



18/09/26

Dear Red Book Members,

We are writing to provide an update on the 2025-26 and the 2026-27 pay awards.

In 2025, the national employers made a full and final offer of 3.2% on all pay points. However, the employers tied to this offer the following conditions:

- That the Building Labourer grade be moved to pay point 3, with no accompanying uplift to the higher grades;
- A recommendation that local employers utilise Job Evaluation to resolve compression of the pay points;
- That Apprentices are removed from the national agreement.

That a new entrant would be placed on the same banding as a qualified, competent Craft Worker is unacceptable to Unite. The employers' proposed solution of Job Evaluation is equally unacceptable as local government schemes are not designed for craft roles and have typically resulted in craft workers losing thousands of pounds from their pay. The removal of the Apprentices from the agreement further erodes the national bargaining structures.

In short, the conditions tied to the 2025 pay offer would undermine the Red Book national agreement and put thousands of Unite members at risk of pay cuts through job evaluation.

Both Unite and the GMB union communicated rejection of the offer to the employers. Unite then proposed a way forward and attempted to utilise the dispute machinery to resolve the issue and **the GMB supported this position.**

The GMB later wrote to the employers stating they had changed their position and would accept the offer, with the conditions attached. The reasons for this change in position are not clear. Unite however was clear that we cannot destroy craft worker bargaining agreements and put our members at risk of local pay cuts.

In summer 2026 thousands of Unite members took co-ordinated strike action to defend their pay and conditions and the Red Book agreement. Following strike action, a

meeting was held between Unite and the national employers to discuss a resolution. The GMB refused to attend this meeting.

Unite has drafted a solution that would protect the national agreement, keep apprentices in the agreement and maintain national structures that remove any need for Job Evaluation. **This proposal would also put 18 months back pay in Red Book members pockets before Christmas.**

The GMB has informed Unite that it will not support the proposed solution. The GMB has given no rationale for this decision. We cannot understand why our sister union, which also rejected the pay offer and supported Unite's proposals in 2025, would now prevent a settlement from being reached.

As a result of Unite's campaigning and the coordinated strike action taken by many Unite members over the summer, an agreement is now in sight. We urge the GMB to do the right thing and support a resolution that would see craft workers receive large back pay sums and protect the National Agreement for the years ahead.

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