



PAY CLAIM FOR 2025-2026

Passenger Transport Forum: Pay Claim 2025 for employees of Transport for Greater Manchester, West Midlands and West Yorkshire Combined Authorities.

1. Introduction

This pay claim seeks to facilitate a modest recovery in the purchasing power of staff wages, which has been eroded over many years. However, it is important to recognise that addressing this long-standing pay erosion will take several years, even if consistent pay increases above inflation were applied over time.

The claim also seeks to restore the competitiveness of wages within the sector, especially as members report that declining real wages are significantly impacting recruitment and retention. This, in turn, threatens the ability of each of the Authorities to deliver services effectively.

Our demands are clear and straightforward to tackle low pay through reform of the pay spine and to recover the losses in pay value caused by years of pay restraint.

We demand:

- A single-year deal.
- An increase for all staff of 5% + RPI (Jan 2025 3.6%) on basic pay, with all pay scale points increased by that amount.
- Introduction of a 4-day working week with a proportionate reduction in the working week without loss of pay, with pro rata changes for those working part time or compressed hours.
- An increase in all allowances to include where applicable first aid, fire marshals, relocation, standby, callout, Market Factor Supplements, travel, accommodation and subsistence. In future, allowances to be index-linked to an agreed pay point for each employer.
- The 3 employers should not be using scale points below £15 per hour.
- The upholding of the commitment made in the 2024-2025 pay offer, with an update to the PTF on the elements that were to be negotiated locally from the 2024-2025 agreements, including family-friendly policies, equality pay gaps, and standby/callout arrangements. Furthermore, requesting the prompt and satisfactory conclusion of any outstanding negotiations related to these matters, without any further delay.
- A free bus and tram pass for all staff, including their spouse/partner and children.
- A salary sacrifice scheme for staff to buy electric vehicles.

2. Rationale for Claim

This pay claim is grounded in a thorough understanding of the views and needs of our members, as reflected in the 2025 pay surveys. The survey responses indicate that members strongly feel the need for a substantial increase in core pay that accurately reflects the essential work they do and also a shorter working week.

According to research conducted by the 4 Day Week Global Campaign, 63% of organisations find it easier to attract and retain staff with a four-day work week; and 78% of employees with a four-day week are happier and less stressed.

It is essential to recognise that the responsibilities of Passenger Transport workers differ significantly from those of Local Government NJC staff. The level of public service, the specialised skills required, and the nature of the work all justify a separate bargaining framework distinct from the NJC. Last year's pay negotiations reaffirmed the importance of this distinct framework, ensuring that Passenger Transport workers are treated fairly, with appropriate recognition of the unique demands of their roles.

Therefore, it is vital to continue respecting the distinct bargaining framework for this group of workers. The outcomes of these negotiations must be tailored to address the sector's specific challenges, including long shifts, unsocial working hours, on-call duties, and the often stressful, public-facing nature of the work. Furthermore, it's important to recognise the additional responsibilities and pressures that ongoing public transport reforms will have on those working in the sector, as regions bring bus and/or rail operations under public control.

3. Falling Value Of Pay

Over the past fifteen years, the wages in Passenger Transport have consistently lagged behind the rising cost of living, leading to a significant decline in living standards for staff. This gap has resulted in a substantial reduction in the real value of pay, leaving workers with thousands of pounds less than they would have earned if their wages had tracked the cost of living.

The last few years have been especially tough, with the cost of living seeing its sharpest increases in over 40 years. In 2022, inflation surged by 11.6%, followed by 9.7% in 2023, while wage growth has remained far below these levels.

The results of our recent member survey clearly highlight the significant financial strain many of our members are enduring. A staggering 61.9% of members report having no access to savings, while 50.3% have found themselves taking on extra debt just to make ends meet. Nearly 39% of respondents are struggling to keep up with mortgage or rent payments, and 29% have been forced to prioritise bills over food—forcing them into difficult choices that no one should have to face.

These figures paint a stark picture of the reality many workers are grappling with, and they underscore the urgent need for action to address the growing financial pressures on staff. The rising cost of living has far outpaced wage growth, leaving workers in an increasingly vulnerable position.

Furthermore, inflation is still running at 3.6%, led by major jumps in housing costs - mortgage interest payments are surging by 18%¹, private rent is rising by 9%² - average household energy costs jumped by 10%³ and water charges rose by 8%⁴. This discrepancy strongly supports the need for a substantial pay rise in 2025-2026 to help close the gap between earnings and the cost of living.

Furthermore, the last decade and a half has seen enormous jumps in the basic costs shown below⁵.

Expenditure Item	House prices	Bus & coach fares	Electricity	Gas
Price rise 2010 - 24	73%	93%	144%	92%

For the value of staff wages not to fall back even further, they must at least keep pace with rises in the cost of living.

4. Affordability

The affordability of this pay claim is evident from the most recent accounts for the three employers. The surpluses generated in the 2023/24 financial year demonstrate that each employer has more than enough financial capacity to meet the cost of a decent pay rise.

In summary, the financial positions of the three employers clearly demonstrate their ability to afford a fair pay rise. The surplus and reserves available are more than sufficient to ensure that employees receive the pay rise they deserve, without impacting the financial health of the employers.

Therefore, it is clear that the requested pay rise is **affordable and justifiable**.

5. Conclusion

There can be no doubt that all the Passenger Transport staff have seen the value of their earnings fall disastrously, with evidence suggesting that they are also falling behind pay settlements for comparable jobs.

This pay claim represents a very reasonable estimate of the reward staff deserve for their dedication, skill, and hard work. It is the minimum consolidated award improvement in pay needed to maintain workforce morale for delivering a consistently high-quality services. We therefore urge employers to prioritise improving pay and reducing hours in this coming round of negotiations to ensure that PTF staff are compensated adequately for their critical work.

¹ Office for National Statistics, UK Consumer Price Inflation, December 2024

² Office for National Statistics, Private Rent and House Prices UK, January 2025

³ Cornwall Insight, Forecast for Price Cap, November 2024

⁴ Office for National Statistics, UK Consumer Price Inflation, December 2024

⁵ Office for National Statistics, UK Consumer Price Inflation Tables, December 2024, for bus /coach, electricity and gas prices, HM Land Registry Index, House Price Index, November 2024 for house prices