



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Find below some frequently asked questions about the Unified Reward project, these will be updated regularly to reflect questions submitted to the helpline. The FAQs are relevant to all affected staff including community schools, where an FAQ relates to a particular group this will be specified or allocated to a separate section. Click on the links in the contents table below to be taken to a specific section.

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1. About Unified Reward

1.1. Who is covered by the project?

The Unified Reward project encompasses; a review and redesign of the pay and grading structure and a harmonisation of the terms and conditions across the council. The aims and objectives of Unified Reward are to create a pay and reward system which is simpler, fairer, more flexible and rewards performance. The council believes this is needed to address the wide range of grades in use across the authority, remove inconsistencies and to ensure that staff are being rewarded for the work they do.

1.2. Who is covered by the project?

All employees at the council and in community schools are included, except: Education and Skills, teachers, support staff in non-community schools (e.g. academies or Voluntary Aided) unless a school wishes to adopt the new arrangements.

1.3. What are the timescales for Unified Reward being implemented?

The anticipated timescales for the implementation of Unified Reward are as follows;

Date	Council Staff	Schools Council Staff
8 February 2016	Consultation Opens	
8 March 2016	Consultation Closes	
21 March 2016	Proposals taken to General Functions Committee	
April 2016	Receipt of New contract letters including outcome of job evaluation	
May 2016	Appeals	Receipt of outcome of job evaluation
July 2016		Receipt of new contracts
1 October 2016	Implementation of Unified Reward	
1 April 2017		Implementation of Unified Reward

1.4. What have you been doing on Unified Reward up until now?

In September 2012 the Remuneration committee approved a bottom up review of the councils pay and grading structure. After some consideration the project got fully underway in June 2014, since then we have undertaken over 600 job evaluations covering around 4500 employees and kept up an ongoing dialogue with Trade union colleagues to ensure we can achieve the best possible offer for employees. Following an in principle agreement with the Trade unions on the package of proposals in January 2016 we are now in a position to open consultation with staff and hear their feedback.

2. Consultation

2.1. When is the consultation period?

The consultation period runs for a period of 30 days from 8 February to 8 March 2016.

2.2. What do I need to do during the consultation period?

Consultation is an opportunity for all staff to understand the Unified Reward proposals and give their feedback. We would suggest all staff should;

- Attend a consultation session
- Read all of the information available on the Intranet/Internet including the consultation overview, 6 page consultation pack and FAQs
- Contact the Unified Reward helpline to answer any queries you have
- Contact the Unified Reward helpline or your Trade Union to give feedback on the proposals

2.3. When are the consultation sessions?

We have arranged a number of sessions scheduled for all staff at major council sites as well as tailored sessions for specific groups of staff including community schools employees.

Employees are advised to attend a session relevant to them but can attend another session if more convenient. The table below outlines all available dates;

Staff Consultation Briefings				
Venue	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
NLBP (Atrium)	Mon 8 th Feb 9:30 – 10:30 11:00 – 12:30	Mon 15 Feb 10:00 – 11:00	Weds 17 th Feb 9:30 – 10:30	Thurs 25 th Feb 10:00 – 11:00
Barnet House	Wed 10 th Feb 11:00 – 12:00 12:30 – 13:30	Thurs 18 th Feb 13:30 – 14:30	None scheduled	Wed 2 nd March 14:00 – 15:00
Mill Hill Depot	Wed 10 Feb 6-6:30 W&R Teams 7-7:30 Street Cleansing 8-8:30 Green Spaces	Tues 16 Feb 7-7:30 Street Cleansing 8-8:30 Green Spaces	None scheduled	Wed 2 nd March 7-7:30 Street Cleansing 8-8:30 Green Spaces 9-9:30 Office staff
Schools – BEST Hub	Mon 8 th Feb 16:00 – 17:00	Half Term	Tues 23 rd Feb 16:00 – 17:00	Mon 29 th Feb 16:00 – 17:00
Schools – Summerside School	None scheduled	Half Term	None scheduled	Tues 1 st March 16:00 – 17:00

2.4. How do I book on to a consultation session?

Employees can book onto a session by clicking one of the links below or contacting the Unified Reward Helpline on 0330 606 4444 (choose option 1). If you work at **Mill Hill Depot**, you will be communicated with separately about the sessions available on site. Whilst employees are welcome to attend any available session, we are providing specialist sessions for staff at Mill Hill Depot and schools to ensure the proposals specifically relating to them are highlighted and thoroughly explained.

Click the relevant link -

[NLBP sessions](#) (North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1NP)

[Barnet House sessions](#) (1255 High Road, Whetstone, N20 0EJ)

[Schools sessions](#) (Barnet Education and Skills Training Hub, Lanacre Avenue, Grahame Park, Colindale, NW9 5FN / Summerside School, Crossway N12 0QU)

2.5. I can't attend any of the scheduled consultation sessions what should I do

We will be recording one of the briefing sessions which will be placed on the council's intranet and website so employees can watch this at their leisure. The slide deck used in the consultation sessions and all other consultation papers are available now on the intranet and website.

2.6. How do I give my feedback?

There are a number of opportunities to give your feedback; including within the consultation sessions, via your trade union representative or by contacting the Unified Reward Helpline on;

Phone: 0330 606 4444 (choose option 1) or

Email: barnethrpayroll@capita-services.co.uk

2.7. Will my Trade Union be consulting with me?

The Trade Unions will be consulting with their members separately you can contact them to find out more.

Unison
contactus@barnetunison.org.uk

GMB
mary.goodson@barnet.gov.uk

2.8. What will happen after consultation?

All feedback received from staff and the trade unions will be considered by the Chief Executive and he will present a report of his final recommendations to the General Functions Committee on 21 March 2016. This report will be available for all staff to see on the council's website a few days before the committee meeting. The outcome of the committee's decision will be communicated to all staff on 22 March 2016.

3. The Unified Reward proposals and what they mean for staff

Pay

3.1. How is the pay and grading structure different?

The pay and grading structure has been simplified from over 300 grades down to 12 new grades and 7 senior manager grades. A range of pay has been added to each grade to allow for employee progression. Basic pay has also been uplifted to the average paid by other local councils.

3.2. What does the new pay and grading structure look like?

The table below lists the 12 new grades;

Grade	Grade Minimum	Grade Maximum
Grade A	16,833	17,748
Grade B	17,748	18,783
Grade C	18,381	20,193
Grade D	19,524	21,552
Grade E	20,856	23,334
Grade F	23,334	26,277
Grade G	26,277	29,727
Grade H	28,935	31,986
Grade I	31,986	35,655
Grade J	36,558	41,073
Grade K	43,869	48,475
Grade L	49,451	55,384

3.3. What is happening to automatic increments?

Automatic increments will be removed with the final increment paid on 1 April 2016 (tbc for schools) following this annual pay progression will be based on an employee's performance review rating. See question 3.10 for more detail.

3.4. How long will my pay be protected for?

All employees negatively impacted by Unified Reward will receive 12 months' pay protection. Following the introduction of Unified Reward the standard length for pay protection (as a result of restructures etc) will be 6 months.

3.5. I am due to get my annual pay increment on 1 April 2016. Will I still get this?

The final automatic increment for corporate council staff will be 1 April 2016. From April 2017 annual increases will be dependent on the performance ratings. The timescales for introduction of performance related pay progression in schools are still to be confirmed so may be slightly different.

3.6. Will my pay change as a result of the project?

As with any full review of the pay and grading structure it is usual that some posts and therefore employees will see a change in their pay. Some employees will see their pay increase, others may decrease and some will remain the same. We have worked hard to minimise any reductions in pay and as a result over 90% of employees will receive the same or a higher rate of basic pay. The overall aim of Unified Reward is focused on fairness and transparency not making reductions or cost saving.

3.7. How will you move me across on to my new grade?

An employee will be moved onto the new grading structure dependent on their current salary. The grade/scale point will have been linked to one of the new 12 grades and;

- If your current salary is *within* the range of the new grade (e.g. Grade D £19,524-£21,552) you will receive the same salary.
- If your current salary is *lower* than the range of the new grade you will be placed at the minimum point of the new grade (e.g. Grade D £19,524)
- If your current salary is *higher* than the range of the new grade then you will be placed at the maximum point of the new grade (e.g. Grade D £21,552) and pay protection at your current salary is paid for 12 months

More information is expected to be available on this in April 2016 when individual impacts are communicated. (May 2016 for schools staff)

3.8. What happens if my salary reduces?

If an employee is negatively impacted by Unified Reward they will receive 12 months' pay protection of their base pay and London Weighting allowance. Pay protection will not be available for the removal of allowances, additional payments or changes to overtime rates.

3.9. When will I receive my new salary?

Unified Reward will be implemented from 1 October 2016 or 1 April 2017 for schools. If your salary has increased you will receive the first pay reflecting this at the end of October 2016 or April 2017. If you are negatively impacted by Unified Reward you will be protected at your current salary for 12 months and will therefore not see a change in pay until October 2017 or April 2018 for schools.

Performance

3.10. How is performance being linked to pay progression?

From April 2017 pay progression within a grade will be dependent on staff performance. The level of increase received will be determined by the performance review rating an employee receives from their manager. If an employee receives an increase this is then consolidated and becomes their new base pay. Once an employee reaches the top of their grade they will no longer receive performance related increments. The increases and ratings are set out below;

Current Rating	New Rating	Percentage Increase
Red	Development Needs	0%
Amber	Satisfactory	0.5%
Green	Good	2.25% (equivalent to a current increment)
Gold	Outstanding	3%

**Please note timescales for introduction of this in schools is still to be confirmed

3.11. How will performance be measured?

Employee performance will be measured in the same way it is now via the performance review scheme. We will be making tweaks to the scheme to ensure it is fit for purpose and there will be clear guidance for how an employee can achieve each rating. We know as an organisation we

need to get better at measuring performance and we'll be working closely with line managers to ensure they are clear on what they need to do and have the right support in place.

3.12. How will you make sure the performance ratings are fair?

As is the case now reviewing performance should be a process a line manager undertakes regularly with their staff to ensure there are no surprises when completing the end of year review. We understand that moving towards performance related progression means there is more at stake for an employee and we need to ensure the process is fair and transparent. There will be the opportunity for an employee to appeal against their rating if they do not agree or feel it is unfair. There will also be a system of moderation in place across teams and delivery units to ensure the same standards are being applied across the board.

3.13. I'm at the top of the grade will I get an increment based on my performance?

No, as is the case now employees at the top of their grade are not eligible progression within the grade. Under Unified Reward there has been consideration to awarding those employees who are rated outstanding for 2 years in a row a one off additional payment. Employees at the top of their grade would be eligible for this.

Annual Leave

3.14. Is Annual leave changing?

Yes, from 1 April 2017 annual leave entitlement will be 30 days for all employees (pro-rated for part time staff). For those staff with 31 days or more entitlement currently one year's protection will be applied at 31 days with a reduction to 30 days for the 2018/19 leave year.

Sickness

3.15. What changes will be made to the sickness absence scheme?

There will be no change to the current sick pay entitlements of six months full pay and six months half pay as outlined in the current policy which can be found on the [intranet](#).

What is proposed is that the approach and procedure for managing short term sickness is revised with the introduction of new sickness triggers. The sickness triggers are outlined in the table below;

Trigger	Sickness level	Salary Reduction
Trigger 1	8 days or 3 occurrences/events within a 12 month period	1 days' pay
Trigger 2	Another occurrence/event following Trigger 1 within a 12 month period	2 days' pay
Trigger 3	Another occurrence/event following Trigger 2 within a 12 month period	3 days' pay

It has been agreed with the Trade Unions that the triggers will be piloted for a period of 12 months in which staff will incur no financial penalties. If an employee hits a trigger management action will be taken. As is the case now manager discretion should be exercised in individual cases to ascertain what action (if any) should be taken.

The triggers are only one aspect of the Attendance Management procedure line managers should be addressing sickness as it arises and taking the appropriate action to manage this with the employee.

Management training and guidance will be provided on disability related absence, it is not our intention to penalise those staff that have a disability or serious life threatening conditions.

3.16. Will my sick pay entitlements change?

No, the sick pay entitlement will remain at six months full pay and six months half pay.

3.17. What type of illnesses will not activate the triggers?

As is the case now management discretion can be exercised when enforcing the triggers. The intention is not to penalise staff with a disability, serious life threatening condition or long term condition. The triggers will also not be hit when a member of staff has a medical certificate, has sustained a serious injury or needs to attend hospital for a procedure which requires recovery time. It is not possible to list every instance where a trigger would or would not be activated, however as is the case now managers will be expected to use their own discretion with HR support in the management of sickness.

Working Week & Overtime

3.18. What changes have been made to working hours?

The normal working day is being extended from 6am-8pm to 6am-10pm this does not suggest any changes to your current working hours, i.e. staff who work from 9am-5pm will continue to do so. This change only affects the time the out of hours overtime rate will begin to be paid (from 10pm).

3.19. Has the working week changed?

No, the standard working week will still be Monday – Friday.

3.20. What will the new overtime rates be?

There are some proposed changes to the overtime payments under Unified Reward the new payments will be as follows;

Overtime Type	Rate	Percentage	Alternative
Saturday rate	x1.25	25%	N/A
Sunday rate	x 1.5	50%	N/A
In excess of 36 hrs per week	x1.25	25%	N/A
Out of Hrs (22:00-6:00)	x1.5	50%	N/A
Bank Holiday	x2.0	100%	Day off in Lieu

3.21. I currently receive 4 hours contractual overtime. Will this continue?

Contractual overtime is being removed for the majority of employees therefore it is unlikely you will continue to receive it. For health and safety reasons a small number of employees will

continue to have contracted overtime, you can check whether this relates to you by contacting the Unified Reward helpline.

3.22. If I work on a bank holiday will I get extra pay?

Yes the rate for working on a bank holiday is x 2 or double-time. Employees can choose between a higher rate of pay or a day off in lieu.

Additional Payments

3.23. What is happening to the additional payments some employees receive?

As a principle we are intending to remove additional payments as part of the process of ensuring all employees are paid correctly (in their salary) for the work that they do. In some instances we recognise there is a need to retain an additional payment. If you currently receive a payment and would like to know whether this will continue we suggest you contact the Unified Reward Helpline (details in section 7).

3.24. I receive an honoraria payment will this be removed?

Yes it will. These allowances have been used in different ways across the organisation in the past so we are removing the allowance to ensure a consistent approach across the council. Going forward a manager should carry out a recruitment process and/or write a role profile to be evaluated in order to award a post/employee additional pay.

3.25. I currently receive a Market factor supplement will this continue?

The Market factor supplement currently received will remain in place as planned until the end of the financial year (March 2017). This will then be replaced by the recruitment and retention schemes as relevant. If you currently receive Market factor supplement you should not see a difference in pay.

Recruitment and Retention

3.26. What mechanisms will be available to ensure we can recruit and retain staff?

We plan to implement two schemes one for recruitment and one for retention each allowing up to 10% additional pay. This will replace the existing Market Factor Supplement and will allow flexibility to react to changes in the market and staff shortages or skills gaps.

Essential Car User Allowance

3.27. What will change about Essential User Car allowance?

Essential User car allowance will now only be paid for those who travel a minimum of 2,500 miles per annum (11 miles per working day). Those who do not meet this threshold will be able to claim the higher casual user mileage rates but will not receive a lump sum from 1 April 2017.

3.28. I currently get an essential user car allowance. Will I still get this?

If you do not meet the 2,500 mile criteria (or a pro-rated version for part-time employees) you will no longer receive the allowance. This payment will be withdrawn from 1 April 2017.

3.29. How will you know whether I meet the 2,500 mile criteria?

We will be able to understand whether you meet the criteria by examining your mileage claims over a 12 month period.

3.30. Will the 2,500 miles be pro-rated for part time employees?

Yes it will. Employees who work part-time will be expected to meet a pro-rated amount of the 2,500 mile criteria taking into account their working hours.

3.31. What if I do 2,400 miles per year or do not quite meet the criteria?

If an employee is very close to meeting the criteria this will be reviewed on an individual basis and there may be discretion to award essential car user allowance.

3.32. How will this affect car parking?

The changes to essential car user allowance will have no impact on the allocation of parking space until the move to Colindale in 2017. There is no intention to remove essential user permits from those people who already have them.

Employee Benefits Scheme

3.33. What is the Employee Benefits Scheme?

We propose to introduce a market leading employee benefits scheme for all staff. This could potentially include; high street discounts, leisure discounts, purchasing annual leave, childcare vouchers, cycle to work scheme and lease cars. There is not currently a date set for introduction of the scheme.

4. Next Steps

4.1. When will I know how Unified Reward will affect me?

At this point we cannot confirm how the project will affect specific individuals. Consultation is open from 8th February to 8th March to enable us to explain the proposals and gather employee views and feedback on the changes. Additionally, the Trade Unions will be consulting with their members during this time. Until the General Functions Committee on 21st March 2016 all details are subject to change. New contracts detailing the agreed changes and the impact this will have to employee grading and salary are expected to be distributed in April 2016 for all council staff and May 2016 for schools council staff

4.2. When will I know what my new grade and salary will be?

Subject to committee approval we expect all employees to be informed of and understand the implications for them including grade and salary by May 2016. Council employees will receive this information via line managers in April 2016 and schools employees will receive the information via head teachers in May 2016.

4.3. What is the process for agreeing the proposals and when will we know if they have been agreed?

Following the end of consultation staff comments and views will be considered alongside feedback from the trade unions this will be incorporated into a full committee report. The report will be taken to the General Functions committee for agreement on 21 March 2016. Employees will be advised of the outcome in the week following the committee.

4.4. Are the HR policies being updated to incorporate the changes?

Yes following sign off by the general functions committee all affected policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated.

4.5. When will I get my new contract?

The timescales will be slightly different depending on the timescales for implementation. Council staff will receive the outcome of their job evaluation and their new contract in April 2016 whereas schools staff will receive a job evaluation letter including grading in May 2016 followed by a new contract in July 2016.

4.6. Do I have a right of appeal and how do I appeal?

Yes all employees have the right to appeal against their job evaluation and grading. When staff receive the information on how they are affected (by the timescales outline in 4.5) there will also be information on how to appeal, a full appeals policy has been drafted to outline the process.

4.7. When is Unified Reward being implemented?

Unified Reward will be implemented on 1 October 2016 for council staff and 1 April 2017 for schools staff.

5. Information for Schools

5.1. I work in an Academy school – am I included in the project?

Only employees in community schools will be automatically included. If you work in a non-community school it will be for that individual school to decide if they wish to adopt the new pay and grading structure or not.

6. Information for Senior Managers

6.1. Will my pay change?

The pay and grading structure for senior managers was reviewed will be no change to the 7 senior manager grades previously implemented as these have already been reviewed.

6.2. Will my pay progression arrangements be changing?

Senior Managers current pay progression is based on their performance with 3 steps in the pay grade i.e. bottom point (entry), mid-point (developing) and max point (fully competent). These arrangements will be retained.

6.3. Will my annual leave change?

Senior managers should currently have an annual leave entitlement of 30 days this will remain the same in line with the Unified Reward proposals to ensure fairness across the council.

6.4. Will my sickness scheme change?

Yes, following the implementation of Unified Reward senior managers will be entitled to 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay, and will also be subject to the sickness triggers.

6.5. Am I entitled to Overtime payments?

Senior Managers are contracted to work the hours required by their role without any enhancements to pay this will remain the same and will not be impacted by the introduction of Unified Reward.

7. Further Information

7.1. How can I learn more about the project?

There is a range of information available:

- read the FAQs for answers to your questions
- look out for regular updates on the Intranet and Internet, Schools Circular
- ask your line manager or Headteacher for more information
- Contact the Unified Reward helpline;
Phone: 0330 606 4444 (option 1)

Email: Barnethrpayroll@capita-services.co.uk

7.2. How will I know the progress of the project?

As the project progresses we will be keeping managers, head teachers and the trade unions up to date. We will also post regular updates on the Intranet, Internet and Schools Circular. You can also ask your manager or team leader for more information, email the generic inbox: unified.reward@barnet.gov.uk or if you are a member, ask your trade union representative.

7.3. Which trade unions are involved with Unified Reward and how do I contact them?

Unison and GMB represent the employees covered by the project you can contact them with the details below or via your local shop steward.

Unison
contactus@barnetunison.org.uk

GMB Convenor
mary.goodson@barnet.gov.uk

7.4. Who will answer my queries when I contact the Unified Reward helpline?

A dedicated team based in Belfast who have been trained and briefed on the Unified Reward proposals. If a query requires more specific knowledge the helpline staff have access to both the Belfast and Barnet HR teams to ensure your questions will be answered as quickly as possible

7.5. How do I contact the Unified Reward helpline?

You can call or email using the details below;

Phone: 0330 606 4444 (option 1)

Email: Barnethrpayroll@capita-services.co.uk

8. Glossary

	Definition
Basic Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- a standard rate of pay before additional payments such as allowances and bonuses
Occurrence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- An incident or event- One occurrence of sickness absence (as at 3.16) could be one day or one period of absence lasting multiple days