

# Job Evaluation – School Support Staff

## Frequently asked questions



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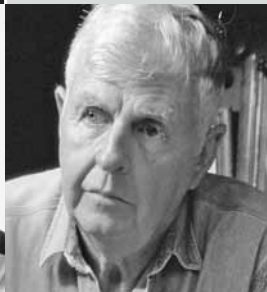
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*These frequently asked questions have been  
developed to answer some of your queries  
about job evaluation*



# General Questions

## **Why is the County Council evaluating everyone's jobs? Can't we just keep things as they are?**

The Equal Pay Act of 1970 requires that all employers ensure that pay systems are not gender-biased. Carrying out a job evaluation exercise is the best way of achieving this. The 1997 Single Status Agreement committed all Councils to job evaluation and the 2004 pay deal also required that local authorities undertake a pay review.

## **Why has the council used two different job evaluation schemes?**

The Council supports the use of the National Job Evaluation scheme, because it is the only scheme that has been developed specifically for use in local government and that has the backing of the trade unions. However, the scheme is only designed to be applied to jobs that go up to spinal column point 49 on the national pay spine, so we had to use another scheme above this level. When it looked at the various schemes that are available, the Council decided that the Hay scheme should be used at the higher level this was because it was considered that the Hay scheme would give better differentiation between different jobs at that level. The criteria for determining if the Hay Scheme applies is:

1. The job requires a full professional qualification or an equivalent level of Organisational/school policy and procedural knowledge (i.e. would score level 6 or higher for Knowledge in the National Job Evaluation scheme or level E for Technical Know-how in the Hay scheme), OR
2. The post holder manages a discrete function or activity, OR
3. The post holder is the Council's corporate expert on a specialised technical subject

All posts in schools that have been evaluated using the Hay scheme met the first criteria 1. There were no posts which met criteria 2 or 3.

## **Why were school support staff not evaluated at the same time as other County Council staff?**

The County Council took a decision that the Job Evaluation exercise would be undertaken on a phased basis. The first phase covered senior staff and phase two covered all other non school support staff. Because of the different employment relationship which exists for school staff it was decided that they would be undertaken in the third phase once the first two phases were complete.

## **Why have some schools not undertaken job evaluation as part of the County Council's scheme?**

Staff employed in Community Schools are all in law employees of the County Council and therefore all support staff in those schools have been included. Staff in Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools are employed by the Governing Body and therefore each Governing Body in those schools has had to determine whether to join in the County Council process or to undertake a separate job evaluation exercise.

## **Who designed the National Job Evaluation scheme?**

The National Job Evaluation scheme was set up by the national Employers Organisation and the three recognised trade unions: UNISON, the GMB and the TGWU.

## **Can you explain why the County Council chose the National Job Evaluation scheme and how the pay scales were set?**

The proposed pay scales were arrived at through negotiation with the recognised trades unions, based on a process called pay modelling. The pay structure was agreed in April 2008 as part of the County Council's agreement with the recognised Trade Unions on Single Status. Options were considered but were discounted for one of three reasons:

- too many people facing a reduction

- they were unaffordable
- they were not equal pay proof.

## **Is job evaluation about cutting costs?**

No, far from it. The fair pay strategy cost the County Council more money. In addition it is anticipated that the implementation of JE in schools will cost an additional significant sum both in terms of back pay cost and on going costs. What the pay strategy is definitely about is making sure we reward all employees fairly and equally, regardless of their sex.

## **Which trade unions have been involved in the negotiations to develop the Council's new pay structure?**

UNISON, the GMB and the TGWU are the three trade unions who have been involved in the pay structure negotiations.

## **Does Term-Time Only or other part time patterns of working make a difference?**

Being employed on a term-time only basis will not make any difference to your evaluation. The job evaluation schemes include specific advice to ensure that part-time workers are not disadvantaged. This is especially true for those factors that require assessments of frequency and duration, for example, Physical Demands, Mental Demands and Working Conditions (under the National JE Scheme). In these situations it is the proportion of working time, and not a measure of hours or days that is used to evaluate those aspects of the job. So if you spend 50% of your time working outdoors, then you will be receiving the same evaluation as a full-time member of staff who spends 50% of their time outside.

## **The Teaching Assistant contract is different (less hours) how will that be treated?**

Teaching assistants' hours result from a national agreement. On this basis they will be treated as

full-time as long as they work 32.5 hours per week.

## **Will my job change?**

No your job will not change as a result of JE. We asked you to describe your duties and responsibilities as they existed in September 2008. It was to assist in the evaluation process that we asked schools to ensure that job descriptions were up to date; again this was to ensure that they accurately reflect current duties.

## **Is the evaluation at 2002 or as now?**

We are evaluating your job as it is at September 2008. This is for the following reasons:

- We accept that there has been very considerable change in support staff roles since the introduction of workforce remodelling.
- To evaluate without taking into account these changes will create unnecessary anxiety as evaluating previously duties may result in staff being placed into pay protection which can be avoided by evaluating current duties.

We also accept that staff are more interested in what they will be earning tomorrow, not what they may have earned 6 years ago.

However, staff who feel that a previous role may generate back pay can have that role evaluated once we have completed the initial evaluations

## **What about workloads?**

Job evaluation will take into account the level of work related pressure in the form of interruptions and conflicting demands, however workload is not a factor in evaluations. JE assumes that workloads are within reasonable levels. Where there are issues of workload these should be addressed through staffing levels and not through JE.

## **Why have you used 2008 as the date for the evaluation of my post?**

In the Autumn Term 2008 we asked all schools to ensure we had an agreed up to date job description for September 2008, which we used to

establish the range of job groups and role profile information. This is therefore the most up to date and consistent information we have for all posts in schools. We will use that date as the base point for the implementation process and the start date for assimilation onto the new grade

## **Who decides the points I will get?**

A Job Analyst has undertaken the evaluation of your post. Each post has then been through a rigorous checking procedure to ensure that the evaluation is fair and consistent. The checking is done by a joint panel made up of managers and trade union reps. The panel has looked at your job on four separate occasions. The first time the panel look at your job is when it is first evaluated. On that occasion the panel will go through each of the factors individually. The second time the panel look at your job is in a group of similar roles, i.e. all technical support roles. This is to check that your evaluation is fair and consistent. Again the panel will go through factor by factor. The panel will then look at your job in its organisational structure i.e. the school, again to check for consistency and again by each individual factor. Lastly the panel will have a look of the all the posts in score order as a final check to make sure that the evaluations are consistent.

## **Will all my qualifications count?**

Job evaluation will of course allow for qualifications and experience to be taken into account, but only where these are consistent with the duties of the job. We will also take into account person specifications, but these are drawn up for recruitment purposes, so they don't always reflect what the actual knowledge requirements are for a competent job holder to perform their duties. So if you have a Masters in Business Administration, but your job is all about photocopying and filing, then that qualification requirement isn't going to be taken into account as it is clearly inconsistent with duties and responsibilities.

## **Who decided if I am in a job group?**

In October 2008 we published a list of what we thought at the time were the likely job groups, and called them 'common roles'. During this process we asked schools to provide us with

copies of reviewed job descriptions and person specifications. Based on the information that the JE Team received we have produced a list of job families.

## **Does the size of school I work in make a difference?**

There will be a difference if the size of the school impacts on your role. Examples where there will be a difference would be in the responsibility for budgets, staff in bigger schools may well have larger budgets to manage; or caretakers in larger schools may have more complex responsibilities for specialist resources such as swimming pools.

## **Do VA and foundation schools have to be evaluated?**

Staff in voluntary aided and foundation schools are employed by their governing body so they are not automatically included in this process. However the Council has recommended that VA and foundation schools participate as JE will deliver a fair and transparent mechanism for determining pay. It will also eradicate any equal pay issues within the school.

## **When will I get my back pay to?**

In approaching JE for centrally employed staff the Council adopted one date for implementation for the Hay and NJE schemes which was the 1st April 2002. However, the funding for school budgets is more complex and accurate information on many jobs as far back as 2002 is no longer available. However the County Council has had on going discussions with the recognised trade unions to seek to agree an approach to ensure that overall school support staff receive a back pay payment where the grade of their job goes up, based on their individual employment history. It is not intended to seek to evaluate all job changes retrospectively back to 2002. Further details on this will follow as soon as the discussions with the trade unions have been finalised.

## **What if I don't agree with the evaluation?**

If you feel that the evaluation has not properly reflected the duties and responsibilities of your

post then you will be able to appeal. Details on the appeals process is included in the information that has been sent to your school or through <http://bigissues.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/index/bigissues/> or Wired.

## **What if I didn't complete the profile matching and been given an indicative outcome what does that mean?**

Where we have not received a completed profile the evaluation has been undertaken on an indicative basis using the most up to date job description information we have about your post, matched against the standard profiles. However we cannot guarantee this is an accurate match to you duties and responsibilities. For example if you manage staff the Job Description will not reflect the number of staff and therefore the evaluation will have assumed that it is a low number and awarded a lower level on Responsibility for Supervision.

If you were unable to complete the matching process because you were absent on long-term sick leave, your manager may have completed the matching process on your behalf if you were unable to participate. Generally speaking you were required to participate in the matching process and it is obviously greatly in your interests to actively engage in this process.

## **What information should I have been given before completing the profile match?**

When we sent out the profile information we asked Head Teachers to ensure that all staff had access to all profiles, especially those for your job group. You will have had the opportunity to agree with your Head teacher which profile best matched your post and also where your job varied from the standard profile asked to add additional information. It is that information which has been used to evaluate your post.

## **What happens if I was not given the range of profiles to consider or not asked to agree the information submitted?**

If you did not agree the information being submitted and included on the form you signed you should have tried to resolve it initially at school and if not register a dispute for external resolution. If you were unable to raise a dispute or not given access to all the relevant profiles for your group we have asked you to let us know separately if this is the case. You can do that by contacting the Customer services Centre on 08449 80 80 80

You will now have the opportunity to register an appeal against the outcome of your evaluation (see section on Appeals).

## **When will the new pay scales be implemented?**

Following the publication of the scores the new pay scale will be implemented on a phased basis during the Summer Term. This will mean that you may not see any change for a few months but will effectively be from 1 April 2011.

## **Why can't the Council give lifelong pay protection?**

We cannot give lifelong protection because this would create a further equal pay liability by perpetuating differences in pay rates between male and female workers. The County Council has however agreed to apply the same pay protection arrangements for this stage of the JE process to ensure that school support staff receive the same pay protection as other staff evaluated previously. The County Council changed the pay protection scheme in April 2010 and therefore, following this first stage of the schools process, any subsequent changes to grade will be covered by the new pay protection scheme.

## **What happens if I lose money?**

If your evaluation results in your pay reducing you will be able to access the Council's pay protection policy. The current pay protection policy

is available on the Big Issues Website or from your Head Teacher. The start date for your pay protection will be 1 April 2011.

### **When will my pay change if I am protected?**

This will depend on which option you chose. No one will lose pay as a result of Job Evaluation at least for 3 years i.e. there will be no loss of pay before April 2014 at the earliest.

### **Which is the best pay protection option for me?**

This is a decision you must make for yourself. To make that decision, you may find it helpful to work out what your total pay would be, over a five year period, under each of the different options. You may also wish to take into account the amount of difference between your old grade and your new grade and what the drop in pay would be at the end of the protection period (if any) under each of the options. You should also consider how close you are to retirement.

### **Once you select a pay protection option can you change your mind and ask to choose a different one?**

No, you won't be able to change your mind once you have chosen your pay protection option.

### **What happens if my pay goes up?**

We will work to ensure that we implement the higher pay as soon as we can. We will also publish details of how we will pay any back pay owed although this will be a phased basis over a period of months starting later in the Summer Term 2011.

### **Will my school be responsible for paying my back pay?**

It has been agreed through the School's Forum that the back pay costs will be met 50% by the County Council and 50% from overall school budgets. The schools contribution has already been identified and set aside to cover back pay payments as they roll out. No individual school

budget will have to meet the cost of back pay for its staff.

### **I have been receiving a consolidated rate of pay to include payments for call outs, lettings, overtime etc. Will I be able to continue to receive a consolidated rate of pay?**

No. The evaluation of your posts will be based on the core duties and responsibilities and will determine the grade for the post. Payments for additional duties such as those you have been undertaking should be made in accordance with the agreed rates as outlined in the information booklet sent to the school and the Big Issues website.

Initially you will have the option to protect your pay to include the consolidated payments, as outlined in the pay protection policy or to move to your new grade and to receive additional payments for the additional work as outlined above.

### **What if there have been changes to my job since September 2008?**

If your job has changed significantly since September 2008 your post may have to be re evaluated. Evaluation of newly established or changed jobs after September 2008 will be started later this year. We will be asking for information on these posts when the current evaluation and implementation phase is completed. It is recognised that a number of Teaching Assistants have moved to a new TA Grade since September 2008 and that in many cases this will not require the post to be re-evaluated a separate process to deal with these cases has been agreed and is detailed in the information pack.

### **Can my Head Teacher and / or Governing Body change my grade?**

Once your job has been evaluated, that should remain the grade for your post. Changes to the grade should only be made where the duties and responsibilities change significantly. Where they do change significantly the post must be re evaluated before any grade changes take place.

## **I have now left the school, how do I make my claim for Back Pay?**

Back pay for School Support Staff, has yet to be agreed by Nottinghamshire County Council. Any previous employees wishing to claim any potential back pay should send a letter stating name, address, employee number and national insurance number to the JE team at County Hall.

The individual will receive an acknowledgement letter, and will then be contacted by JE team again once implementation begins- this date has not yet been agreed but is likely to be during 2011. If there is a change of address please update the team of any changes.

## **Where can I get independent financial advice to make sure I make the right decisions about my pension and pay protection options?**

The County Council cannot provide financial advice. However, you can find a local financial advisor by going online to [www.searchifa.co.uk](http://www.searchifa.co.uk). Alternatively, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau. We have provided detailed advice and guidance in the guidance document we have produced, copies of which are available in your school and electronically <http://bigissues.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/index/bigissues/> or Wired.

## **Appeals**

### **I am part of a large group of people that do the same job. All our jobs have been evaluated together. But, I feel my work is very different to that of my colleagues and that I should be able to appeal separately against my job score. What can I do?**

If you, or a number of your colleagues believe that your job is significantly different to the rest of your group, and your manager agrees, you will need to contact the Job Evaluation Team who will be able to advise you.

## **Who will consider my job score appeal?**

Your job score appeal will be considered by a group of three people called the joint review panel. To make sure the review is done fairly, two of the people on the panel will not have been involved in the original evaluation of your job. Once the panel has considered your appeal you will be informed of their decision within ten working days. There is no further right to appeal.

## **What do I do if my head teacher does not support my decision to appeal?**

Talk to your head teacher and explain why you believe you have a valid reason to appeal. Show them the evidence and information you have to support your appeal. If your head teacher decides that they cannot support your appeal, and you can't resolve the difference informally, you may consider using the disputes procedure in the appeals procedure. You can find a copy of the Appeals Procedure on Wired or the County Council's Big Issues site on the internet In this situation please contact the job evaluation team and your trade union representative for advice.

## **Can my job score go down as well as up if I appeal?**

Yes. If you appeal there is no guarantee that your job score will go up or stay the same. It can go down as well.

## **Can I keep appealing against my job score until I get the answer I want?**

No. You have only one opportunity to appeal. You can withdraw your appeal at any time.

## **If I appeal against the score for one factor used to evaluate my job, will it affect the other factors and my overall job score?**

Yes. If you appeal against one factor it could impact on the score for another factor. For example, if a job has been awarded a level



two on working conditions, because the job holder spends a large proportion of their time working outdoors, but they appeal against the score for mental demands, on the grounds that they spend 75% of their time writing reports, then the panel may have to adjust the score on both factors.

**If I'm part of a large job group, like a midday supervisor, or teaching assistant, do all the postholders have to agree to submit an appeal?**

The majority of postholders would have to agree to submit an appeal. This is because the job score could go down as well as up as a result of the appeal.

**If I think that my job is comparable with a similar job in the school or another school can appeal on this basis?**

No comparability is not a grounds for appeal – the grounds are

- a. the scheme has been wrongly applied; or
- b. there is new or better information available to support the evaluation
- c. An indicative evaluation was undertaken

**If I feel I've taken on new responsibilities and duties in my job since September 2008 and they're not reflected in my job description, can I use this as a reason to appeal?**

No. The current published evaluations are based on duties and responsibilities of a post at September 2008. Where there has been a significant change to the duties and responsibilities of the post this will need to be submitted as a changed post from the date of the change.

**Has the appeals process been agreed by the trade unions?**

Yes. The appeals process has been jointly agreed by the County Council's management and the trade unions and is the same applied centrally.

**How do I find out more about how to appeal and the National Job Evaluation scheme?**

The appeals procedure is detailed on WIRED and the Big Issues website and also in the information pack to schools.

**What if I can't access the internet?**

You can ask your Head Teacher for the information or contact the JE team through the Customer Services Centre on 08449 808182 who will arrange for the information to be sent to you.

**Where can I get more information?**

You can get more information from:

- Your head teacher or Your JE contact
- Your TU Rep
- Big Issues website or WIRED
- Calling the Customer Services JE Helpline on 08449808182
- Writing to: Job Evaluation Team,  
County Hall,  
West Bridgford,  
Nottm  
NG2 7QP

E mail – [nje.schools@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:nje.schools@nottsc.gov.uk)

# Notes

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### **Contacting us**

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