

# Kent Scheme Schools Newsletter

From April 2026

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County Council have agreed the Pay Award for 2026/2027.

The Kent Scheme pay bands have been increased by at least 3.8%, and the minimum Kent Scheme pay rate rises to £13.56 per hour, which retains the Council's position to pay above the National and Foundation Living Wage.

Agreement on the pay award has been reached with our recognised Trade Unions.

## Kent Scheme Pay Range

In line with the new pay structure and approach to pay progression, introduced on 1 April 2025, the temporary transition points used for 2025/2026 have now been removed.

KSA will be paid at £13.56 per hour, or £26,168 per year. This continues to exceed both the rising National Living Wage, now £12.71 per hour, and the updated Foundation (Real) Living Wage of £13.45 per hour. Overall, this represents a 6.75% increase to KSA compared with last year.

The top of each Kent Scheme pay band has increased by the annual pay award of 3.8%. The bottom of each pay band has increased by varying amounts to maintain our pay policy principles. Pay bands KSA–KSE have also received a higher increase at the top of the grade to support the uplift at KSA.

Kent Scheme Pay Grade	Entry	Middle	Top
KSM	£81,015	£85,473	£89,931
KSL	£71,432	£75,306	£79,179
KSK	£63,376	£66,692	£70,007
KSJ	£55,764	£59,150	£62,535
KSI	£47,990	£50,718	£53,446
KSH	£41,782	£44,194	£46,606
KSG	£36,264	£38,012	£39,760
KSF	£32,140		£35,035
KSE	£29,167		£30,934
KSD	£27,904		£29,020
KSC	£26,956		£27,765
KSB			£26,822
KSA			£26,168

The new grade bandings apply to Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools. Where a school does not follow the KCC pay award timeline (April) – an appropriate pay policy needs to be in place. In any event, schools cannot pay beneath the new statutory minimum from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026. This is no different to previous years.

Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools are not obliged to follow Kent Scheme pay.

### **Entry Salaries for New Starters**

New staff must be appointed at the entry salary for the grade. In exceptional circumstances, where the business need justifies it and the candidate brings significant skills and experience, a higher starting salary may be considered. Managers should always ensure that starting salaries remain fair and do not create pay inequities within their existing teams.

### **Entry Salaries for Promotions**

When a member of staff is promoted, they should normally move to the entry salary of the new grade. If this does not result in at least a 2.5% increase on their current salary, their new salary should be set at a level that provides a minimum uplift of 2.5%, even if this places it above the bottom of the grade.

### **Internal Appointment to a role at the same grade**

In the case of internal appointments, where an individual moves to a role at the same grade as their current role and KCC is the direct employer, no salary increase will be applied. Any future salary progression will be managed through the Performance Management process.

### **Pay and progression for Kent Scheme Terms and Conditions**

All staff will have a performance assessment each year on their anniversary date. For staff who transitioned to the new pay structure on 1st April 2025, their anniversary date will be 1st April. For those schools operating a September pay determination date who transitioned to the new pay structure on 1st September 2025, their anniversary date will be 1st September.

Progression within a pay grade, except for KSA and KSB, which are single salary point grades, and staff already at the top of their grade, is subject to, and informed by, a positive performance assessment. Progression is by steps between salary points, and the time required to move between steps is clearly defined for each grade.

Once a member of staff reaches the top of their grade, their annual pay award will be consolidated into base pay rather than paid as a non-consolidated lump sum.

The temporary transition points are being removed. Therefore, any staff member who was mapped to a temporary transition point under the new pay structure implemented in 2025/2026 will move to the next fixed point in the structure on 1st April 2026 or 1st September depending on the schools' pay determination date.

### **Personal Performance Implications**

Staff who receive a 'No' performance assessment rating on their anniversary date will not receive a pay increase if they are already at the top of their grade. If they are at any other salary point within the grade, their pay progression will be withheld for a year.

### **The importance of talking about your performance assessment**

Your performance conversation is a great chance to reflect on what you've achieved, understand what you're doing well, and clarify your objectives for the year ahead. It's also an opportunity to agree on what good performance looks like going forward. Before your discussion, take a look at our conversation tool and think about the topics you want to cover to support your development, performance, and wellbeing throughout the year.

## The Local Government Pension Scheme

Kent County Council's employer contribution rate will be 18.5% from 1 April 2026.

The rate of pension contribution you make to the LGPS is based on different pay bands. The rate you pay will depend on how much you earn (including any pensionable allowances). This will be assessed on 1 April and reassessed if there are any change of circumstances, for example an increase of hours or promotion.

Your rate will be shown on your payslip in April and updated if any changes are made at a later date. If you think your contribution rate is incorrect you need to ring the number given on your payslip.

Band	Range	Contribution Rate
1	Up to £18,400	5.50%
2	£18,401 to £29,000	5.80%
3	£29,001 to £47,300	6.50%
4	£47,301 to £59,800	6.80%
5	£59,801 to £84,000	8.50%
6	£84,001 to £119,100	9.90%
7	£119,101 to £140,400	10.50%
8	£140,401 to £210,700	11.40%
9	£210,701 or more	12.50%

## Kent Scheme Annual Leave Provision

It was agreed through the 2025/26 pay bargaining with our recognised trade unions that KCC will standardise annual leave to 30 days for all staff by 2027/28. This will be done on an incremental basis. Therefore, the Kent Scheme annual leave arrangements for 2026/27 are outlined in the adjacent table. The Concessionary Day remains.

Annual Leave will now be booked in hours for all staff. In recognition of the increasingly flexible way our colleagues work, KCC will now convert annual leave entitlement into hours. This allows individuals to take leave which accurately reflects their working patterns, including taking time off for public holidays and the concessionary day. This change does not affect annual leave entitlement.

Grade	Standard	After five years' service
KS Entry Apprentice KSA – KSE	214.6 hours (214 hours and 36 minutes) equivalent of 29 days	222 hours equivalent of 30 days
KSF – KSJ	222 hours equivalent of 30 days	222 hours equivalent of 30 days
KSK and above	222 hours equivalent of 30 days	222 hours equivalent of 30 days

## Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC's)

If you wish to save more for your retirement, the LGPS in Kent has two AVC providers which you can invest with. For more information, visit the [Kent Pension Fund website](#).

## Kent Rewards

Kent Rewards is a platform available to Kent Scheme employees working in Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools. You can find more information on the huge variety of benefits available to you by visiting [Kent Rewards](#).