

Scottish Local Government Pay Ballot April 2021 Frequently Asked Questions

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 the 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.

How do I vote?

This is an online consultative ballot being conducted from 13th April to 5pm on 28th April. You will receive your ballot via e-mail if we have an e-mail address for you. It is important that you do not forward that e-mail to anyone else – the link it contains is unique to you.

If we do not have an up to date e-mail address on your membership record you will be able to vote securely online using a link on our campaign page at <https://www.unison-scotland.org/local-government-pay-ballot>

Who is being balloted?

All UNISON members working in Local Government covered by Scottish Joint Council terms and conditions. This includes most, but not all, Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs). It does not include members covered by Craft or Chief Officer terms and conditions. If you are unsure whether you should be included in the ballot please check with your local UNISON branch in the first instance.

I haven't received an email ballot, what should I do?

Firstly, check that it hasn't ended up in your spam/junk folder and as this can sometimes happen. Secondly, check if colleagues in the same workplace have received theirs – if not it may have been blocked by your employer's firewall. If you think this might have happened please contact your local UNISON branch in the first instance. If neither of these work please contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857 who will be able to check your membership details and facilitate your vote.

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 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 are we being offered?

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

- A flat rate payment of £800 (this will be 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%.

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:

- Falls far short of the flat rate or % increase outlined in our claim.
- Does little to address issues of low pay which have become endemic following a decade of austerity.
- Contains no provision for restoring pay levels to pre-austerity levels.
- 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.
- 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.
- Contains no assessment of the pay gap against any of the protected characteristics (something that could easily have been prepared and submitted to the trade unions in the months since the submission of our claim and in advance of our meeting today to help inform our discussions).

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.

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 local authorities face 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.

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.

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

New members joining UNISON before 19th April 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 28th April.

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.