

VOTE ACCEPT LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY BALLOT



Frequently asked questions

Scottish Local Government Pay Ballot September 2022 Frequently Asked Questions

1. What am I voting on?

You are being asked whether you accept or reject the revised and improved pay offer, received from COSLA on the 2nd September 2022. UNISON's Scottish Local Government Committee are recommending that you vote YES to accept the revised and improved offer.

2. What are we being offered?

You can read COSLA's full offer letter [here](#). The key elements of the offer are:

- An increase of £2000 for those earning up to £20,500
- An increase of £1925 for those earning between £20,500 to £39,000
- A 5% increase for those earning between £39,000 to £60,000
- A maximum increase of £3k for those earning above £60,000
- The removal of SSSC fees where applicable (social care registration fees)
- One additional day of annual leave
- An uplift of all nationally agreed allowances in line with the percentage offer
- All increases based on a 36hr week calculator

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

The Local Government Committee are recommending acceptance of this offer for a number of reasons:

- The offer is a significant improvement on previous offers. The original offer was for 2% which was a total pay-bill increase of £140m. We now have on the table an offer which is a 7.5% increase to pay-bill, totalling around £600m.
- The offer will further lift up those on low pay by increasing the Scottish Local Government Living wage to £10.85 and giving those on the lowest wages a pay rise of 10.55%.
- The offer ensures that all members earning below £39k per year – 85% of the workforce – will get increases of between 5% and 10.55%.
- The £2000 for the lowest paid and the £1925 for those up to £39k is based on a 36-hour week calculator. This is an improvement on all previous offers, which were based on a 37-hour week calculator. This means that those who work a 37hr week will get more than these figures.
- The removal of SSSC fees (social care registration fees) is something we have campaigned for since they were introduced and the agreement to remove these takes away another financial burden for many low paid workers in social care and early years.
- The extra day of annual leave is welcome and means an increase in pay for term-time workers.
- This is the best offer anywhere in the public sector in the UK right now, achieved by the determination of members in waste and schools to take strike action and our negotiators being determined to squeeze as much as possible out of CoSLA and the Scottish Government.
- The Committee believes it is the best offer that can be achieved at this time.

4. What are the other SJC Trade Unions saying about this offer?

Both Unite and the GMB have suspended their industrial action and are consulting their members on this offer with a recommendation to accept. We understand that the GMB's ballot will close on the 23rd September and Unite's ballot will close on the same day as ours, the 28th September.

5. In what way does this offer differ from the one before which we were asked to reject?

The previous offer was for a percentage pay increase plus, where applicable, a one-off 'cost of living supplement' to take the increase to £1925 and it was based on a 37hr week calculator. The one-off 'cost of living' payments were not going to be 'consolidated' into pay – this means they would not have been pensionable or count towards overtime - you would have got them this year but they would not have increased the level of your pay going forwards.

This revised offer does not contain any 'one-off' payments – **all increases in this revised offer are fully consolidated so they permanently increase the level of your pay, are pensionable and count towards overtime.** This offer is also based on a 36hr week calculator, which means those who work more than 36hrs a week actually get more than the figures stated.

6. The offer does not solve the cost of living crises – what else can you do to help?

It is not possible to solve the entirety of our cost-of-living crisis in a single set of pay negotiations with Scottish councils that have been under-funded for years and a Scottish Government that has some constraints on their budget. That is why our fight against the cost-of-living crisis includes demands for the UK government to cut energy bills and increase spending on public services. It is also why UNISON has and will continue to support calls for free school meals, increases in benefits for children and a rent freeze.

7. Will my increase be backdated?

Yes. The pay implementation date is the 1st April 2022 so the terms of this offer, if accepted, will apply from that date and all increases will be backdated to then.

8. I am a term time worker – how will this affect me?

Term time workers will have the same hourly rate increase. In terms of the additional day's leave - this does not mean that you will have an extra day of school closure but will be paid for an extra day during the school breaks. So, this is essentially an extra day paid during the year.

9. I do not work 36 hours a week – how will my increase be calculated?

As with all pay awards increases will be applied to the hourly rates and the total uplift will be based on the number of hours worked. There are many, many different working patterns across all 32 local councils and it is not possible for us to calculate the individual uplifts for each member. If in doubt please ask your local finance department to confirm what this would mean for you personally.

10. Why does the offer letter say that the removal of SSSC fees for all roles and grades is 'where applicable'?

This simply refers to the fact that not everyone in the local government workforce has to pay SSSC fees – the removal is for everyone covered by SJC terms and conditions who, because of the role they do, are currently required to pay them.

11. Why has it taken so long to get here?

This has been a long and painful process and this offer comes much later than we would have wished – the joint SJC trade unions submitted the pay claim in January 2022 in plenty of time for agreement to have been reached by the pay implementation date of 1st April.

But we could not simply accept the first offer the employer presented us with. We believe it is right that we fought for as much money for our members as possible. The offer we now have in front of us has only been achieved by our high profile campaign, the determination of our members in waste, recycling, schools and early years being prepared to stand up and take strike action and our negotiators being determined to squeeze as much money as possible out of CoSLA and the Scottish Government.

We have repeatedly called for a review of the negotiating process to try to ensure negotiations on pay take place in a speedier fashion - you will see that the offer also makes a commitment to put proposals to the SJC AGM in November this year to try to do just that.

12. What happens next if we accept the offer?

We will press for implementation to be made as soon as possible. We will continue to campaign for future offers to be based on a 35hr week calculator, will continue negotiations on payment of other professional fees e.g. for OTs and for central standards of support for home/hybrid working.

13. What happens if we reject the offer?

We will return to the selective industrial action strategy that we already had in place to try to press for further movement from the employer.

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

New members joining UNISON **before the 23rd September 2022** will get a vote in this ballot. 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 5pm on 28th September 2022.

15. I haven't received my voting link - where is it?

If you've not received an e-mail with your voting link please, in the first instance, check your junk/spam folders – the sender will be emails@unison.org.uk with the subject 'Your Voting Link - UNISON Local Government Pay Ballot'.

If the e-mail is not there it could be that we do not hold an up to date e-mail address for you or that you updated your details after we downloaded the mailing list for this e-mail. We will be issuing weekly reminders during the ballot period which will capture anyone who updates their details after the ballot opens. The last date to update your details to ensure you get a ballot link is 23rd September. To update your details please log into MyUnison on www.unison.org.uk/my-unison, or call 0800 0 857 857.

16. I have clicked on the ballot link but the page is not loading - how can I vote?

The ballot page is liable to experience a lot of web traffic when the ballot goes live which might mean some users experience difficulty loading the page. Please give it time and try it again later - you have until 5pm on the 28th September to cast your vote.

17. I accidentally voted No when I meant to vote Yes (or vice versa) - can I change my vote?

No. Please read the e-mail and ballot link you receive carefully before casting your vote. The vote is anonymous and the system quite rightly therefore does not allow us to make changes to it.

18. What else can I do to support UNISON's work in Local Government?

There are a number of things you can do to help strengthen the union's work for local government members:

- Make sure you use your vote!
- Share this 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.