

Environment Agency

Last update: 18 Jun 2025

Environment Agency Update

EA Pay Claim 2025-26

Posted on: 18 June 2025

Dear Members,

Please see below the Joint Trade Union pay claim for the Environment Agency for 2025-26:

[2025-26-environment-agency-pay-claim.pdf](#)

Letter To EA Regarding Enterprise Hire Cars

Posted on: 23 September 2024

Dear Members,

GMB and other unions in the Environment Agency have written to the Agency about the dangerous Enterprise Hire Cars. Please see the letter below and email any comments to kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk.

[environment-agency-trade-union-improvement-notice.pdf](#)



Posted on: 16 September 2024

Dear Members,

Below is a link to the EA Pay offer for 2024.

[2024-ea-pay-offer-to-joint-officers-final.pdf](#)

The new Government gave Government Departments and Arms Length Bodies, such as the Environment Agency, authority to negotiate pay increases with Trade Unions of an average of 5%. This was to reflect the broad outcome of the pay awards elsewhere in the public sector.

The Secretary of State, Steve Reed MP, gave the Agency permission to negotiate with the Trade Unions, and a series of meeting has led to this full and final offer.

The detail of the offer from your employer includes an annex which should help you understand the impact on you as an individual.

The final offer was made after series of meetings with the employer. The Trade Unions sought to get the highest possible offer from the Agency.

The payroll provider, SSCL Ltd, is facing challenges this autumn as it acts as payroll provider for many employers in the civil service and related bodies so the ballot process will be concluded by 10 October 2024 so that payment can be made on 20 November.

Reps will meet in the next couple of days to consider the offer and will advise members whether to accept or reject the offer, or to leave it to members to decide. GMB Regions will undertake the ballot and let you know how you can vote. Please take this opportunity to invite your colleagues to join GMB which will give them the opportunity to vote on this offer. They can join online here: [Join GMB | GMB Union](#)

If you have any questions regarding the offer please email publicservices@gmb.org.uk.

Kevin Brandstatter

National Officer



Posted on: 13 September 2024

Dear Members,

Today, 13 September 2024, Trade Unions concluded pay negotiations with the Environment Agency.

The final and formal offer will be subject to a ballot which will conclude on 10 October. If the offer is accepted members will receive the uplift in pay on 20 November 2024.

GMB reps will meet early next week to consider the offer and any recommendation to members.

Further information will follow early in the week commencing 16 September.

Please remind your colleagues that only union members are able to vote on this offer and ask them to join GMB at [Join GMB | GMB Union](#)

Kind regards,

Kevin Brandstatter

National Officer

DRAFT PAY REMIT GUIDANCE 2024/25



Posted on: 2 August 2024

Dear Members,

The last bulletin included details of the EA Joint Unions Pay claim. The Cabinet Office has now published its Guidance for the Civil Service and related bodies.

You will find it by following this link [pay-remit-guidance-2024-25-.pdf](#)

It is very detailed but essentially gives employers a remit to negotiate average pay increases of around 5%.



You will notice the joint union pay claim is higher than this and we expect negotiations to begin shortly.

Please see link to a new pay survey for members to complete <https://forms.office.com/e/ZqqnzBNmgB>

Please ask your colleagues to join GMB – the link is below.

www.gmb.org.uk/join

Environment Agency Pay Claim 2024



Posted on: 10 July 2024

Dear Members,

The joint trade unions have submitted a pay claim for 2024/5. Please click on the link below to read it. Negotiations will begin when the Cabinet Office release the pay remit for 24/25.

[environment-agency-tu-side-2024-pay-claim-.pdf](#)

Environment Agency Members Bulletin June 2024



Posted on: 21 June 2024

GMB EA reps met in Reading on 26 April 2024

PAY

As the election has been called there will be no negotiations in the civil service and related bodies such as the Environment Agency until after the election.

Cabinet Office and Treasury will take account of awards made through Pay Review Bodies while setting the civil service remit, and these reports will be with Ministers in mid-July. It is possible that the pay remit will be set to allow negotiations to begin.

STAFFING



GMB met with EA senior management to raise the reduction in staff numbers in the River Thames from 108 and 50 or so which includes temp staff. In 2008 the EA set safe numbers on the Thames at 108 over the summer period following scrutiny of health and safety on the River. GMB also raised issues around health and safety, flood risk, the absurd waste of money through external contractors, the closure of revenue earning campsite and the failure to adequately enforce boat registration – another earner! We also raised complaints from women members about a growing level of sexism and discrimination developing in the EA.

If any member is affected by poor staffing, overwork, discrimination on any grounds, or wants to get more active in GMB please contact kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

Your input around these issues would be welcome.

PLEASE LET COLLEAGUES SEE THIS BULLETIN AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO JOIN GMB, THE MORE MEMBERS WE HAVE, THE STRONGER WE ARE. [Join GMB | GMB Union](#)

"Dirty Waters: How The Environment Agency Lost Its Way" – The Guardian



Posted on: 14 June 2024

Dear Members,

Please follow the link for an article about the Environment Agency:

[Dirty waters: how the Environment Agency lost its way | Environment | The Guardian](#)

Email To Environment Agency



Posted on: 31 May 2024

Dear Members,

Below is the text of an e-mail sent to Anna Burns, on behalf of GMB members working on the River Thames as Lock and Weir Keepers. Staffing levels have been slashed and GMB is meeting the employer as soon as a date can be agreed.



Good Afternoon Anna

Thank you for responding to our concerns. I thought I should set the scene for our meeting by further explaining our position.

At our meeting in Kings Meadow, my colleagues referred to the slashing of Waterways staff over the years, from 108 in 2008 to the current level of 63, 43 residents, 10 permanent reliefs and 10 seasonal reliefs. Under the terms of Better Ways of Working, the minimum staffing levels for the **safe** operation of the River were set at 1.5 staff per lock in the winter and 2 staff per lock in the summer. The minimum needed simply to account for annual leave is 45 residents and 18 relief.

Currently there are 10 unfilled roles, 2 are resident lock keepers and 8 are relief lock keepers.

There can be no good reason to have reduced these numbers, and the failure to consult GMB could be a breach of health and safety law, as well as being bad industrial relations practice.

I am aware that for at least the last five years, GMB Reps have been asking for Tech Officers and Team Leaders to provide cover for lock keepers but this has yet to materialise. Obviously they would need to be trained to undertake the role.

While I understand the difficult financial position Waterways is in, the Agency must find the funding to return the staffing levels on the Thames to at least the number matching the numbers for safe operation as defined above.

The Agency (or DEFRA) told the BBC that unions had been fully consulted about the new staffing levels, which is patently untrue and we await an explanation of how the BBC were given incorrect and misleading information, and look forwards to a correction.

We also note continued references to the Agency's statutory obligations, but not all of them. The statements to date have not taken into account the statutory duty to report environmental incidents in the event a low level at a weir causing the death of fish, nor the duty of the EA to prevent flooding on the Thames.

The ground water levels are very high and wet weather continues to be forecast. I understand that water level management is a complicated process and hard to sum up in one paragraph and that the absence of a lock keeper on a weir doesn't prevent levels being checked as most sites have telemetry systems in place so that the levels can be monitored remotely.

However, reducing staffing levels past a critical number, thereby increasing the response time to a rising or falling river, increases the likelihood of environment damage, including fish kills, water management failures and avoidable flooding.



The Agency will be aware of the water levels, but just can't get someone to a weir in time to make the necessary adjustments because there aren't enough staff.

While Agency staff can remotely check a water level, only a skilled and experienced weir keeper will be able make the necessary calculation to determine by how much a gate needs to be adjusted and they need to be on site in time to make that adjustment.

There are other aspects of safety which do not seem to have been covered, for example a fence or gate is a control measure, but often lock keepers have to ask people not to sit on top of the fence or to shut the gate. Many potential accidents and injuries are saved by a duty keeper taking a rope or instructing a boater to put the vessel in reverse etc, etc.

In advance of our meeting would you please share the risk assessments associated with the staffing levels for each lock, as each of these is a separate workplace under the regulations, and hopefully you can let us know why they were not subject to consultation with GMB safety reps in advance of implementation.

To reiterate we need for the number of trained personnel to be restored to its previous levels, to ensure that the locks operate in line with health and safety requirements, and prevent accidents, environmental incidents and flooding from happening.

I look forward to meeting with you.

LOCK KEEPER SAVES LIFE OF BOATER AS ENVIRONMENT AGENCY MAKES 'DANGEROUS CUTS'



Posted on: 10 May 2024

Incident clearly shows why locks on the River Thames need staff on duty at all times, warns GMB

A lock keeper saved the life of a stricken boater as the environment agency makes 'dangerous' staff cuts, GMB has said.

On 29 April, Temple Lock near Marlow, Buckinghamshire, resident lock and weir keeper Matt Rooke rescued an injured man from the water after his boat was damaged and sank.

Mr Rooke stopped the boater from being swept over the weir, saving his life.



Yet with just 24 hours' notice and no consultation, the Environment Agency implemented plans to reduce staffing levels on a number of locks on the river Thames.

Under the scheme many sites, including Temple Lock, will be unstaffed 75 per cent of the time.

Kevin Brandstatter, GMB National Officer said:

"This incident clearly shows why locks on the River Thames need properly trained full-time staff on duty at all times.

"If Mr Rooke had not been on duty that day, the boater would have almost certainly died.

"The appalling weather and almost continuous rain during the past few months means weir keepers are vital to manage the passage of water and reduce flood risk.

"These staff changes have been made with no notice and without speaking to the people who know – the lock keepers.

"GMB believes the Environment Agency has failed in its legal obligations under the health and safety act to undertake proper risk assessment at each lock affected.

"We are calling for the agency to abandon these ill-thought out and dangerous cuts."

EA Final Pay Offer 2023/24 Ballot



Posted on: 20 November 2023

The Environment Agency has recently made a final pay offer to the trade unions following an intense set of pay negotiations after the Government's recent approval of the Environment Agency's Pay Flexibility Business Case (PFBC) for 2023/24.

The final pay offer can be found here: [2023-2024-environment-agency-pay-offer-to-joint-officers.pdf](#)

The four unions (GMB, Unison, Prospect and Unite) are consulting members. A link to the GMB ballot paper is here: <https://forms.office.com/e/qBZ...>

The link opens at 5pm 21st November.

The ballot closes at 5pm on Tuesday 12th December 2023.



GMB believes that this offer is the best achievable purely by negotiation and that only through a campaign of industrial action *might* the offer be improved. **In 2022 GMB members voted by a substantial margin to take action, but the threshold for lawful action (50% of those entitled to vote) was missed – 49.77% of members voted.**

The Environment Agency's new PFBC linked to the Cabinet Office Pay Remit guidance set the context for negotiations. The PFBC was the only mechanism which Treasury and the Cabinet Office would allow the Agency to seek an increase above and beyond the Civil Service Pay remit, which set the maximum as 4.5% of the pay bill, with a further 0.5% of the pay bill for the lowest paid.

The PFBC saw the release of a further 1.35% targeted towards certain groups, all identified in the final offer.

6.35% did not meet the demands in the original pay claim – 13.2% – to take account of inflation at the time the claim was agreed by the unions, and to take account of ten years of falling real wages.

The four unions believed it was our responsibility to negotiate the best possible pay deal, doing all we could to distribute these limited funds. We do not claim that this final offer is all that you would have wished for. The offer has positive and negative elements which you will recognise by reading the offer in detail.

During negotiations, the trade unions tried to ensure a more equitable distribution of the funds Treasury allowed the Agency to use, and there was some progress, albeit **within the 6.35% envelope** allowed by Treasury.

GMB re-iterates the position outlined above. We believe that this offer is the best achievable by negotiation and that the offer might only be improved with a sustained campaign of industrial action.

If members vote to accept the pay offer, payment, backdated as appropriate will be made in January 2024.

Environment Agency Bulletin November 2023



Posted on: 7 November 2023

Pay

The Environment Agency and its Trade Unions met on 6 November to formally start pay negotiations on the 2023/24 pay offer. The discussion in the meeting was constructive and further meetings are



scheduled for later this week and next. Further information will be shared by both the Environment Agency and Trade Unions once negotiations have concluded.

Capita Data Leak

The Information Commissioner continues to investigate the cyber leak which occurred earlier this year.

As soon as we are able to report any progress we will. In the meantime, if any member suspects they have been subjected to fraudulent activity please raise it with your bank/building society as soon as possible, and keep records for the future.

Government Plans

There is less than a year to go to the next general election, but in the meantime the Government is moving forwards with a number of initiatives which may impact the Agency.

Attendance at the workplace

The civil service is moving towards new increased attendance levels for office based workers. The mandated requirement is expected to be around **three days per week** for office based workers.

GMB understanding is that the new attendance levels may be imposed on arm's length bodies such as the Environment Agency by the Secretary of State. The timing of this is odd, as there are ongoing plans to downsize the Whitehall estate in particular because of the success of hybrid working and the increase in productivity.

GMB visits

If you would GMB Regional Officer to visit your workplace to meet with you and colleagues to discuss any issues there are at work, please email kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk and arrangements will be made for a visit. We are happy to include non-members in any meetings to encourage them to join GMB and make us stronger.

In Solidarity,

Kevin Brandstatter

National Officer, GMB

Pay Claim 2023/24

+



Posted on: 31 October 2023

Today GMB and colleagues from other unions met with the EA to discuss pay for 2023/24.

The Union Side went through the pay claim submitted to the EA and published in a previous bulletin.

In discussions EA said they were awaiting for Treasury clearance to commence negotiations, but this had not yet been confirmed. Both sides wish to commence negotiations as soon as possible.

Members will be kept updated with any developments as soon as they arise.

Environment Agency Bulletin September 2023



Posted on: 22 September 2023

Pay 2023/24

The Trade Unions have submitted a pay claim to the Agency. The claim is for:

1. A consolidated pay increase for all staff of not less than 13.2%, representing June 2023 RPI plus 2.5%. A substantial uplift for the lowest paid.
2. We expect the Agency to secure sufficient additional funding to make this possible.
3. A meaningful and transparent mechanism for timely progression within pay scales – not linked to performance markings, but linked to skills, knowledge and experience.
4. A substantial increase in payments for incident response, particularly standby payments.
5. For field ops TM & LTM Level C to receive parity of treatment with staff grades in relation to any performance awards and meaningful conversations to continue with respect to field ops workers moving across onto staff grades.
6. Increases to the current family friendly policies including Maternity and Parental leave provisions.
7. The introduction of payment for all roles across the EA where staff have the relevant Chartered accredited status.



8. To progress seeking accreditation as a Real Living Wage employer and ensure nobody is paid less than the nationally recognised Living Wage Foundation Real Living Wage rate.

Any settlement will be backdated to the anniversary date.

Capita

(Or Capita as some members call it)

Securing information from the Pension Scheme managers is quite challenging as Capita forced them to sign a legally binding Non Disclosure Agreement before sharing even limited information with the Scheme managers. Capita are more concerned about their reputation and future profitability rather than the distress they have caused to thousands of staff and pensioners from the Agency and other Pension schemes.

The Information Commissioners Office have launched an enquiry, which may result in a substantial fine. It is obvious that Capita have been negligent in their approach to safeguarding data and have yet to explain how and why sensitive data was neither encrypted nor held in a secure place. They have yet to explain why the Universities Superannuation Scheme were told about the leak a week ahead of the EA scheme.

We are especially concerned that the private information of GMB members involved in enforcement is in a public domain, and that this should NEVER have happened.

GMB solicitors have been asked for advice about any potential action we can take forward on behalf of members.

RAAC – dodgy concrete!

It's been in the news a lot lately. We understand that a number of EA buildings have been found to have RAAC in walls, ceilings or elsewhere. GMB has been involved in meetings with the Government Property Agency (GPA) and the Office of Government Property (OGP) recently and we have been advised of the following:

- All Government Departments and Arms Length Bodies (such as the EA) have been told to undertake surveys for RAAC. These involve:
- A document search to identify the concrete used in any buildings, if apparent RAAC was definitely not used to take no further action;
- If not the case to undertake a visual inspection of concrete, and if in doubt;
- Undertake an physical inspection involving sampling;



- Remedial action should follow to make buildings safe, and if not possible the building should be closed down.

During the meeting GMB raised the likelihood of asbestos being present in buildings and walls and this was taken on board by the GPA and OGP. Departments with their own property management, such as DEFRA which manages EA property have had instructions to deal with the issue promptly.

The Cabinet Office has also told employers to consult with Health and Safety Representatives, about plans for inspection, to share results and indicate any measures to be taken.

If you are a GMB Shop Steward or GMB Safety Representative, please ask the managers of your workplace what they are doing or have done and remind them of their legal responsibilities to keep you informed and to consult you.

If you are a member in a workplace but have no safety rep, please consider undertaking the role. Training and information will be made available to help you.

GMB is aware that many EA staff are not members of a trade union. Please share this bulletin with colleagues you work with – each of the issues here will be important to them but dealing with them through a trade union is much easier than trying to do it alone.

If colleagues wish to join, please direct them to:

www.gmb.org.uk/join

Where they can join GMB, one of the UK's largest trade unions. If you or your colleagues would like someone from GMB to visit your workplace and discuss the benefits of GMB membership, please contact me directly:

Kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

Kevin Brandstatter, GMB National Officer

GMB In The Environment Agency



Posted on: 5 September 2023

Colleagues



Following a recent meeting regarding the Capita data breach, I submitted a range of questions to the Environment Agency for the EA Pension Fund. The Pension Fund were not able to answer a number of the questions for legal reasons, however I can summarise what I understand to be the situation as follows:

Regarding the security of the information Capita held, and how it was held, the joint trade unions, and the Agency as an employer are awaiting clarity from Capita about this.

Capita has confirmed that information was copied rather than stolen but the effect on members is the same – personal information is in the possession of people who should not have had access to it and the responsibility sits with Capita as the “trusted” contractor and the Environment Agency as the employer or former employer.

To date Capita has not been able to confirm that there has been no malicious activity, e.g attempted fraud on the individual bank accounts etc.

GMB remains concerned that those affected by the loss of data were not told of the incident for weeks and there was a potential for fraudulent activity on their personal accounts.

It seems obvious that Capita have not got a grip of the situation and having told us no data had been sold, (despite the open message from some hackers that they had all the data), is now monitoring for “indications” of leaking or selling data.

The Information Commissioners Office and other regulators are investigating and GMB wants Capita to be totally open and honest about their failure to safeguard personal data and not to simply seek to restore their reputation in order to continue pursuing profits subsidised by the taxpayer.

To date the Pension Fund has been keeping in contact with staff and pensioners by a mix of post and webinars GMB is concerned that postal delays and the lack of access of many retired members to technology is an issue which needs to be tackled

We continue to seek comprehensive information on the attack, the extent of the attack, Capita's response to the “blackmail” attempt, and any firm proposals for compensation. To date Capita have resisted any call for compensation and GMB solicitors have been asked to advise us regarding the next steps.

Further information will be made available as soon

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY BALLOT RESULT



Posted on: 1 March 2023



The outcome of the industrial action ballot is below. Unfortunately, the turnout in the ballot was one vote lower than the legal threshold required for industrial action.

A meeting of reps will take place next week to discuss the result and decide on the next steps.

Kevin Brandstatter
National Officer
GMB

Dear colleagues,

Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 Section 231A

Further to my letter of 7 February 2023, the results of this industrial action ballot were:

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ENTITLED TO VOTE IN THE BALLOT: 216

NUMBER OF VOTES CAST 107

Are you prepared to take part in strike action?

NUMBER OF "YES" VOTES 63

NUMBER OF "NO" VOTES 42

NUMBER OF SPOILED OR OTHERWISE INVALID VOTING PAPERS 2

Are you prepared to take part in action short of a strike?

NUMBER OF "YES" VOTES 84

NUMBER OF "NO" VOTES 16

NUMBER OF SPOILED OR OTHERWISE INVALID VOTING PAPERS 7

THE NUMBER OF VOTES CAST IN THE BALLOT WAS 49.54% OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ENTITLED TO VOTE IN THE BALLOT

VOTE YES FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

+



Posted on: 1 February 2023

Dear Colleague

You will shortly receive a ballot paper from CIVICA asking you to vote for industrial action in the Environment Agency.

Early last year GMB and the other EA unions submitted a pay claim for 10% or the level of inflation, whichever was higher. After months of “negotiations” the Agency closed the negotiations down and imposed a pay “offer”, substantially lower than inflation.

GMB urged the Agency to make representations to the Secretary of State for DEFRA, and to the Treasury in order to secure additional funding to allow a significantly improved pay offer. The Agency refused to do so.

Our colleagues in Unison and Prospect have since undertaken ballots for industrial action involving strikes and “working to rule”, and while to date the Agency has not made an improved pay offer we have continued to seek the re-opening of negotiations.

In the absence of an improved offer, or further negotiations we now need you to vote for industrial action in order to bring the Agency “back to the table”

What are we asking you to do?

Vote YES for strike action – this will be coordinated with Unison and Prospect, who have organised one day strikes so far.

Vote YES for action short of a strike – the ballot paper gives examples of the sort of action you can take which does not involve being on strike.

GMB members have already voted in consultative ballots for industrial action, but this is a **statutory ballot, required by employment law, and provides protection for members and the union from action by the Agency.**

While we recommend members vote yes, it is imperative that your voice is heard, and that you vote in this ballot.

The Ballot will close on 10 March 2023.

The ballot will be open to new GMB members as well so please encourage you colleagues to join GMB – www.gmb.org.uk/join



If you do not receive a ballot paper, please contact your Regional Office, or email:

kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

Kevin Brandstatter
National Officer
GMB

Noticeboard Bulletin – 20-09-2022



Posted on: 20 September 2022

Dear member,

We expect that the Environment Agency will write to all staff today letting you know that they will not be paying the pay increase as per it's offer in October as they had hoped. The trade unions and Environment Agency weren't able to reach agreement. There were 3 main reasons the joint trade unions couldn't agree to the offer being paid are:

- 1.All the trade union consultative pay ballots overwhelmingly rejected the offer and voted in favour of industrial action.
- 2.We believe that a negotiated settlement that provides more money for EA workers is still achievable. The business has said that that it wishes to continue a dialogue with makes this point for us.
- 3.We believe that it could be unlawful for the Environment Agency to impose the offer and are currently seeking legal advice on this point

Therefore, our opinion is that negotiations should continue to consider how an increase in the current offer can be achieved.

James Bevan has publicly said that the offer is "unwise, unjust and unfair" so they must accept they need to do more to attract more money.

The Environment Agency has suggested on four separate occasions it will pursue a Pay flexibility Business Case for "next year". This approach has been unilaterally pulled by the organisation. However, even if this does happen next year, it won't be a silver bullet. We will keep you posted on progress in due course.



Posted on: 13 May 2022

GMB and the joint trade unions have written to **Lucy Hunt**, Chief Operating Officer for the Environment Agency, to urge her to reconsider the agency's non-engagement in pay talks.

It has been 35 days since the department received the collective pay claim for staff, and they continue to stonewall, refusing to meet even to discuss pay with staff representatives. Meanwhile, the cost of living crisis continues unabated, and members are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet on the agency's low pay.

[Read the letter in full](#)

SHARE THIS UPDATE WITH A COLLEAGUE AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO **JOIN GMB!**

Previous Bulletins

Noticeboard Bulletin - 01-12-2022



Posted on: 1 December 2022

GMB and other unions in the EA put forward a pay claim earlier this year to match inflation. In response the EA made an offer of 3% plus £345 which all unions rejected as it was effectively a massive pay cut in real terms.. The latest news is below.

Unions continued to negotiate in good faith and unions consulted members about the offer, and whether members were prepared to take action to secure a higher offer.

All unions consulted members, with Unison and Prospect securing significant votes for action with good turnouts. Unite had a low turnout and have played no further part in negotiations and GMB members response was to reject, but on a poor turnout.

Following the Environment Agency decision to close pay negotiations for 2022, refuse to ask either the Secretary of State or the Treasury for additional funding for a decent pay increase in 2022, GMB



conducted an on line ballot of members.

The ballot was around the action members would be prepared to take to secure a decent pay increase. Unlike the earlier ballot the results were much better:

Turnout 65%

Those voting for strike action 68%

Those voting for action short of a strike 92%

This was a consultative ballot and the result means that I am seeking the authority of the Central Executive for a postal ballot (as required by the Trade Union Acts) for members to vote on strike action and/or action short of a strike.

The law requires that a minimum of 50% of members take part in the ballot for it to be lawful.

In the meantime, GMB is working with both Prospect and Unison around industrial action, rallies and demonstrations.

A further bulletin will go to members shortly with the arrangements for balloting of the membership.

Please let any of your colleagues know what GMB is planning and remind them that they can join GMB by going on line www.gmb.org.uk/join

Kevin Brandstatter
National Officer
GMB

Pay Negotiations 2022



Posted on: 11 January 2022

COMPLETE THE PAY SURVEY!

As an Executive Agency of DEFRA, GMB members in the civil service in general, and the Environment Agency in particular have suffered at the hands of government pay policy. The 2021 pay "offer" from the EA mirrored what the Treasury told Departments to offer, although there was more negotiations around pay for performance which did benefit members. Despite the offer being rejected by three of the four EA



unions, it was implemented by management . This led to below inflation increases for the lowest paid EA staff, and nothing for staff paid above £24,000 per annum.

Negotiations in 2022 will still be influenced by Treasury Pay policy but unions will not know what the pay policy is until some time in early 2022. In the run up to any announcement, GMB will be open with Government and the different departments that sufficient funding should be made available to different departments to enable them to make a pay offer above the level of inflation to make up for the years of austerity.

Other employers in the civil service have offered longer term pay deals to unions without additional funding and this has led to changes in other terms and conditions of employment to release funds to improve pay for some staff.

GMB is now giving you the earliest opportunity to have **your** say on pay. The survey which is attached gives you the chance to influence pay negotiations right at the outset by defining what you want from 2022 Pay and perhaps more importantly to some, what you don't want – or maybe what you don't want to lose.

GMB's ability to win improvements for members is helped enormously by having more members. If you work with colleagues who are not in GMB, please let them know about this survey, and encourage them to join the union. New members can complete this survey as well.

It is simple – from a PC, laptop or smartphone use the internet to go the link above.

Environment Agency's Pay Offer 2021



Posted on: 11 August 2021

GMB in your region will be balloting members in the EA between now and 17 September. To make sure you get your vote, **contact your regional officer today!**

The Offer in Detail:

The Environment Agency pay remit for 2021 Pay was approved by The Secretary of State for DEFRA in June. It implements the policy set down by the Chancellor to "pause" pay increases for the vast majority of staff and award £250 to those paid less than £24,000.

Meetings with the employer followed and the formal offer to trade unions is set out below



The Agency will apply the following:

a fixed value consolidated increase of £250 to employees who earn less than £24,000 (FTE - excluding allowances). The grade rate and grade maximum values for all grades will be unchanged except for Grades 1, 2 and 3 where the grade rate will increase by £250. The grade maximum for Grade 2 will also increase by £250. Where an eligible employee is below the new Grade Rate after applying the £250 increase, they will move to the new Grade Rate.

tapered increases to staff earning between £24,000 and £24,249 (FTE) to a new salary of £24,250 (FTE) to ensure that pay leapfrogging does not occur as a consequence of applying the £250 increases.

non-consolidated performance awards, prorated to reflect individual average weekly working patterns in SOP for the 2020/21 performance year.

Grades	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations
Staff Grades 1 to 7, EOB and Nuclear Grades	£720	£1075

Where an employee has been promoted between 1 st January 2021 and 31st March 2021 and was not eligible for a performance decision they will receive the award for 'met expectations'.

This change will continue to apply for the 2021 pay review and will be continually reviewed at subsequent pay reviews.

Staff in previously agreed career frameworks (Field Operatives, Graduates and Environment Officer A) continue to be eligible to receive pay step movement, in accordance with scheme guidance.

Pay Steps for EOA Induction and Training Stage 1 will increase by £250.

The pay step value for Training Stage 2 will remain unchanged.

Pay Steps for Field Operatives on TM and LTM 1 and 2 only will increase £250.

Pay steps for LTM3 will remain unchanged as they are greater than £24,000 already.

Pay steps for Graduate Trainee Scheme (GTS) grades will remain unchanged as they are greater than £24,000 already.



Apprentice pay is linked to the grade rate for their role, where these increase by £250 apprentice pay will increase proportionally.

Non-consolidated payments equivalent to the amount for 'Met Expectations' (£720) will be made to Team Members and Lead Team Members within Field Operations who are on Pay Step C and who have a 'met expectations' performance rating.

Field Operations employees at Pay Steps A or B are not eligible for this payment as they retain a mechanism by which they may move to higher pay steps through performance.

Any eligible employee in receipt of a pay supplement (red circle) allowance, will receive the proportion of their pay award, which would have been consolidated if they were within the pay range, as a non-consolidated pay award. This will be paid monthly from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

The EA will backdate increases to salaries to 1 July 2021 or appointment date, if later. All payments will be pensionable in line with previous years.

The EA will only pay this year's pay award to employees who leave on or after the date we formally confirm that the pay settlement is agreed. This is the date on which the National Negotiating Group (NNG) joint circular is issued. This includes employees who leave under the Voluntary Early Release Scheme.

The exceptions are:

- Leavers under compulsory redundancy
- Leavers under ill-health retirement
- Leavers transferring to another employer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 (revised 2006).

The value of allowances will remain unchanged.

The EA will continue to operate Local Recognition Scheme arrangements throughout the 2021/22 pay remit year with an overall budget allocation of £500k.

The EA have committed to additional measures to improve the employee offer as follows

EA commits to extending the Joint Reward Committee for the coming year.

At the next Joint Reward Committee meeting the EA will work with unions to confirm priorities to be taken forward over the next 12 months, including the elements highlighted in the pay claim as well as other



Joint Trade Union Improvement Notice Update



Posted on: 3 February 2021

You received an update last week in relation to the response from the EA to the Union Improvement Notice served on Sir James Bevan as Chief Executive of the Environment Agency.

The EAs response did not satisfy the concerns of the trade unions and Donna Rowe-Merriman, TU Side Joint Secretary, wrote to James Bevan on behalf of all the recognised trade unions (Copy attached).

We again stressed the fact that TU members carrying out essential work on sites during the global pandemic are facing significant risks while performing their duties. These risks are evolving and it is important that the EA responds to them to ensure they fulfil their role as an employer to eliminate and reduce the risks for our members, supported by scientific data from SAGE, HSE, and PHE.

UNISON wrote to the HSE on 6 January pressing the HSE on the need for employers to review risk assessments in line with the increased transmission rate of the New Covid variants. We strongly urge the EA, in consultation with the joint unions, to review risk assessments and SSoW considering the emerging science and data. **Key elements for the EA to review are:**

- ONS data released 25/01/21 highlights the numbers of coronavirus deaths amongst the working age population, and there is increased risk identified in many occupations that are mirrored in the EA.
- BBC reported (29/01/21) evidence obtained from Public Health England that shows significant numbers of breakouts in offices both before and during the current lockdown.
- Offices provide the perfect environment for Covid to spread. High density environments, little social distancing and are often sealed, with air can just recirculating pathogens like Covid. There is growing evidence that there is an up to 70% increased chance of contracting Covid in poorly ventilated offices.
- Impacts of New Variants of Covid – The emergence of the UK / Kent variant led directly to the current lockdown and recent evidence shows the South Africa variant is now in



circulation around the UK, with door to door testing in some areas.

- PHE Risk Assessments are now also calling for a review of the wearing of face coverings.

All the trade unions are asking is for the EA to review the current risk assessments in offices and depots where staff are attending in lockdown to ensure they remain covid secure, in consultation with the Joint TU's.

The unions are calling for a consistent approach. Landlords of some buildings where EA colleagues work are making wearing face coverings mandatory in communal areas. Managers in some parts of the Agency itself are advising their staff to wear face coverings in communal areas, and this is the sort of inconsistency that confuses and concerns members.

The light may be at the end of the tunnel supported by the vaccination roll out – but we cannot be complacent at this juncture. Short term implementation of best practice will not be an inconvenience. It will support the reduction in community transmission, thus saving the lives of EA staff, your families, and countless members in the local communities you serve.

We have called on the EA to reconsider the areas outlined in the Union Improvement Notice as a matter of urgency to ensure that all EA employees can be confident that all actions are being taken for them to be safe.

In the meantime, we would encourage you to continue to take a precautionary approach when considering your own health, safety and welfare during this time and have an early discussion with your team leader or manager on any work you consider is no longer essential.

We would like to reiterate the fact that we want to work jointly with the Agency to build on the SSoW that have been implemented so far during this significant point in the progression of the pandemic.

Noticeboard Bulletin - 22-01-2021



Posted on: 22 January 2021

Today GMB and sister trade unions have issued a Union Improvement Notice (UIN) to the Environment Agency.



Union Improvement Notice

This improvement notice is issued on behalf of **Unison**, **Prospect**, **GMB**, and **Unite** unions and is issued by accredited Safety Representatives.

It is issued to **Sir James Bevan** as the **Chief Executive of the Environment Agency** with ultimate responsibility for Health and Safety across the organisation.

Under the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999** the employer has a responsibility to risk assess the workplace and practices undertaken by employees.

We believe that under the legislation there is a responsibility to:

- Identify what could cause injury or illness (the hazard)
- Decide the likelihood of that risk being realised (causing harm)
- Take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this is not possible, control the risk
- Review all assessments, in the light of any new developments

For the purposes of this notice there are no specific premises as it applies to the whole of the estate.

The combined trade unions welcomes the approach that has been taken since the outbreak of Covid-19 and the risk assessment processes that have been put in place.

However on behalf of the combined trades unions **Prospect**, **Unison**, **Unite**, and **GMB** do not believe that enough action has been taken to control the risk of the hazard (Covid-19). Particularly in the light of developments such as the new variant of COVID-19, which is known to significantly increase the risk of transmission there is, under the **MHSWR**, a legal requirement and urgent need to review the risk assessments for workplaces, those working in the field and those undertaking inspections on third party premises. This is in order to ensure consistent standards are applied across the organisation.

As you are aware from our joint meetings held regularly over the last 10 weeks the TU side believe there are affordable, reasonably practicable measures that can be put in place to reduce the risk of infection. These include but are not limited to:

- Making it compulsory to wear face coverings in communal areas at all workplaces
- Improving social distancing, and reducing contact between work bubbles, by for example staggering arrival and departure times.

To date the TU side has not received any indication that management is prepared to consider these measures.

Therefore we are now issuing you with this union improvement notice, to in the light of the new COVID-19 variant and known increased risk of infection, review, consult and re-issue all risk assessments explicitly recognising the increased transmissibility of the new variant of Covid 19, and put in place, as a minimum, the following measures.

- Introduce the compulsory wearing of face coverings in communal areas, and any other areas where there is a risk of communal transmission
- Improving social distancing and reducing contact between work bubbles, by for example staggering delivery and collection times.

We are also request a written response from you by **26 January 2021** informing us of how you intend to implement

This UIN relates to our belief, and examples from you as members, that the current risk assessments and safe systems of work haven't been updated in light of the new Variant Covid (NVC-19) being more transmissible than the original Covid-19. This has led to some local reviews being undertaken and different approaches and standards being applied in different parts of the business. This fragmentation means that best practice is not being shared as well as it should be

The Environment Agency has stated that it's following the Government Advice, and while this is usually a reliable source of information and guidance, it's not the only source of information. With other reliable scientific organisations and the media reporting how significantly more transmissible the NVC-19 is it's reasonable and right to review all of the risk assessments. We may well agree that for some that they are appropriate for you to undertake your work safely. Others may need minor or more significant changes. What we can't say for sure, until they are reviewed, is that they are fit for purpose. The key point is that Government guidance sets the minimum standard and in no way over-rules the employer's legal duty to properly assess risk

We have not undertaken this action lightly, and have been highlighting this to the Environment Agency's management over many weeks. However, they have not changed their position, leaving us with no alternative.



Please continue to use your judgement, raising your concerns with your line manager, and use the dynamic risk assessment where you don't believe you are safe.

Remember, the Environment Agency operates with a philosophy 'that all harm can be prevented'.

Covid 19



Posted on: 18 November 2020

GMB continues to press the EA to ensure that where workers are required to attend workplaces, those workplaces are safe.

Safety reps have been involved in risk assessments, and many of these may need to be reviewed. The reason being that aerosol infection has been recognised as a significant risk. This is an issue because unlike droplets which settle on surfaces and are picked up by contact, aerosols remain in the air for a considerable time, and infection by virus carriers is caused when they breathe virus particles out. Ventilation is the key factor in preventing spread. All ventilation systems should be set up to extract air from the building and replace it with fresh air, rather than circulating air around a building as the aerosol will be moved from room to room or floor to floor increasing the likelihood of infection.

Employers need to recognise that social distancing at 2m indoors, does not prevent infection by aerosol infection. Many employers in the public and private sector have or are about to introduce the compulsory wearing of face coverings, or in the case of some fluid resistant masks as the only way of safeguarding staff from infection.

Lease Cars

Some GMB members will have cars provided by the Agency to enable them to do their job. These cars were offered as part of a package on appointment and the Environment Agency now want to review the use of cars and withdraw them on grounds of economic viability and carbon footprint.

The plan to review and potentially withdraw cars from EA staff has led to a lot of worry and fear among GMB members. If you have been/or will be affected please let us know by an email to kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk, giving some detail in confidence.

GMB is keen to understand the impact of the loss of lease vehicles on your ability to undertake your job, but also how the loss will impact on you as an individual and on your family life.



The UK faces potentially severe challenges in early 2021. The fallout from leaving the European Union, with queues at ports, the continuing pandemic (although a vaccine gives us hope), but more importantly the prospect of dealing with any flooding that might arise owing to forecasts of a wet first three months of 2021.

GMB has raised the potential impact these three ongoing events will have on the Agency in what will be a critical three months.

Your experiences of the last bout of major flooding and its impact on you and work colleagues would be valuable in union discussions with the EA, particularly if there are any lessons that can be learned, which can be applied to lessen the impact on members.

Please let us know by an email to kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk, giving some detail in confidence.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY BALLOT RESULTS:



Posted on: 22 October 2020

The result of our recent pay ballot has been tallied, with 88% of the respondents voting in favour of the deal.

We have written the following notification of results to John Leyland, the Chief of Staff at the Environment Agency:

“ Dear John

I am just following up on the feedback I gave you from GMB members regarding the final EA pay offer and subsequent ballot.

I had a number of emails/messages from GMB members regarding the final pay offer. GMB did not make a recommendation either way in respect of the offer, and this proved to be the correct approach with our members.

The feedback was a recognition that the offer was the best that could be achieved without industrial action, and many of those who voted for it did so reluctantly. There were also several members who chose not to vote at all for similar reasons.



Members recognised that a limited pot of money had been secured by the EA for 2020 which could not resolve all of the pay issues which had built up in the organisation over the years.

While the pot was used to improve the pay and allowances of certain roles, the overwhelming feedback was that the limited amount of money in the EA could not and did not make up for a decade of pay restraint which had seen EA front line workers lose around 20% of their pay in real terms.

A pay increase marginally above the rate of inflation has certainly not met the aspirations of GMB members, nor has it felt like an increase for EA staff who are on the front line seeking to protect the environment, deal with impact of pollution and prevent flood, fire, chemical and other catastrophes from damaging communities and risking lives.

GMB believes that EA staff should be paid substantially more for the important jobs that they do, and that the Agency, the Department and Government recognise this and act accordingly in improve the living standards of staff in 2021.

Regards

Kevin Brandstatter – GMB National Officer, Civil Service

Environment Agency Ballot Now Closed!



Posted on: 13 October 2020

Thank you to everyone who voted!

The details of the deal on the table are available below!

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



Posted on: 1 October 2020



HAVE YOUR SAY ON YOUR PAY

The GMB Ballot on the Environment Agency Pay offer for 2020 is now open and will close on **Tuesday 13 October 2020**.

The ballot is on-line and instructions on how you can vote are being circulated separately.

MEMBERS VOTE HERE!



(You'll need your membership number, email address, and postcode - if those have changed [update your details here](#))

As an Agency of DEFRA, the Secretary of State is required to approve the EA pay remit and this was confirmed on **27 July 2020**.

Since that time GMB and sister trade unions have been meeting EA on a regular basis both formally and informally to negotiate. GMB has been involved in all discussions and has constructively engaged with EA management to secure the best possible offer.

The context for our demands for a good increase for EA staff included:

- The enormous amount of work EA staff undertook to deal with the extreme flooding that affected many parts of the country over the last winter;
- The challenges staff faced as a result of the Pandemic.

The detail of the offer is set out below, and if agreed will be paid in November 2020, backdated to 1 July 2020.

After the period of negotiations EA made a formal pay offer for 2020 based on the following:

- A fixed value consolidated increase based on a 2% of the Grade Rate for each grade where employees have 'Exceeded', 'Met' or 'Approached' Expectations.
- An additional increase to the Grade Rate for Grades 1, 2 and 3 by £250 and for Grades 4 (including EOB), 5, 6, 7 and Nuclear grades by £100.
- With a proviso that where an employee is below the new Grade Rate after applying the fixed value award, they will move to the new Grade Rate.

The cash value of the increases to be paid for each grade and new grade rates is set out below:

	Grade Fixed Value Award	New Grade Rate Value
SG1	£346	£18,144
SG2	£378	£19,517
SG3	£465	£23,963



SG4 (inc EOB)	£562	£28,785
SG5	£712	£36,389
SG6	£907	£46,374
SG7	£1,139	£58,174
ND	£747	£38,190
NG1a	£1,093	£55,864
NG1b	£1,346	£68,757
N2	£1,646	£84,027

Grade Maximums will not increase. Any individual award which would have the effect of exceeding the Grade Maximum will result in the excess being paid as a non-consolidated sum. This will be paid monthly from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. This approach recognises colleagues within each pay grade equally for their contribution as expectations of their role are similar and ensures that colleagues will receive the same amount in cash terms.

EA will pay the following non-consolidated performance award values which will be pro-rated to reflect individual average weekly working patterns in SOP for the 2019/20 performance year.

For Staff Grades 1 to 7, EOB and Nuclear Grades

Met Expectation	Exceeded Expectations	
£710	£1,070	

Additionally, where an employee had been promoted between 1 st January 2020 and 31st March 2020 and was not eligible for a performance decision EA will pay the award for 'met expectations' to them.

This change will apply for the 2020 pay review and will be continually reviewed at subsequent pay reviews.

Environment Officer A



EA will revise Environment Officer A (EOA) pay steps to the values below which will bring them into closer alignment with Staff Grade 3.

Pay Stage -- 2020 Value

Induction -- £23,196

Training Stage 1 (Link to Grade 3 Grade Rate) -- £23,963

Training Stage 2 -- £24,630

Graduate Trainees

Pay steps for Graduate Trainee Scheme (GTS) grades will increase by 2% + £100

Field Operatives

Pay Steps for Field Operatives on TM and LTM will increase by 2% + £250

EA will make a non-consolidated payment of £710 to Team Members and Lead Team Members within Field Operations who are on Pay Step C and who have a 'met expectations' performance rating.

Field Operations employees at Pay Steps A or B are not eligible for this payment as they retain a mechanism by which they may move to higher pay steps through performance.

Red Circles

Any employee in receipt of a pay supplement (red circle) allowance, will receive the proportion of their pay award, which would have been consolidated if they were within the pay range, as a non-consolidated pay award. We will pay this monthly from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. 1.9 We will backdate these increases to salaries and allowances to 1 July 2020 or appointment date, if later.

All payments will be pensionable in line with previous years.

EA will only pay this year's pay award to employees who leave on or after the date we formally confirm that the pay settlement is agreed. This is the date on which the National Negotiating Group (NNG) joint circular is issued. This includes employees who leave under the Voluntary Early Release Scheme. The exceptions are:

Leavers under compulsory redundancy



Leavers under ill-health retirement

Leavers transferring to another employer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 (revised 2006)

Allowances

EA will increase the following allowances by the value stated:

Allowance Increase

London weighting inner 2% (rounded to nearest £)

London weighting outer 2% (rounded to nearest £)

Overtime attendance allowance 2%

Pilotage allowance – per annum for 1st 12 acts 2%

Pilotage allowance – per claim after 1st 12 acts 2%

Standby – complete week (full calendar week (7 days)) 5%

Standby – less than one week (Mon – Friday) 5%

Standby – less than one week (Saturday and Sunday) 5%

Standby on non worked Friday/Saturday/Sunday 5%

Standby – Additional daily payment for bank holidays 5%

Standby – Additional payment for Christmas Day 5%

Call out while not on standby 5%

Call out while not on standby Xmas day 5%

Incident Response Pay Flood Warning On Standby 5%

Incident Response Pay Flood Warning Not On Standby 5%

Incident Response Pay Fixed Rate On Standby 5%



August 2018 Incident Response Pay Fixed Rate Not On Standby 5%

Incident Support Payment 5%

Incident Resilience Payment Rostered Working Mon Fri 5%

Incident Resilience Payment Rostered Working Sat Sun 5%

Incident Resilience Payment Rostered Working Bank Holiday

5% Incident Resilience Payment Rostered Working Christmas Day 5%

EA will introduce a Critical National Infrastructure Essential Operator Allowance for specific duty roles at Thames Barrier. This allowance will be effective from the date the proposed contractual change is accepted.

EA will introduce a group market forces factor for Catchment Engineer and Deputy Catchment Engineer roles in FCRM. This allowance will be effective from 1st July 2020.

EA will introduce a change to Incident Response Pay, sometimes referred to as incident overtime, for staff undertaking incident response activity outside normal working hours (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm). As part of this year's pay review a small number of critical roles will now claim Incident Response Pay Fixed rate for incident response with effect from 1st November 2020.

This will apply to the following roles:

- Environment Management Duty Officer (EMDO)
- Environment Management Site Controller (EMSC)
- Flood Incident Duty Officer (FIDO)
- Field Operations Duty Officer (FODO)

Special Paid Leave

This will increase for Reservists and Special Constables from 12 days to 15 days.

Over the next 12 months, Unions and management will review the following:

Pay Equality;



Allowances and Awards

Workforce Reforms,

Pay priorities and pay progression

GMB Recommendation

GMB regards this offer as the best that can be achieved by negotiation and secured above inflation pay rises for all members, and tackled issues raised in last year's pay negotiations by members particularly in respect of EOA grades and the allowance structure.

GMB negotiators do not make any recommendation to accept or reject this offer, but will be guided by how members vote.

Kevin Brandstatter

GMB National Civil Service Officer

