

Scottish Local Government Pay Ballot November 2021 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 is recommending that you ACCEPT the offer. It is really important that you let us know your views.

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 £9.78.
- An £850 flat rate increase for those earning less than £25,000 annually (4.72% - 3.43% depending on starting salary). *Note this covers national Spinal Column Points 2-40 and is calculated on a nominal 37 hour working week.*
- A 2% increase for those earning between £25,000 and £40,000 annually
- A 1% increase for those earning between £40,000 and £80,000 annually
- A £800 flat rate increase for those earning more than £80,000 annually
- A back dating of the implementation date of the pay award and the increase in the SLGLW to 1 January 2021. *To be clear this takes the value of the flat rate increase from £850 to approximately £1,062 in the year 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. While it is acknowledged that the backdating element of the increase is non-recurring it equates to a 5.89% increase in the year for those earning at the current SLGLW rate.*
- A 2% uplift of all nationally agreed allowances in line with the percentage uplift for those earning £25,000 to £40,000. *This does not apply to First Aid and Distant Isles Allowances which are agreed separately*
- A commitment to providing an equivalent offer to all Local Government bargaining groups and have done so based on the settlement provided. *We understand that the Teaching unions requested a non-differentiated uplift (i.e. the same % to apply to all regardless of current salary) and that they have been offered a 1.22% uplift to all SNCT pay points.*
- A commitment to continue to discuss the matter of professional fees associated with role in future out-with this settlement.
- A commitment to exploring with us ways in which we could achieve a no-detriment reduction in the working week.

3. Why is the Local Government Committee recommending acceptance of the offer?

In recommending this offer to you the Local Government Committee were mindful that:

- Significant progress has been made in negotiations with the employer – we have moved the amount of money the employer is offering those on the lowest pay up by a third and our negotiations have secured an additional £86m of investment into the pay bill.
- 55% of local government workers earn below £25k per annum and the flat rate increase secured for those workers is the highest single uplift in a one year settlement for the lowest paid that has been achieved and is higher than those on equivalent pay points received in the NHS.
- The increases for those on median and higher rates of pay are in line with the wider Scottish public sector pay policy and agreements reach in other public sector organisations.
- The principle of parity across the local government bargaining groups is reaffirmed and an equivalent offer has been made to them on this basis. SJC workers on the lowest pay will receive a higher percentage uplift than that proposed for their Teaching colleagues.
- Additional work will be undertaken to address the issues of work-life balance and the burden of professional fees.
- Whilst the offer does not meet all aspects of the claim it makes progress in all areas of it. If the offer is rejected we would have to proceed with the selective strike action in those branches that secured a mandate amongst their school cleaning, school catering, school janitorial, waste and recycling staff, and look at the possibility of conducting additional statutory ballots for industrial action in other service groups.

- The progress made has been as a direct result of the campaign that we have built and all of the actions you have taken as part of that throughout the year.

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 £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.

5. Why has it taken so long to get to this point?

We know that the delay to securing this deal will have been a source of immense frustration for you. We submitted our pay claim on 16th December 2021. It took the employer over three to respond to that. After consulting you about that offer we went back to the employer to let them know that offer had been rejected and needed to be improved.

Over the months that followed we negotiated with them for an improved offer, we lobbied the Scottish Government for additional funding for local government to improve the offer and we campaigned across the summer on the issue of pay and then conducted formal statutory ballots for industrial action amongst select groups of workers.

We wanted to give the employer every opportunity to put forward an acceptable offer. These efforts have seen the original offer revised upwards twice, to a point where your Local Government Committee can now recommend acceptance of the offer to you as the best that can be achieved through negotiation.

6. What happens if we reject the offer?

If the offer is rejected we would have to proceed with the selective strike action in those branches that secured a mandate amongst their school cleaning, school catering, school janitorial, waste and recycling members, and look at the possibility of conducting additional statutory ballots for industrial action in other service groups.

Current Tory anti-trade union laws mean that a ballot for industrial action must secure a turnout of over 50% of eligible members and a majority of those voting in favour of industrial action for any action to be legal, to protect members from dismissal and the trade union from other law suits.

7. Does industrial action mean strike action?

The industrial action – in those branches that secured a legal mandate - which has been suspended to allow for this consultation to take place is for strike action amongst members working in school cleaning, school catering, school janitorial, waste and recycling services.

If we had to move to conduct statutory industrial ballots of additional groups of workers to secure an improved offer the Local Government Committee would look at all available options.

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

New members joining UNISON before the 22nd November 2021 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 at midday on the 29th November 2021.

9. What else can I do to support UNISON?

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.
- Recruit your colleagues to the union and urge them to vote.
- Get involved in the work of your local UNISON branch.