Pay Policy

2026/7

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Version Control

Current version	Previous version	Summary of changes made	Approved by (meeting/committee)
Sept 2026	April 2026	Changes to salary amounts, staffing figures and to reflect the pay awards for Chief Executives, Chief Officers and NJC.	
April 2026	Apr 2025	Changes to salary amounts, staffing figures, gender pay gap and pay multiple information	Full Council March 2026
April 2025	Apr 2024	Changes to salary amounts, staffing figures, gender pay gap and pay multiple information	Full Council March 2025
April 2024	Apr 2023	Changes to salary amounts, staffing figures, gender pay gap and pay multiple information	Full Council March 2024
April 2023	Apr 2022	Changes to salary amounts, staffing figures, gender pay gap and pay multiple information	Full Council March 2023
April 2022	Apr 2021	Changes to salary amounts, staffing figures, gender pay gap and pay multiple information	Full Council March 2022
The Pay Policy has been updated each year since 2011 in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011			

1 Introduction

1.1 This document sets out Bolton Council's pay policy principles for the period 2026/27. The figures included are accurate as at Quarter 4, 2025/2026.

1.2 The policy has been produced in response to the Localism Act 2011, which requires each authority to produce an annual pay policy statement and supporting detail. The statement does not reflect the arrangements for teachers or pay to staff in schools.

1.3 Bolton Council recognises the complex and competing drivers underpinning public sector remuneration, especially at a senior level, including:

- The financial constraints of the public purse and an imperative to transparently demonstrate value for money at all times.
- The organisation's obligations under equal pay legislation
- The importance of attractive terms and conditions to enable us to recruit and retain quality staff.

1.4 Within Bolton Council, decisions relating to recruitment, pay, terms and conditions, severance arrangements and reward of Chief Officers are made by elected members, via the Chief Officer Appointments Panel. The role of this panel is to ensure that the complex considerations related to public sector pay are made. For all other employees of the council, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the appropriate Executive Cabinet Member, has the power to approve establishments of Directorates, including creation, deletion, or variation of posts and including terms and conditions of services and the grading and re-grading of individual posts.

1.5 The council is directly responsible for the employment of 6,483 staff. The council also provides services to a total population of 310,085 residents.

1.6 Bolton Council is fully committed to creating a culture where equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to everything we do. Our policies and processes form part of our infrastructure to support an environment where people from all groups and our diverse communities feel included, supported, and are treated fairly in accessing all opportunities.

1.7 All employees of Bolton Council handling personal data must comply with current data protection legislation and the Information Governance Framework together with the associated policies and procedures which are available on the Information Governance page of the intranet. If you do not have access to the intranet, please speak with your manager.

1.8 We work closely with our recognised Trade Unions to jointly develop, review, and improve our employment policies and practices to support Bolton Council's aim of building an effective, equitable and dynamic organisation that is an employer of choice.

2 Pay and Grading

2.1. Pay and Grading Structures

2.1.1 In determining the pay and remuneration of its employees, the council will comply with all relevant employment legislation.

2.1.2 This includes the Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, The Agency Workers Regulations 2010 and where relevant, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations, the Employment Rights Act 1996. With regard to the Equal Pay requirements contained within

the Equality Act, the council ensures that all pay arrangements can be objectively justified through the use of Job Evaluation methods.

2.1.3 The Council's pay and grading structures for NJC and Chief Officers were determined following comprehensive pay and grading reviews implemented in 2009. These involved:

- The evaluation of all posts in scope using analytical job evaluation schemes to capture the full range of responsibilities for each post.
- Determination of pay structures with the assistance of independent experts and approval of these pay structures through the Cabinet and Appointments Panel for NJC and JNC structures respectively.

2.1.4 The Council's pay and grading structures are subject to ongoing reviews for effectiveness and value for money. In previous years a series of improvements to the values of Grade A and B have been made, to take account of an increase in value expressed by the national campaign for a Living Wage and to maintain the gap between minimum council earnings and the value of the National Living Wage. The nationally negotiated NJC pay offer for 2025/26 does not cover the increase in the new Living Wage Foundation rate applicable from April 2026 and a supplement has therefore been applied, pending the national pay award confirmation for 2026/27.

2.1.5 It should be noted that the Council also employs staff on Teachers, Soulbury and JNC for Youth Workers pay structures, whose terms, conditions and pay rates are determined by the relevant national negotiating body in accordance with the agreed collective bargaining machinery.

2.1.6 From time to time, it may be necessary to pay special allowances or supplements to individual employees as part of their employment contract where specific circumstances require this and where it can be justified in accordance with council policies. Such allowances are negotiated nationally or locally through collective bargaining arrangements and/or as determined by council policy.

2.1.7 This may include the following:

- market rate supplements in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capacity, for example when there are skills shortages locally or nationally. This approach will only be adopted where there is clear evidence of recruitment difficulty, and any such payments will be time limited and in accordance with council policy.
- special payments where an employee has taken on additional duties and responsibilities for a defined period of time, for example covering a vacancy or taking on a special project

2.1.8 The council will ensure that the requirement for an additional allowance or supplement is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence and where market rate supplements are considered that this is with reference to data available from within and outside both local government and the private sector.

2.2. General remuneration policy principles

2.2.1 The Council agreed the principles of a core Pay Policy in 2004, which determined that pay levels should be based on analytical job evaluation outcomes and remuneration levels should be set with regard to the following criteria:

- To enable us to attract and retain the quantity and quality of staff we require to achieve our strategic and operational objectives.

- To achieve value for money, having regard to market forces and the Council's financial constraints.
- To recognise the responsibility and accountability borne by employees and encourage the delegation of decision making to the lowest level, commensurate with effective service delivery.
- To recognise employee contribution and performance in achieving their objectives, including the acquisition of relevant skills and competencies, and displaying the knowledge, ability and commitment required.
- To be transparent and fair ensuring that all employees receive equal pay for work of equal value having particular regard to gender, race, age and disability.
- To support cost-effective flexible working, in meeting both customer/service requirements and work/life balance for employees.

2.3. Annual cost of living pay awards

2.3.1 All grades are subject to annual review and cost of living awards, as determined by the relevant national negotiating body.

2.3.2 The NJC pay offer at Bolton affects 3,529 departmental staff and 2,954 staff in community and voluntary controlled schools. Pay awards are applied once agreed.

2.4. NJC pay and grading arrangements

2.4.1 All NJC posts have been assimilated on to a single pay spine. The NJC pay and grading structure covers the vast majority of posts within the Council and extends from Grade A (scp 3 wef 01/04/26) posts such as Cleaners and General Assistants through to very senior management posts, largely Heads of Services for large and complex areas, which are paid up to Senior Head of Service Grade (scp 62). To encourage employees to develop in their role and to improve their performance the council has arranged for most Grades to contain between two and five increments.

2.4.2 New employees will usually be appointed to the minimum pay level for the relevant grade. Managers have the discretion to recommend an employee for acceleration of increments within the grade when they have demonstrated exceptional performance or join us with significant skills, knowledge and/or experience in the role they are being appointed to.

2.4.2 Bolton Council's pay and grading structure for NJC staff is available on the Council website. pay-structure (bolton.gov.uk)

2.4.3 As part of the Pay and Grading Review, the Council also reviewed the other terms and conditions where there is flexibility for local review, as prescribed in Part 3 of the National Green Book. The Part 3 local provisions for Bolton are published on our website and are summarised as follows:

- Standard payments for unsociable hours, including shift working, weekend and night work.
- A defined process for determining the value of any honoraria and additional duties payments.
- Robust criteria for market rate supplements. At present the Council is not paying any market rate supplements.
- Clear criteria for allocation of essential car user allowance and regular review of all payments.

2.4.4 The Council does not pay for staff car parking fees within the Borough.

2.4.5 Employees who incur additional charges following an imposed relocation of work-base can claim an allowance payable for 4 years, in line with the provisions of the former Purple Book.

2.4.6 Relocation allowances at appointment can be paid by the Council. Any requests would be considered on a case-by-case basis up to a maximum amount of £3000.

2.5. JNC (Chief Officer) Pay and Grading Arrangements

2.5.1. A review of Chief Officer pay for all staff employed on JNC terms and conditions, including the Chief Executive, was undertaken in 2009 and overseen and approved by the Appointment's Panel, with technical advice from the Hay Group.

2.5.2 The current Chief Officer Structure chart is shown on the Council website. Any changes to the Chief Officer structure are approved by the Appointments Panel.

2.5.3 When recruiting to all posts the council will take full and proper account of its own Policies. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed Chief Officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment.

2.5.4 Where the council is unable to recruit to a post at the designated grade, it will consider the use of temporary market forces supplements in accordance with its relevant policies.

2.5.5 In exceptional circumstances, where the council remains unable to recruit to a Chief Officer or where there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant post, the council may consider engaging an individual through a 'contracts for service'. Such arrangements can be advantageous because they can reduce employment costs and are flexible because they can be used for short periods of time without the need to pay termination payments. Where these arrangements are used the council will use relevant procurement processes to ensure that it can demonstrate value for money. Such arrangements will be kept under regular review

2.6 Remuneration for the Chief Executive

2.6.1 A review of pay for the post of Chief Executive was undertaken in 2006 and was included in the review of all Chief Officer remuneration in 2009, with advice from an independent advisor.

2.6.2 The basic grade of Chief Executive is based on 5 pay points (£202,465- £ 214,983 wef 01/04/26). Progression is conditional on satisfactory performance against objectives and the post-holder not being subject to any disciplinary or capability procedures.

2.7 Chief Officer Pay Grades (at 01/04/26)

2.7.1 The Chief Officer pay structure is as follows. At some levels there is both an upper and lower tier, dependent upon the scope and scale of particular roles:

Grade	Min	Max	Titles	Number
5	£85,172	£98,578	Assistant Director, Consultant in Public Health	11
4	£98,578	£110,709	Deputy Director, Assistant Director	8
2	£127,358	£139,875	Director	1
1	£139,875	£152,392	Director	4
Chief Executive	£202,465	£214,983	Chief Executive	1

2.7.2 The grades described above are complete remuneration and inclusive of all additional allowances, including essential car user allowance and mileage.

2.7.3 All Chief Officer and Chief Executive roles are currently full time on permanent employment contracts.

2.7.4 Actual remuneration for individuals may be accessed via the Council website.

2.7.5 The legal basis for publishing this personal data information is provided in Article 6 (1) (c) of the General Data Protection Regulation in that it is a legal obligation for a Local Authority to comply with transparency rules concerning pay policies which must be open to public scrutiny.

2.8 Incremental progression and extended grades for Chief Officers

2.8.1 All Chief Officer grades are incremental. Incremental progression within the basic grade is subject to satisfactory performance over the previous twelve months, which is determined with regard to the following criteria:

- Satisfactory performance against objectives set as part of the annual appraisal process.
- No disciplinary action undertaken in the past 12 months including any relating to managing absence. Increments would be withheld until any pending disciplinary action was concluded.
- Not being subject to formal capability procedures.

2.9 Performance related pay for Chief Officers and access to extended grades

2.9.1 All Chief Officers have a fixed salary. At present there is no additional remuneration which is subject to performance, e.g. performance related pay or bonuses of any kind. This is because the nature of most Chief Officer roles would make the determination of outcome objectives, dependent upon their personal performance, difficult to articulate.

2.9.2 At the top of the grade there is, however, an extension to provide the flexibility to manage recruitment and retention issues and reward exceptional performance, subject to the agreement of the Chief Officer Appointments Panel. The value of the extension is as follows and may be applied as a series of additional increments or a % payment:

- Chief Executive and CO Grades 1 and 2 – up to £18,779
- CO Grades 3-4 – up to £6,384
- CO Grade 5 – up to £8,939

2.9.3 The following criteria and processes apply to give access to this payment:

2.9.4 The additional payment could be used as part of the recruitment to a vacant post along the lines of “more” available for an exceptional candidate. Any decision to apply a payment in this regard would need to be agreed by the Chief Officer Appointments Panel both prior to recruitment in respect of the principle that this was an option and to then agree this for a specific candidate.

2.9.5 In the event that the additional increments are proposed, they must first be agreed by the Chief Executive and relevant Director and are then subject to Chief Officer Appointments Panel approval.

2.9.6 For all three categories: recruitment, retention and exceptional performance, the additional payment above the basic grade is paid as a “retention allowance”. This means that at the end of the 12-month period the agreed payment (up to a maximum of the additional grade) would be paid on the condition that the member of staff was in post and not serving notice. This would then apply to each subsequent year in the same way.

2.10 Recruitment of Chief Officers

2.10.1 Due to the nature and responsibilities of their role Chief Officers are normally employed on full time permanent employment contracts. The council’s policy and procedures with regard to recruitment of Chief Officers is set out within the Employment Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

2.11 New appointments above £100,000

2.11.1 The establishment of new posts with salary levels at £100K or greater are subject to approval by full Council having regard to the guidance issued under s40 Localism Act (2011). This requirement only applies to new positions established and not to the filling of existing roles on the Council’s establishment, such recruitment will be in accordance with the Councils established processes.

2.12 Other allowances for additional responsibilities

2.12.1 An additional payment is made to the Chief Executive for Returning Officer Duties in accordance with the Representation of the People Act (1983).

2.12.2 The Returning Officer will make payments to those officers who undertake specific duties in relation to the elections, in accordance with their role.

2.12.3 It should be noted that normally fees payable for duties undertaken in connection with elections are funded by central government in accordance with Fees and Charges Orders made by Parliament.

2.13 Pay multiples (31 March 2025)

2.13.1 The pay multiples for the period are set out below. Two calculations are provided.

2.13.2 The ratio between the highest paid salary (**£195,791**) and the median salary of the whole of the workforce (**£27,269**). This multiple is **1:7.18**

2.13.3 The ratio between the highest paid salary (**£195,791**) and the lowest salary **(£23,656**). The pay multiple for 2024/25 is **1:8.28**

2.14 Gender Pay Gap (GPG)

2.14.1 The Equality Act 2010 (GPG Information) Regulations will require the Council to publish its 2025 gender pay gap data by April 2025. The regulations require 3 sets of data to be produced for the workforce as at 31st March 2025.

2.14.2 **Mean GPG** - this is the difference in average hourly rates and the figure most frequently used.

2.14.3 Women's average hourly rate is **3.2%** lower than men.

2.14.4 This is equivalent to **£0.56.** The average hourly rate for women being **£17.03** and for men **£17.59**.

2.14.5 **Median GPG** - this is calculated by finding the midpoint in all employees' hourly pay which is aimed to avoid any distortion of average rates by extremely high or low (following deduction of salary sacrifice) rates.

2.14.6 Women's median pay is **3.1%** lower than men. This is equivalent to **£0.47**. The median hourly rate for women being **£14.88** and for men **£15.35**.

2.14.7 The bonus data required does not apply at Bolton Council as bonus payments are not paid.

2.15 Quartile analysis

2.15.1 The council must show the proportion of male and female full-pay relevant employees in four pay bands. To do this, employees have been ranked from the highest to the lowest paid, divided them into 4 equal parts (known as quartiles), the percentage of male and female employees in each of the 4 parts then calculated:

- Lower quartile: Female 76.9%, Male 23.1%
- Lower middle quartile: Female 67.2%, Male 32.8%
- Upper middle quartile: Female 69.5%, Male 30.5%
- Upper quartile: Female 70.8%, Male 29.2%

2.15.2 The figures remain static compared to last years and the organisation's explanatory narrative can be seen on the Council website.

2.16 Pay for the lowest earners

2.16.1 The Council is committed to being a good employer and as part of this paying our lowest earners at the highest affordable hourly rate. The Council defines the lowest paid workers as those paid on the lowest pay points in use. The council employs apprentices who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid employees' as they are paid the National Minimum Wage, are given paid time off from work for training or study as part of their apprenticeship and receive holiday pay and other employee rights/benefits i.e. sick pay.

2.16.2 The Council's strategy to pay for the lowest paid takes account of:

- The Council's approach to anti-poverty and cost of living challenges.
- The established intention to maintain a "gap" in earnings between the value of the National Minimum Wage and minimum pay at Bolton Council.

- The continued commitment to ensure all staff are paid a living wage.

2.16.3 In April 2017, the Council introduced a Living Wage Supplement (LWS) to any pay point paid less than £8.45 per hour, which increased the value of the bottom two scale points of the pay structure and meant that the lowest starting salary for any Council worker was £8.45 per hour. In April 2019, the LWS was no longer necessary because the increased pay rates were above the Living Wage rates. In 2020, a Living Wage Supplement of 5p per hour was again applied to point 1 to match the Living Wage Foundation rate of £9.30. Since 2021/22 the supplement has no longer been necessary as the lowest point of the pay structure was the same value or greater than the Living Wage Foundation rate. However a temporary uplift has been implemented each year due to the delay in the pay award being agreed, which has ceased at the point the pay award was agreed.

2.17 Our wider reward package

2.17.1 The Council is committed to providing a comprehensive employment package. In addition to salary, any associated allowances, leave entitlement and pension contributions, the Council also offers a number of optional opportunities* to staff:

- Occupational Health provision including access to physiotherapy, an EAP advice line and wellbeing support options.
- Salary sacrifice schemes – cycle to work, home & electronics and car lease.
- Discounted staff parking scheme.
- Healthcare cost options to be taken directly from wages.
- Other local discounts including preferential rates for gym membership.
- Lifestyle discounts via the Vivup app
- Flexible and hybrid working options.
- Training and development programmes including access to the Apprenticeship Scheme for existing staff.

**Some of these benefits are subject to eligibility and some subject to service requirements.*

2.17.2 In 2018 the council also signed up to the Greater Manchester Continuous Service Commitment which allows employees to transfer their continuous service between certain Local Authorities and GM NHS bodies.

2.18 Voluntary severance

2.18.1 The council does not currently have a voluntary severance offer. Redundancy payments are paid in line with the HR policy framework.

2.19 Voluntary early retirement (VER)

2.19.1 Staff aged 55 or over who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme may apply to take voluntary early retirement. Under this scheme staff may apply for the early release of their existing pension benefits. Unless in exceptional circumstances pensions will not be enhanced (i.e. additional pension).

2.20 Flexible retirement

2.20.1 Staff aged 55 or over who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme may apply to take a minimum of a 20% reduction in hours or grade and access their pension. The cost of the strain must be mitigated by the salary saving over a period determined by the council or an alternative means of meeting the cost must be identified by the service or department.

2.21 Pensions contributions

2.21.1 Where employees have exercised their statutory right to become members of the Local Government Pension Scheme the Council is required to make a contribution to the scheme representing a percentage of the pensionable remuneration due under the contract of employment of that employee. The rate of contribution is set by Actuaries advising the Greater Manchester Pension Fund. This rate is reviewed on a triennial basis in order to ensure the scheme is appropriately funded. The current rate, set at 1st April 2023 through to 2026 is 19.8% for the LGPS. The employee contribution rates, which are defined by statute (as at 1st April 2023), are:

Band	Actual pensionable pay for an employment	Main section contribution rate for that employment	50/50 section contribution rate for that employment
1	Up to £16,500	5.50%	2.75%
2	£16,501 to £25,900	5.80%	2.90%
3	£25,901 to £42,100	6.50%	3.25%
4	£42,101 to £53,300	6.80%	3.40%
5	£53,301 to £74,700	8.50%	4.25%
6	£74,701 to £105,900	9.90%	4.95%
7	£105,901 to £124,800	10.50%	5.25%
8	£124,801 to £187,200	11.40%	5.70%
9	£187,201 or more	12.50%	6.25%

2.22 Policy of re-hire following termination

2.22.1 It is the council's policy that staff who have left under a severance arrangement or VER should not normally be re-hired or contracted by the Council. Any situation involving re-engagement, including as an employee, worker or as a provider of a service under a contract must be approved by the relevant Director and Chief Executive.

2.23 Tax avoidance

2.23.1 The Council is aware of arrangements whereby employees may be paid through a personal service company. In view of the value for money implications for the public sector as a whole, the council would not normally intend to implement such arrangements for the payment of its employees. The council has processes to ensure compliance with those providing services through an intermediary (the IR35 regulations).

3 Annual review of this policy

3.1 Under the terms of the Localism Act this document is reviewed and approved by full council annually. The policy and supporting detail is also published on the Bolton Council website.

3.2 Links provided to the downloads published on the website at the following:

Local arrangements NJC Part 3 provisions

NJC Pay Structure

Chief Officer Structure

4 Publication of Pay Policy Statement

4.1 Upon approval by full council, this statement will be published on the council's website. In addition, for posts where the full-time equivalent salary is at least £50,000, the council's annual statement of accounts will include a note setting out the total amount of:

- salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable by the person in the current and previous year
- any bonuses so paid or receivable by the person in the current and previous year
- any sums payable by way of expenses allowance that are chargeable to UK income tax
- any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination
- any benefits received that do not fall within the above.

5 Related Policies and Procedures

5.1 This document should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and procedures, which are all available on the intranet.

5.2 If a member of staff does not have access to the intranet, managers should provide copies of or access to this information.