

Requisitioned Items

Cabinet Member: All

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer: Julian Gale - Strategic Manager, Governance & Risk

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1. National Joint Council Pay to Councils

- 1.1 The following requisitioned item will be proposed by Cllr Leigh Redman and seconded by Cllr Liz Leyshon:

Somerset County Council notes that:

- For most workers in local government and schools, pay and conditions are determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for government services.
- On average, across the country, NJC basic pay has fallen by 21% in real terms since 2010
- NJC workers had a three-year pay freeze from 2010-2012 and have received only 1% annually since then
- NJC pay is the lowest in the public sector
- Job evaluated pay structures are being squeezed and distorted by bottom-loaded NJC pay settlements needed to reflect the increased National Living Wage
- The likelihood of rising inflation following the vote to leave the European union will worsen the current public sector pay inequality.

This council supports the NJC pay claim for 2018, submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers and calls for the immediate end of public sector pay restraint. NJC pay cannot be allowed to fall further behind other parts of the public sector.

This council also welcomes the joint review of the NJC pay spine to remedy the turbulence caused by bottom-loaded pay settlements.

Council also notes the drastic ongoing cuts to local government funding and calls on the Government to provide additional funding to fund a decent pay rise for NJC employees and the pay spine review.

1.2 Somerset County Council therefore resolves to:

- Write to the LGA to make urgent representations to Government to fund the NJC claim and the pay spine review;
- Write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor supporting the NJC pay claim and seeking the additional resources needed to fund a decent pay rise and the pay spine review;
- Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and the pay spine review.

2. Mental Health Challenge Pledge

2.1 The following requisitioned item will be proposed by Cllr Christine Lawrence and seconded by Cllr Leigh Redman:

The **Mental Health Challenge** recognises that Local authorities have a key role in improving mental health in their communities.

The independent Mental Health Taskforce published its Five Year Forward View in February 2016, which set out the current state of mental health service provision in England. The taskforce calls for all local councils to have a member champion for mental health. This 'leadership by example' role is critical to raise the profile of mental health in a local area. The intention is to take a proactive approach and promote positive mental health across the local area.

As one of the first steps to implementing the new County Vision for Somerset, the Council is keen to appoint two member champions for mental health

This is in line with the Mental Health Challenge set by The Centre for Mental Health, The Mental Health Foundation, The Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds. The Challenge asks authorities to commit to promoting mental health across their business and in return will provide support and networking for authorities and councillors.

This Council notes that:

- 1 in 4 Somerset residents will experience a mental health problem in any given year
- The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020
- Unemployment is one of the most important factors affecting individual wellbeing regardless of age, gender, level of education, ethnicity or part of the country you live
- Mental ill health currently represents 23% of the total burden of ill health in the UK and is the largest single cause of disability

- Half of all adult mental health problems have developed by the age of 14 years
- People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK
- Positive mental health is essential for our quality of life. It is important for thriving communities, for economic productivity and for personal relationships

This Council believes:

- As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health
- Mental health should be a priority across all the local authority's areas of responsibility, including housing, community safety and planning
- All councillors, whether members of the Cabinet or Scrutiny and in our community and casework roles, can play a positive role in championing mental health on an individual and strategic basis

2.2 This Council resolves:

- To sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Approved Mental Health Professional Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.
- To commit to appoint two elected members as 'mental health champions' across the Council; one to focus on adult mental health and one to focus on children and young people in Somerset.
- To delegate authority to the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board to appoint the mental health champions referred to above.
- To identify a member of the Public Health staff (Louise Finnis) within the council to act as a 'Lead Officer' to support the Mental Health Champions
- To ensure the Health and Wellbeing Board receives updates from the Champions, at least annually

The Council will also:

- Support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces
- Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community

- Work with local partners to offer effective support for people with mental health needs
- Tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community
- Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health