you can find out more about the Future Council Workforce proposals and keep up-to-date:

- Read more and sign-up for email updates to your work or home email at:  
**Inline/workforce-contract (if you have a council email address) or [birmingham.gov.uk/workforce-contract](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/workforce-contract)**
- Find answers to frequently asked questions at:  
**Inline/workforce-contract-FAQ** (if you have a council email address) or **[birmingham.gov.uk/workforce-contract-FAQ](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/workforce-contract-FAQ)**
- There's also information available on the Schools HR Portal, which your head teacher, or line manager can access – and they'll also get regular updates to pass on to staff.

## Employee survey and confidentiality

Confidentiality is important, therefore an independent research company BMG is carrying out the survey. Your completed survey will go directly to BMG and they guarantee that your individual responses will only be seen by them (see the 'BMG Promise'). Birmingham City Council will be able to see what is said but not who has said it. So you can rest assured your comments will be anonymous.

## 'BMG's Promise' regarding confidentiality

- BMG Research is bound, by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, to make sure all survey responses remain confidential. At no time will individual responses in any data or reports provided to the council be attributable to any member of staff.
- The survey is looking to pull out trends in views: not highlight the views of individuals.
- Any open text comments provided will be proofread by BMG Research, who will, in line with their code of conduct, make every effort to remove people's names. However, please remember that comments will be reported back as they are written – so please try not to identify yourself or others through your comments. Any comments submitted will be shared with the project team and may be published.
- To ensure confidentiality, no groups of staff of lower than ten will be reported upon individually unless contacted in advance

# Frequently asked questions

## **What is a Section 188 notice?**

A Section 188 notice is written information on an employer's proposals affecting employees and it is required under Section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (TULR(C)A) 1992). It is issued to the trade unions to mark the start of formal consultation on issues affecting employees.

## **Why are Schools Support Staff affected by the proposals?**

The council is the employer for support staff in schools who are employed on NJC terms and conditions (specifically, in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units). Their terms and conditions must be identical to those of wider council employees, to ensure all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

## **When will I be consulted?**

You will be briefed through the staff consultation meetings that will be held by your line manager. You'll also be given the opportunity to complete a survey on the proposals – which is enclosed with this guide.

There may also be individual consultation meetings with employees who will be affected by a large number of the proposed changes. Details will be made available as soon as possible.

## **Has Birmingham City Council already decided what will happen?**

No. The council is still consulting on the proposals.

## **When will I get a new contract?**

Consultation with the unions is still ongoing. Once consultation with them and employees is completed, council proposals – together with those of the unions – will be presented for a decision.

Subject to approval and/or agreement with the trade unions is anticipated that a revised contract of employment incorporating the approved proposals will be implemented in January 2018 for Schools Support Staff.

## **How will I know how much money I am losing as a result of the proposals?**

At this time, the council is consulting with trade unions and employees. Until a final decision is made, we won't know what the precise changes for each individual might be. However, as part of the consultation exercise, you'll be given an opportunity to speak to your line manager about how the proposals may affect you. At the point of either collective agreement or a final decision to implement is made we will write to each individual employee advising of the specific impact on them.

## **Will there be any protection for employees who are losing money?**

This is one of the issues we are consulting with the trade unions on.

# How can I make my views known?

There are a number of ways for you to make your views known:

- A survey regarding the proposals is enclosed with this guide and you will be encouraged to complete this to give your views and opinions
- You'll be briefed through team consultation meetings with your head teacher, and/or line manager – and you'll have an opportunity to give your views and opinions.
- Employees affected by a large number of the proposed changes may be invited to individual consultation meetings. Details will be made available as soon as possible.
- You can call the Future Council Workforce Team on **0121 675 7070 (option 5)**
- Share your views on the dialogue app, Birmingham Speaks – a place for open discussion of ideas about Birmingham City Council at:  
**<https://birmingham.dialogue-app.com/2z2nfubosb>**
- You can email your suggestions and queries on the proposals to **[FCWCSchools@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:FCWCSchools@birmingham.gov.uk)**
- Post your views and comments to:  
**Birmingham City Council Human Resources  
Future Council Workforce Contract Team  
PO Box 16320  
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