LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES JOB EVALUATION SCHEME:

TECHNICAL NOTE NO. 1: DRAWING UP LOCAL CONVENTIONS

1. What are local conventions?

1.1 ‘Local conventions’ is the term given to the local interpretations of the wording of a job evaluation scheme, which are usually written down so that they can be applied consistently across all evaluations.

1.2 In the computerised web_Gauge version of the NJC JES, the equivalent local interpretations are called ‘Local Help Text’.

2. Where do local conventions come from?

2.1 Any job evaluation scheme is a set of rules (factors; factor definitions; factor level definitions; scoring and weighting) according to which jobs are assessed and measured by the evaluation panel or committee. Because the Local Government NJC Job Evaluation Scheme, like many modern job evaluation schemes, has to apply to a wide range of different types of jobs, the factor and factor level definitions have to be written in generalised language, which can apply equally to a variety of jobs.

2.2 The evaluation panel or committee interprets the generalised wording in relation to their own jobs and thus refines and extends the job evaluation scheme rules. A particular evaluation committee, for example, may agree the following rule interpretations, extensions and refinements:

- interpreting factor level definitions in relation to their own jobs and organisation (eg. by agreeing the financial parameters for ‘considerable’, ‘large’, ‘very large’ and ‘extremely large’ sums of money under the Responsibility for Financial Resources factor)
- refining factor level definitions to clarify how they should apply to jobs (eg. by agreeing that ‘broad area of activity’ is to be interpreted as a sub-division of a service because that fits the particular authority’s organisational structure)
- drawing equivalencies between job evaluation scheme factor level definitions and job features not obviously catered for (eg. by agreeing that jobs requiring HND qualifications should normally be considered as matching the Knowledge level 5 guidance note; or that sitting on small chairs (as for classroom assistants) should be treated as ‘working in an awkward position’ under the Physical Demands factor)

2.3 In order to ensure that these interpretations, refinements and extensions to the job evaluation rules are applied consistently, they are usually recorded.
3. **Forms of local convention**

3.1 Local conventions can take a number of forms, although they are not always distinct in practice:

(i) ‘Extended wording’ conventions. These effectively extend the wording of the factor level definition to explain the interpretation adopted:

eg. Working Conditions: Level 2 - ‘some exposure to disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous.....people related behaviour’ includes exposure to casual abuse, abuse directed at the local authority and abuse directed at the jobholder.

eg. Responsibility for People: ‘well being’ is to be interpreted as including intellectual and educational well being, as well as the forms of well being listed in the factor definition.

(ii) Including examples of job features:

eg. Working Conditions: Level 2 - ‘some exposure to disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous.....people related behaviour’ includes daily or more frequent exposure to casual abuse.

eg. Responsibility for People – level 2 covers jobs involving providing a service direct to members of the public, but where there is no direct assessment of needs

(iii) Including examples of job types:

eg. Responsibility for People – level 2 covers jobs involving providing a service direct to members of the public, but where there is no direct assessment of needs eg. library counter service, public convenience cleaner, public building maintenance worker

3.2 All three forms are acceptable, as long as any references to specific jobs are inclusive rather than exclusive (so that they do not restrict the factor level in question to the job examples given and do not restrict the jobs in question to that level) and that job examples include both male-dominated and female-dominated jobs, wherever practicable. Many sets of local conventions combine more than one form of local convention.

3.3 Where the level definitions allow for more than one way of getting to each level, for example, the Responsibility for Physical Resources, Interpersonal Skills factors, then a matrix format for local conventions may be helpful, as it allows evaluators to check consistency across the
different demands covered by the same factor, as for example, in the attached table at Appendix 1.

3.4 Evaluators would fill in the remaining matrix boxes and add to guidance, in accordance with their own decisions.

4. How do we develop local conventions?

Step 1: Complete detailed evaluation rationale sheets for the first jobs evaluated, explaining exactly why each job was scored at a particular level. After around 10 jobs have been evaluated, undertake a consistency check on the evaluation scores and rationales.

Step 2: Identify any points where it was necessary to reach agreement on how wording should be interpreted. Record the agreed interpretations as draft local conventions.

Step 3: Identify any evaluation patterns (eg. jobs with less than 10% exposure to unpleasant conditions have all been scored at level 1 on Environmental Conditions) and record these also as draft local conventions.

Step 4: Modify and/or extend local conventions as benchmark evaluations proceed. Keep records of agreed local conventions, either on a copy of the NJC JE scheme, or as a separate document. Review and confirm local conventions at the end of the benchmark exercise.

4.1 Although local conventions are best developed during an initial benchmark exercise, there is nothing to stop them being added to at a later stage of the evaluations, if, for example, a new situation occurs and interpretation is required. However, if the new convention is likely to impact on other jobs, this may mean reviewing some or all of the foregoing evaluations.

5. Developing Local Help Text for the web Gauge system

5.1 There are two main ways of developing local help text for the web Gauge computerised version of the NJC JES:

(1) Carry out a conventional benchmark set of evaluations using the paper-based version of the JES, develop local conventions as described above, then insert these as local Help Text into the computerised system. This approach has a number of advantages, for instance:

   a. The benchmark jobs can also be used to test that the web Gauge system is delivering the same outcomes as the paper-based version;
b. The steering group or evaluation panel that evaluated the benchmark sample of jobs will have developed useful skills when it comes to validating or quality assuring the web Gauge outcomes.

(2) Carry out a first set of benchmark evaluations (a ‘test’ sample of jobs) using the web Gauge system, develop local Help Text and test this on a second benchmark set of jobs, modifying as necessary. Using more than one facilitator for the benchmark evaluations can help raise areas where there could be differences of interpretation of questions and additional agreed advice may be needed.

5.2 As with conventional local conventions, local Help Text can be added to or amended during subsequent evaluations, but this may mean re-working some, or all, previous evaluations.

5.3 Within the web Gauge version, there is a standard Help Text report that can be reviewed and printed for all 13 factors within the NJC scheme. Should any re-working of evaluations be required, the web version now includes an Evaluation history that records all previous evaluations (the system will, however, only recognise the latest version, with previous versions being kept for ‘audit’ purposes).

6. Conclusions

6.1 All JE experience confirms that it is worth investing time and effort in the initial benchmark evaluations, to provide robust local conventions or Help Text and thus ensure maximum consistency of non-benchmark evaluations.

6.2 Local conventions and Help Text are always important but particularly so where there is more than one job evaluation panel or committee, or facilitator, to ensure consistency within evaluations and over time.
# APPENDIX 1

## EXAMPLE MATRIX OF NATIONAL / LOCAL CONVENTIONS FOR PHYSICAL RESOURCES FACTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Buildings / External Locations</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>Personal Possessions</th>
<th>Stocks / Supplies / Procurement</th>
<th>Policy / Advice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Limited handling/processing</td>
<td>Low value equipment e.g. computer terminal, PC, other office equipment</td>
<td>Limited e.g. adding toner, paper for office equipment, as necessary</td>
<td>Limited – frequency and/or value e.g. occasionally collect client pension</td>
<td>Limited ordering e.g. office stationery from central stores</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regular handling/processing e.g. word processing, data input, updating client records</td>
<td>Careful use of expensive equipment e.g. minibus, transit van</td>
<td>Regular key holder for building, opening up or closing buildings with keys; building cleaning</td>
<td>Regular day to day maintenance e.g. adding toner, paper, unblocking jams e.g. dedicated photocopier operator e.g. adding chemicals, checking school swimming pool</td>
<td>Regular e.g. collecting pensions, shopping for clients every week</td>
<td>Regularly provide advice on established procedures e.g. estates dept. first point of contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regular handling/processing of considerable amounts of information e.g. input of electoral register data</td>
<td>Careful use of very expensive equipment e.g. refuse lorry driver, <em>JCB</em> operator e.g. mainframe computer, in-house printing equipment</td>
<td>Security roles (as main job feature e.g. security guard); cleaning of range of premises e.g. <em>peripatetic cleaner</em></td>
<td>Maintenance &amp; repair of range of equipment/buildings e.g. <em>directly employed office equipment repair engineer</em> e.g. maintenance of premises e.g. <em>school caretaker</em></td>
<td>Ordering range of supplies e.g. <em>central office and stationery supplies</em></td>
<td>Interpretation of policies &amp; procedures on resources e.g. <em>estates manager</em></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Adapt... significant information systems e.g. <em>IT programmer or systems analyst</em></td>
<td>Adapt wide range of equipment</td>
<td>Security of range of high value physical resources e.g. <em>buildings security manager</em></td>
<td>Adapt wide range of buildings/construction works</td>
<td>Wide range of equipment &amp; supplies e.g. <em>central office procurement</em></td>
<td>Interpretation of external regulations etc. Shared development of policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Adapt...large-scale info systems e.g. <em>personnel/payroll system</em></td>
<td>Adapt wide and high value range of equipment</td>
<td>Security of wide &amp; very high value physical resources</td>
<td>Adapt wide and high value range of buildings/constructions</td>
<td>Wide, high value range of equipment, supplies e.g. <em>central IT procurement</em></td>
<td>Major development of policies with a significant impact across the service</td>
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<td>Very major responsibility e.g. information systems manager</td>
<td>Very major responsibility for equipment e.g. IT &amp; communication s manager</td>
<td>Very major responsibility for buildings/external locations e.g. estates manager</td>
<td>Very major responsibility for maintenance, adaptation of buildings, construction works e.g. head of maintenance</td>
<td>Very major responsibility for procurement and deployment e.g. information systems manager</td>
<td>Very major development of policies with a major impact across services</td>
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**NOTE:** Normal type statements are from factor level definitions and national guidance notes: *statements in italics are examples only of possible local conventions of different types.*