

Scottish Local Government Pay Ballot Frequently Asked Questions

1. What am I voting on?

We are asking for your views on the pay offer that has been put forward by COSLA. UNISON's Scottish Local Government Committee are recommending that you reject that offer so we are also asking you to indicate your willingness to take industrial action up to and including strike action in pursuit of our full claim. It is really important that you let us know your views.

2. What did we ask for?

You can read a full copy of our claim [here](#). We asked for:

- A settlement that runs for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019
- A £1,500 flat rate increase to all spinal column points, or 6.5%, whichever is greater (based on a 37 hour working week). This includes an above inflation increase plus an element of restoration and should be applied after the Scottish Local Government Living Wage increase has taken effect.
- An equivalent percentage uprating of the Scottish Local Government Living Wage (SLGLW), with the SLGLW being used as the minimum pay level for pay and all allowances.
- An equivalent percentage or, the median paid where the base salary increase is paid as a flat rate, uprating of all allowances.
- A commitment to redress the imbalance in pay, caused by previous pay awards which have been below the rate of inflation, over a period of not more than 5 years.

3. What are we being offered?

You can read the employer's offer letter [here](#). The offer is for:

- A one year deal covering the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, with the award being back dated to the 1 April 2018 application date.
- A 3% pay increase for all employees earning up to £80,000 and a flat rate of £1600 for employees earning more than £80,000.
- An uprating of the Scottish Local Government Living Wage (SLGLW) from £8.51 to £8.77 and for this to continue to be the minimum rate of pay in Scottish local government, paid on the same terms as agreed in the 2017-18 pay award.

4. Why is the Local Government Committee recommending rejection?

You can read our full letter to the employer setting out our reasons for rejection [here](#). Those reasons include:

- The employer has not engaged in meaningful negotiations with the Trade Unions. Had they done so we would have had the opportunity to shape the offer to help those most in need.
- Fairness - A key element of our claim was to be treated equally with other local government workers however we have now found out that the Scottish Government plan to inject

significant sums of money to improve Teachers pay which is over and above the offer made. Our argument is simple - if additional funds can be found to improve Teachers pay then they can, and should, be found to improve the pay of other local government workers.

- The pay offer is below the current rate of inflation.
- Restoration – the offer does not address the fact that you have lost circa 15% of your salary in real terms over the past decade through below inflation increases caused by austerity.
- Low Pay – the offer does not address the significant issues of low pay prevalent in local government and more needs to be done for those on the lowest pay.

5. What happens if we reject the offer?

We would hope that when the employer sees the strength of feeling amongst members they will come back to the negotiating table with an improved offer. If that does not happen the Local Government Committee will review whether we need to proceed to industrial action.

6. Why is it taking so long?

We wanted to give the employer every opportunity to put forward an acceptable offer. We have lobbied them for an improved offer, we have lobbied the Scottish Government for additional funding for local government to improve the offer and we have campaigned across the summer on the issue of ONE Team, emphasising that local government workers need to be treated as ONE Team and awarded a fair increase, alongside Teachers. It is unfortunate that after all of this the employer has not put forward an acceptable offer.

7. Shouldn't we be more worried about cuts and job losses?

The union are fighting to protect public services but we need to make a stand on pay too. Ordinary council workers didn't cause the financial crises and shouldn't be the ones who pay the price for it. We all need to work together to show that the work we do for our communities is valued and valuable and that means local government workers getting a decent rate of pay.

8. Does industrial action mean strike action?

It can do but there are other strategies that can also be considered like overtime bans and working to rule. Also strike action can cover all sorts of stoppages for example selected occupational groups can take strike action that can have a significant effect on services.

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

New members joining UNISON before the 28th October 2018 will get a vote on this offer. 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 on the 7th November.

10. What can I do to support the Union?

There are a number of things you can do to help strengthen the union's position on this:

- Make sure you use your vote!
- Encourage your fellow members to vote.
- Recruit your colleagues to the union and get them to vote.
- Share this info on your social networks so people understand why the offer is unacceptable.
- Get involved in the work of your local UNISON branch.