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Issue Number 12

NJC pay campaign – latest news

All the latest news, campaign ideas and resources from the local government NJC 2021 pay campaign.

UNISON members reject pay offer – and will be balloted for strike action

As we reported in our email on 1 October, UNISON members have voted overwhelmingly to reject the Local Government Employers' offer of a 1.75% pay increase (2.75% for those on pay point 1). 79% of members voted to reject the offer, and we now know that members of GMB and Unite have voted to reject, with similar percentages.

This overwhelming majority of UNISON members makes clear the strength of feeling among local government workers about their pay. Council and school workers have been the unsung heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic, working tirelessly and often at risk to their own safety to serve their communities. Meanwhile, since 2010 the value of their pay has fallen by 25%. The 1.75% pay offer is completely inadequate and UNISON members have made their feelings about it clear.

UNISON's NJC Committee therefore decided to move to ballot members on industrial action. Ballot papers are scheduled to go out in early December, and members will be asked whether they want to take strike action to secure an improved pay offer. UNISON will be asking members to vote 'yes' to strike action.

Meanwhile, the Joint Trade Union Side have written to the Employers' Side, asking them to return to the negotiations and making clear that they need to make an improved pay offer. We have also asked them to re-consider their refusal to engage in lobbying of the Westminster Government, alongside the unions, to try to secure more funding for local government pay. We know that local government finances are difficult, but if the employers are serious about valuing the work our members do, they will work with us to get a fairer deal for their staff.

You can read the Joint Trade Union letter here:

https://msgfocus.com/files/amf_unison/project_131/Letter_to_employers_re_Pay_Offer.pdf

We have issued a press release to highlight our rejection of the offer, the strike ballot, and our call for an improved offer here: <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/2021/10/council-and-school-staff-deserve-increased-pay-offer-say-unions/>

Like UNISON, Unite will also be balloting members for industrial action. GMB are holding a consultative phase first, but we hope they will then join us in balloting members for strike action.

Campaign materials and resources

In the coming days, we will be launching new campaign branding and then a range of campaign resources, aimed at explaining the dispute to members, encouraging them to vote, and promoting a strong 'votes yes to strike' message. For all of the latest news and campaign resources, visit the campaign web page: <https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/fair-pay-now-council-school-workers/>

Ask members to update their details

Preparing for an industrial action ballot of members across several thousand employers obviously involves a huge amount of work at branch, regional, and national levels. Thank you for all your efforts.

It is of course crucial that our records are up to date in advance of the ballot. Please ask your members to check and update their details here: <https://www.unison.org.uk/update-your-details/>

Today's action: re-tweet our joint trade union letter

It would be great if we could generate major publicity for our letter to the Employers' Side, making clear that our members have rejected the offer, we are moving to a strike ballot, and demanding an improved offer. Please click here and re-tweet! : <https://twitter.com/unisontheunion/status/1450115906886045701>

And please ask your members to do the same.

Talk to your members

It is clearly vital that we engage with members as much as possible in advance of the ballot, as well as during the ballot period. Campaign materials will be available soon, but in the meantime please arrange meetings (in person or virtual, as appropriate) and use whatever means you can to encourage them to vote, and to vote yes to strike.

Our message to members is that if we get a 'yes' vote on a sufficient turnout, the plan would be to take an initial day's strike action; but that it might be necessary to take further, escalating action.

NJC Committee members and staff from the campaign team are available to speak at branch and regional meetings.

Other campaign resources - reminder

Here's a reminder of further campaign resources that are available to help you spread the word.

Campaign web page: www.unison.org.uk/LGfairpay - ***watch this space for new campaign materials and resources***

The forgotten frontline - article focusing on individual stories:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2021/07/the-forgotten-frontline-council-and-school-staff-need-a-10-pay-rise/>

Posters aimed at members, potential members and the public - order printed copies or download digital versions: <https://shop.unison.site/product-category/council-and-schools-pay/>

Downloadable 'Fair pay for council and school workers' graphics:

<https://medialibrary.unison.org.uk/?c=392&k=c8607f325c>

Pay campaign leaflet - general: <https://shop.unison.site/product/njc-pay-leaflet-2021/>

Pay campaign leaflet - schools: <https://shop.unison.site/product/njc-pay-schools-leaflet/>

General leaflet – Welsh: <https://shop.unison.site/product/njc-pay-leaflet-2021-welsh-version/>

Schools leaflet – Welsh: <https://shop.unison.site/product/njc-pay-schools-leaflet-2021-welsh-version/>

Key messages document bringing together arguments, statistics and examples – helpful for local campaigning eg with press and media:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZdW0r7YCbkmnr3UfsQcwHgt_bWvMSwEbUL82kGibLM/edit?usp=sharing.

Local Service Champions videos – highlighting the vital work our members do:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkDSY-8LeTI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9yAdGHmGOE>

Campaign video – use this button to auto-share on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Ffb.watch%2F4StFuIWC Ee%2F>

Campaign video – use this button to auto-share on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/UNISONinLG/status/1365346416172875777?s=20>

Facebook page: facebook.com/UnisoninLocalGovernment

Twitter feed: @UNISONinLG

Model motion for local Labour Party meetings:

http://msgfocus.com/files/amf_unison/project_131/Local_Labour_Party_motion_-_supporting_the_pay_claim.docx

Link for members to update their details: <https://www.unison.org.uk/update-your-details/>