

# PAY UP FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What did we ask for?

- You can read our full claim here. The claim was for:
- A settlement that runs for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024
- An increase of 12% or £4,000 whichever is the greater to all spinal column points (based on a nominal 35 hour working week). This would equate to a £2.20 increase on the hourly rate.
- An underpinning minimum rate of pay of £15 per hour.
- An increase to the mileage rate to ensure parity with NHS colleagues.
- A no compulsory redundancy agreement.
- Completion of the review, established as part of our 2021 settlement, of professional fees (beyond the SSSC fees which are now paid for local government workers) incurred by members in the course of their employment.
- Early completion of the review, established as part of our 2021 settlement, on how we achieve a no detriment reduction in the working week to enable members to achieve a better work-life balance.
- Agreement to change the national calculator for the normal working week to 35 hours.
- No less than parity with other local government bargaining groups.
- Early commencement of negotiations with a clear expectation of settlement implementation by 1 April review date.

### What is the employer offering?

The employer has, to date, only tabled one offer – that was on the 3rd April 2023. You can read the full offer letter here. The offer is made up of two parts:

- a 5% full year increase on all Spinal Column Points (SCP) from 1 April 2023
- plus an additional, grade dependent, increase from 1 January 2024.

### This additional amount would be:

- An additional £0.45 on SCP2 to SCP18 (annual full-time salary of circa £20,933) and the underpinning Scottish Local Government Living Wage rate. This will raise the SLGLW by £0.99 over the course of the financial year.
- An additional 2.5% on SCP19 to SCP43 (annual full-time salary of circa £28,862), with smoothing consisting of slightly higher uplifts applied to SCP19, 20, and 21.
- An additional 1.5% up on SCP44 to SCP64 (annual full-time salary of circa £38,585).
- An additional 1% on SCP 65 and above.

### Why should I vote YES for strike action?

The offer is not good enough – you are worth so much more.

- Falls short of the Joint Trade Union's claim, which was submitted on 26th January 2023.
- Falls far short of the current rate of inflation, which remains above 10%. It would therefore amount to a real-terms pay cut for our members during the current cost of living crises and as such will plunge more of them into debt.
- For those on the lowest pay, falls short of the offer made to local government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Has a cost envelope which falls short of that which has applied to other areas of the public sector.
- Fails to address other items contained within our claim including any real proposals to move to a minimum rate of pay of £15 per hour.
- 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.

### If we vote Yes to take action when will we be on strike?

We are required by law to hold a formal industrial action ballot before taking action. This is the ballot you are being sent now, in a purple envelope.

# Local government ballot 2023

## Frequently Asked Questions

The legislation governing how and when unions conduct formal industrial action ballots is very strict – it means ballots can only be held by post and requires us to achieve a 50% turnout of those balloted with a majority of those voting in favour of taking action. Only when, and if, those requirements are met would we be able to take action.

If we reach those legislative requirements it is likely that strike action will take place in September and we will seek to co-ordinate strike dates with our sister trade unions.

### 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. What happens if we say we are not prepared to take strike action?

We would convey that message to your employer. However, indicating to the employer that you are not prepared to take action to challenge their decisions is unlikely to encourage them to put forward an improved offer.

### Which groups are being balloted for strike action?

The membership groups that we have formally notified employers we will be balloting are all members employed working in schools, who provide services to the running and operation of the school. This includes early years members where they work within a school or are co-located with a school BUT it does not include early years workers in stand alone nurseries.

### 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 tactical - to ensure we maximise the impact of our action on vital service areas likely to force the employers hand.

### What is the deadline for returning my ballot paper?

We must receive your completed ballot paper by 10am on the 25th August 2023 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. The ballot helpline will be open from 8am on the 7th August 2023 to 12 noon on 21st August 2023.

### Other SJC trade union strike ballots have concluded – Why is ours taking place now?

UNISON take responsibility to ensure that all industrial action is legally compliant so you are protected if you are on strike. We are the largest representative body of local government workers by far and that means our ballot preparations take a little time.

### 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 an employee working in a schools, for the purpose of providing services to the running and operation of the school, or your work in early years if you work within a school or are co-located with a school.

### I'm not being balloted for strike action right now – will I be balloted at a later date?

UNISON Scotland local government committee will continue to review the situation to see if other groups of members need to be added in additional waves of ballots and action. We will keep you updated.

### I am not being balloted for strike action right now – 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 you do so colleagues included in the ballot know that they have your support and solidarity because they will be taking action on behalf of all local government workers.

#### 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.
- Help us speak to colleagues who are being balloted to stress the importance of them returning their ballot paper – sign up to call colleagues by contacting your local branch.
- Talk to your colleagues in the workplace about the importance of voting yes to take strike action.
- Share our campaign materials on your social media feeds. You can access these <https://unison-scotland.org/local-government-pay-23-24>.
- Recruit your colleagues to UNISON – the more members we have the louder our voice at the negotiating table. They can join <https://join.unison.org.uk>.

