

VOTE YES FOR STRIKE ACTION



Frequently asked questions

What did we ask for?

The Joint SJC Trade Union claim was submitted on 16th December 2020. The claim was for:

- A settlement that runs for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022
- A £2,000 flat rate increase to all spinal column points, or 6%, whichever is greater (based on a 37 hour working week).
- An underpinning minimum rate of pay of £10.50 per hour.
- A separate, additional payment towards pay restoration.
- An equivalent percentage or, the median paid where the base salary increase is paid as a flat rate, uprating of all allowances.
- No less than parity with other Local Government bargaining groups.
- All professional costs associated with the role to be met by the employer.
- A commitment to exploring ways in which to achieve a no-detriment reduction in the working week.
- An assessment of the pay gap against all protected characteristics.

What is the employer offering?

- A flat rate payment of £850 (applied to SJC set hourly rates based on a 37 hour working week giving an underpinning minimum rate of pay of £9.75 per hour) for all employees remunerated up to £25,000;
- A 2% uplift for those earning £25,000 to £40,000; and
- A 1% rise for those earning up to £80,000 with a cap of £800; and
- All nationally negotiated allowances, not including First Aid allowance, uplifted by 2%.

Which groups are being balloted for strike action?

Members working in school cleaning, school catering, school janitorial services and waste and recycling.

Why are only certain groups being balloted for action?

It is important to stress that this campaign is for all local government workers. The decision to only ballot certain groups of workers for strike action is to ensure we maximise the impact of our action on vital service areas.

What is the deadline for returning my ballot paper?

We must receive your completed ballot paper by 10am on the 22nd September so you need to get it in a post box a couple of days before this to make sure you meet the deadline.

What should I do if I misplace my ballot paper?

Call the ballot helpline on 0800 0 857 857. This helpline will be open from 8am on 8th September to 12 noon on 16th September.

Why can't I vote online?

Legislation governing industrial action stipulates that a formal industrial action ballot must be conducted by post.

Why should I vote for strike action?

- The offer is not good enough – you are worth more.
- The offer falls far short of the flat rate or % increase outlined in our claim and far short of that being offered to other public sector workers.
- The current offer does not do enough for the lowest paid – 55% of Local Government workers earn below £25k per year.
- The offer contains no provision for restoring pay levels to pre-austerity levels.
- The offer contains no provisions to pay the registration fees of workers who are required to maintain a regulatory registration to undertake their role or any other costs associated with undertaking their role.
- The offer contains no commitment to explore a no-detriment reduction in the working week or any other measure to address the increased demands placed on our members or their ability to maintain a work-life balance.

UNISON would not ask you to take strike action unless it was absolutely necessary. We have exhausted all other options in terms of trying to get movement from your employers.

Will I get any financial support if I vote to take strike action?

Yes, all members taking strike action will be financially supported by UNISON. Further details will follow.

Why are we not being consulted on the revised pay offer rather than being balloted for strike action?

UNISON's local government members overwhelmingly rejected the pay offer in a consultative ballot earlier this year. COSLA came back with a revised offer this month (August) which upped the proposed flat rate payment for those earning under £25k by £50 (from £800 to £850). This revision adds only an additional 97p per week for the lowest paid and the rest of the offer remains unchanged.

UNISON's Local Government Committee met to consider the revised offer. It was decided there was not a significant enough improvement to the offer to warrant a further member consultation and the unanimous decision was made to proceed with industrial action.

I am employed on multiple contracts with my local authority – am I being balloted to take strike action in all my roles?

You are only being balloted on your role as a school cleaner, school caterer, school janitor, waste or recycling operative.

I'm not being balloted for strike action – what can I do to show my support for the campaign?

There are a number of things you can do to show support for the campaign and it is important that you do so colleagues included in the ballot know that you stand with them. You can:

- Help us get the word out! UNISON is leading the fight for better pay for all local government workers – help share our campaign messages.
- Talk to your colleagues about the importance of voting yes to take strike action.
- Share our campaign materials on your social media feeds. Visit www.unison-scotland.org.uk
- Recruit your colleagues to UNISON – the more members we have the louder our voice at the negotiating table. They can join online at joinunison.org