

Recognise, Respect, Reward.

Scottish Local Government Pay Ballot April 2022 Frequently Asked Questions



1. What am I voting on?

Given the employer's failure to put forward an acceptable pay offer by the review date of 1st April we are asking you to tell us whether you are willing to take some form of action, up to and including strike action, in pursuit of an improved and acceptable pay offer from the employer.

UNISON's Scottish Local Government Committee is recommending that you vote YES to indicate your willingness to take some form of action in pursuit of an improved and acceptable offer from the employer. We believe this is now the only way to achieve movement in the employer's position.

2. What are we being offered?

You can read COSLA's full offer letter [here](#). The key elements of the offer are:

- An increase in the Scottish Local Government Living Wage (SLGLW) hourly rate to £9.98.
- A 2% increase for all spinal column points.

3. Why did the Local Government Committee reject that offer?

You can read our letter to COSLA rejecting that offer [here](#). Your Local Government Committee do not believe the offer is fair or equitable. In rejecting it they noted that energy prices have gone up circa 54%, food prices have increased circa 5%, transport prices have gone up circa 9%, national insurance contributions have increased 1.25%, many local authorities have chosen to increase council tax by a higher percentage than proposed in this offer, and at the time of writing RPI stood 7.8%. This offer would not cover these increases and will further erode the value of our members pay.

The failure to provide a meaningful increase to the Scottish Local Government Living Wage means that those on the lowest pay would still not reach a £10 per hour rate of pay never mind the £12 per hour called for in our claim. This offer is weighted towards those on the highest pay and will further exacerbate the issue of endemic low pay which plagues this sector. Those earning above £40k per annum (12% of the local government workforce) would receive an increase of £800 plus, with some receiving an uplift of £2k, with those on the lowest pay (51% of the local government workforce) receiving an uplift of £500.

4. What did we ask for?

You can read a full copy of the pay claim which was submitted [here](#). We asked for:

- A settlement that runs for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022
- A £3,000 flat rate increase to all spinal column points (based on a 35 hour working week).
- An underpinning minimum rate of pay of £12 per hour.
- The payment of SSSC fees for all by 1st April 2022 and completion of the review, established as part of our 2021 settlement, of all other professional fees incurred by members in the course of their employment by March 2023.
- Early completion of the review, established as part of our 2021 settlement, on how we achieve a no detriment reduction in the working week.
- Agreement to change the national calculator for the normal working week to 35 hours.
- An agreement that in future all allowances are automatically updated in line with October inflation rates.
- Agreement of home/hybrid working guidance that provides appropriate recompense for expenses incurred as a result of home/hybrid working.
- A review of the job evaluation scores for roles that have changed during the period of the pandemic and/or have new additional qualification requirements.
- No less than parity with other local government bargaining groups.
- Early commencement of negotiations with a clear expectation of settlement implementation by 1 April review date.

5. If we vote Yes when will be taking industrial action?

This is a consultative ballot only at this stage – we hope that by indicating your willingness to take some form of action the employer considers their position and puts forward an improved offer. If the employer's position remains unchanged following the outcome of this ballot your local government committee may decide that we move to a formal industrial action ballot.

We would be required by law to hold a formal industrial action ballot before taking action and they can only be held by post and requires us to achieve a 50% turnout of those balloted with a majority of those voting in favour of taking action. Only when, and if, those requirements are met could we take action.

6. Does industrial action mean strike action?

Not necessarily – industrial action can cover a number of things including working to rule and strike action. The Local Government Committee would review the response to this consultation and the strength of feeling expressed by members and take a view on next steps based on that and a number of other factors.

7. What happens if we say we are not prepared to take action?

We would convey that message to your employer. However indicating to the employer that you are not prepared to take action to challenge their decisions is unlikely to encourage them to put forward an improved offer.

8. What about people who aren't UNISON members – can they vote?

New members joining UNISON before the 18th April 2022 will get a vote in this ballot. If they provide an e-mail address to the union when they join they will be sent an e-mail with a link to their ballot after this date but before the close of ballot at 5pm on 22nd April 2022.

9. I haven't received my vote - where is it?

If you've not received an e-mail with your voting link please, in the first instance, check your junk/spam folders. If its not there and you still have not received it by 15th April please call 0141 342 2899 or log in to MyUnison (<https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/>) to check that the details we hold for you are up to date.

10. I don't have an e-mail address on your system/my e-mail address has recently changed - how do I get a vote?

As long as your membership records are updated before 18th April 2022 you will receive an e-mail with your voting link. To update your details call 0800 0 857 857 or log in to MyUnison at <https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/>

11. The system is telling me that I have already voted when I haven't - how can I cast my vote?

This is a safety feature to help prevent duplicate voting. We suspect this happens when you have clicked on the ballot link and closed it before voting and the system then blocks the IP address. Members should clear their cookies and try the link again. It should then work.

(To clear cookies check online for advice on the specific device the member is using or for the following steps may assist: On your computer, open Chrome. At the top right, click 'More'. Click 'More tools'. Clear browsing data. At the top, choose a time range. To delete everything, select 'All time'. Next to "Cookies and other site data" and "Cached images and files," check the boxes. Click 'Clear data').

12. I have clicked on the ballot link but the page is not loading - how can I vote?

The ballot page is liable to experience a lot of web traffic when the ballot goes live which might mean some users experience difficulty loading the page. Please give it time and try it again later - you have until 5pm on the 22nd April to cast your vote.

13. I accidentally voted Yes when I meant to vote No (or vice versa) - can I change my vote?

No. You should read the e-mail and ballot link you receive carefully before casting your vote. The vote is anonymous and the system quite rightly therefore does not allow us to make changes to it.

14. What else can I do to support UNISON's campaign?

There are a number of things you can do to help strengthen the union's hand in negotiations:

- Make sure you use your vote!
- Share this information on your social networks & encourage your fellow members to vote.
- Write to your local Councillor and ask them to support our campaign for recognition, respect and reward for all local government workers – you can send an automatic letter [here](#).
- Recruit your colleagues to the union and urge them to vote.
- Get involved in the work of your local UNISON branch.