

Barnet faces bill of tens of millions in London's first council equal pay claim



Barnet Council could be liable for tens of millions of pounds as it faces the first local authority equal pay claim ever launched in London.

GMB Union has begun proceedings on behalf of around 400 women working as school support staff at the council.

They say there are structural pay differences between members of staff working in roles staffed predominantly by women and those roles carried out mostly by men.



Barnet's Refuse Staff, who are overwhelmingly men, currently receive a full day's wages even if they complete their work early.

Some roles within the council's Refuse Department have also been paid a retention bonus, which school support staff have not received despite serious issues with retention in schools in London and across the country.

GMB has attempted to settle the claim through negotiations, but the council's Head of HR has refused to meet with the union since January.

If successful, members will be able to claim for up to 6 years pay differential, as well as for the time it takes to settle the case.

Consequently, the longer the case takes to settle, the larger the potential costs will be for Barnet.

Beverley Gunning, GMB Barnet Branch Secretary, said:

"It is shameful that we must take Barnet Council to court to make them do the right thing, but we will do whatever is necessary to fight for the money our members are owed after years of systemic gender pay discrimination.

"The work of school support staff is vital, and these members are already some of the council's lowest paid staff.

"These loyal and committed workers deserve for Barnet to settle the full amount owed, set things right for the future, and issue an unreserved apology from the council.

"The longer it takes to settle this claim, the larger the settlement will grow.

"Barnet Council is running out of time."

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Member requiring help?

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