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By email:  
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### **GMB Air Products – Pay Claim 2026 PG Operators**

The GMB has conducted a survey of its members in respect of their 2026 pay aspirations.

#### **Background**

- The GMB is unable to ignore the current inflationary volatility which will continue to be faced by employees for some time.
- Substantial increases in the cost of living over recent years continue into 2026 and this will significantly reduce the value of staff wages.
- Wage growth is required to ensure living standards are maintained.

Inflation as of November 2025 – significant price rises by item (12-month change)

#### Retail Prices Index (RPI) – November 2025

Item	%
Beef	28.3
Water and other charges	26.1
Coffee and other hot drinks	14.3
Butter	13.4
Sweets and chocolates	12.7
Canteen meals	9.2
Vehicle tax and insurance	9.1
Books and newspapers	8.8
Lamb	7.9
Pork	6.6
Maintenance of motor vehicles	6.6
Bus and coach fares	6.2
Mortgage interest payments	6.1
Rail fares	5.8
Food excluding seasonal	5.7
Tea	5.7
Other tobacco	5.7
Soft drinks	5.6
Clothing and footwear	5.6
Council tax and rates	5.4
Entertainment and other rec.	5.2
Foreign holidays	5.2
Food and catering	5.1
Food	5.1
Catering	5.1

## Living Wage Foundation Rates

In mid to late October, the independent Living Wage Foundation sets a voluntary living wage rate based on its own analysis of cost-of-living pressures. The Foundation also publishes a separate Living Wage rate for London. 16,000 employers covering 490,000 workers reportedly pay the Foundation Living Wage.

### Independent Foundation Living Wage hourly rates – 2025/26 (from October 2025)

	2024/25 rate	2025/26 rate	Increase
Foundation Living Wage	£12.60	£13.45	6.5%
London Living Wage	£13.85	£14.80	6.6%

[Source: Living Wage Foundation](#)

The Living Wage Foundation says:

*“The real Living Wage rates are higher because they are independently-calculated based on what people need to get by. That’s why we encourage all employers that can afford to do so to ensure their employees earn a wage that meets the costs of living, not just the government minimum.”*

While there remains in some quarters a preoccupation when determining pay to focus on CPI, we believe that CPI consistently understates the real level of inflation for the following reasons:


- CPI fails to adequately measure one of the main costs facing most households in the UK – housing. Almost two-thirds of housing in the UK is owner occupied, yet CPI almost entirely excludes the housing costs of people with a mortgage
- CPI is less targeted on the experiences of the working population than RPI, since CPI covers non-working groups excluded by RPI – most notably pensioner households where 75% of income is derived from state pensions and benefits, the top 4% of households by income and tourists
- CPI is calculated using a flawed statistical technique that consistently underestimates the actual cost of living rises faced by employees

## Conclusion

- Members seek a significant pay rate increase to base rates & flow throughs
- Improvements to annual leave allowance
- Opt in to Night Shifts

The GMB have sought to present a pay claim which we believe to be sustainable even in the present challenging situation. We are mindful of our responsibility to all our members to seek a real and beneficial pay increase that rewards employees for their dedication, skill and hard work. We believe that a significant improvement in pay is needed to keep up with the true cost of living currently faced by all employees.

Yours sincerely



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