

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STRIKES

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BUSTING THE MYTHS AROUND COSLA'S REVISED PAY OFFER

Why haven't COSLA published the proposed revised pay scales in relation to their most recent offer?

Good question. It is normal practice for the revised spinal column points to be shared with any offer letter but these were not attached to the offer made on 21st September 2023 – it would certainly assist greatly if these were shared now to ensure absolute clarity about what is being offered.

Will most members not receive a £2006 uplift as a result of the revised offer?

No, some people will but the figure quoted only applies to people working 37 hours a week and at the very lowest pay point. The vast majority of members do not work a 37 hour working week and are not on the lowest pay point. If you work part time or term time the uplift you receive will be pro-rata'd to the actual hours worked so you could receive significantly less than this actual amount.

Also, it was a commitment in last years negotiations that whilst agreeing that settlement would be based on a 36hour working week we would aim for future settlements to be based on a 35hour working week. This offer reneges on that commitment.

COSLA state that this offer is “now above the current rate of inflation” – why are you saying that it is a below inflation increase?

COSLA's statement ignores the fact that the level of inflation in April 2023, when your pay uplift was due, was 11.4%. This offer therefore remains below the level of inflation at the time your increase was due. We do not believe it is acceptable for the employer to simply wait on changes to the economy over many months to justify a lower level of pay for its workers.

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local government workers

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Does this recent offer put jobs and services at risk of further cuts?

Correspondence received over the weekend states that “this funding envelope specifically constitutes new money”. This is at odds with COSLA’s own press release announcing the revised offer that stated “no new money has been identified for this offer”. When we met with COSLA on 20th September it was made clear that the result of this would be further cuts to our members jobs and the services they provide. We also know that the dire financial state of local authority budgets means that jobs are consistently being lost due to cuts. The Scottish Government need to provide financial stability to local government to protect the jobs and services upon which we all rely.

Are UNISON fighting for people on low wages or only for the higher paid?

As the largest trade union in local government we have members in every occupational group and at every point on the pay scale. We fight for all our members. We know that whilst not every member is on the lowest pay point most of you earn below the average Scottish wage of £33k. So we are fighting to make sure that everyone gets a decent pay uplift whilst also taking steps to pull the lowest pay point up by seeking a commitment to a minimum underpinning rate of pay of £15 per hour.

COSLA state that they are “committed to working with the Trade Unions to agree and recommend a road map [to an minimum underpinning rate of pay of £15per hour] for the next SJC AGM in November” – why is that not good enough?

UNISON have little confidence in this statement by COSLA.

Two working groups were established as part of last year’s settlement – to review how we could achieve a no-detriment reduction in the working week and the review of professional fees across the workforce – have produced nothing for you. We requested a review of the bargaining structures after last year’s negotiations – to try to ensure we didn’t end up in this position again -and the changes have yet to be implemented.

We also note that despite making the request in our claim, which was submitted in January, we have only now received a revised offer some 8 months later. The prospect of COSLA and the Scottish Government turning this work around in under two months seems limited.

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