

Local Government Pay Claim

BARGAINING BRIEFING

Introduction

UNISON members have suffered a real terms pay cut over the last ten years. Despite the news headlines following the budget, there was no allocation of funds to local authorities to meet the three percent pay rise that other public sector workers are likely to receive. The UNISON Local Government Committee is now in negotiations with the employer to secure a decent pay rise for local government members. To support our campaign UNISON is conducting a survey of local government workers. This briefing gives details of how you can take part in that survey and the wider campaign.

The Budget

As has become normal in recent years the budget announcement lead to angry debates about whether or not local government has had its budget cut. The answer is yes. Despite an additional £159.5m of revenue funding councils are getting a standstill budget in 'real terms'. However, 'real terms' means an assumption that inflation will be 1.4% next year. No one really believes this will happen. There are also 'unavoidable commitments' e.g. demographic change, COSLA calculated all these demands at 2.6%, plus 3% for a realistic inflation estimate. That's why they called for £545m. More details on the budget can be found in the further information section of this briefing.

What are we calling for?

On 12th January 2018 UNISON, along with the other Scottish local government trade unions, submitted a pay claim for 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 claim includes an above inflation increase plus an element of restoration. You can read the full detail of the pay claim [here](#).

Why are we calling for 'restoration'?

UNISON research has calculated that you have suffered a real terms loss in pay, due to below inflation increases over the past ten years, of some 15%. This is the difference between how much the cost of living has gone up compared to how much your pay has gone up.

We would argue that a 15% difference does not simply apply a bit of pressure on household incomes but demonstrates that you will have had to make difficult lifestyle choices to make ends meet.

So, we are calling for your employer to make some inroads into protecting your pay from the sharp rise in inflation (the OBR is forecasting RPI inflation this year of 3.3%) but also make a start to reverse the many years of real terms cuts to wages through paying an element of 'restoration'.

KEY POINTS:

- UNISON and the other trade unions have submitted a pay claim of a £1,500 flat rate increase to all spinal column points, or 6.5%, whichever is greater.
- Despite the Scottish government's budget announcement they have provided no additional funding for a 3% pay rise for local government workers
- Local government workers have experienced a real terms pay cut of 15% over the past ten years



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This pay claim is therefore designed to protect the lowest paid workers but also start to bring workers earnings back into line with where they should be. We know that this cannot be done in one year but it must be an aim for everyone and that is why we have sought a commitment to full restoration of pay over a period of not more than 5 years.

The Scottish government has said that it is going to lift the pay cap for public sector workers – does that mean I will get a 3% increase?

Not necessarily: The Scottish government do not include local government workers in their definition of ‘public sector workers’, only those that they employ directly e.g. the civil service and NHS workers. They view local government pay as a matter for local authorities. Whilst we have welcomed the Scottish government’s stated intention to lift the public sector pay cap for public service workers we have consistently argued that this must apply to you as local government workers who deliver a good public service in local authorities across the country.

What happens now?

The ball is now in your employers hands. We understand that they want to see the detail of the government’s final budget settlement and then consult COSLA leaders before responding to our claim. We do not therefore expect to have a formal response to our claim until the end of March.

What can I do to help?

- Please have **your say on your pay** - to ask for your views about the claim and how you think you might be able to help us get the increase you deserve. Please tell us what you think by answering a few short questions [here](#). This will take no more than 2 minutes of your time and will give us valuable information that we can use in negotiations. The deadline for responding is 5pm on Friday 16th March.
- Please circulate this briefing to fellow members and colleagues know what the union is doing to fight for better pay for all local government workers.
- Recruit a friend to the union – our strength is our members and the more of them we have the stronger our position in negotiations.
- Write to your local MSP about local government funding.
- Find out when your local councillor is having their s file, adds new surgery and lobby them directly to support UNISON’s pay claim.
- Speak to your local UNISON branch and let them know you are willing to help – many hands make light work!

Action for Branches

Branches will already be working with members consulting locally about this year’s pay claim. The local government committee asks that branches supplement their local work by using branch websites and social media to encourage members without email to use this survey to share their views. This will support the development of the campaign to secure a real pay rise for members

Further information:

UNISON Scotland pay survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8W75WX8>

Pay Claim

<http://www.unison-scotland.org/2018/01/12/unions-submit-local-government-2018-pay-claim/>

Letter to cabinet secretary

<http://www.unison-scotland.org/2017/12/19/local-government-pay/>

Update on budget

<http://publicworksscotland.blogspot.co.uk/2018/02/council-funding-step-forward-but-not.html>

Update on impact of budget Cuts

<http://publicworksscotland.blogspot.co.uk/2018/02/council-funding-step-forward-but-not.html>



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