

# UNISON to ballot local government members on industrial action



Just under a month before the local government elections at the beginning of next month UNISON members have instructed their trade union to ballot 70,000 local government members across every local authority in Scotland on industrial action.

The decision was announced at UNISON's local government committee meeting on Monday following a consultative ballot which resulted in a 77.6 per cent vote to reject the employers' pay offer.

The union claims that real value of local government pay has reduced as prices rise.

Employers have offered an increase of £350 for employees earning less than £35,000 and for those earning more than £35,000 the increase suggested is 1%. The union asked for a flat rate payment of £1,000 for all employees and continued uprating of the Scottish Government Living Wage.

UNISON said that if the consultative ballot resulted in a strong vote one way or the other then they would move towards a formal industrial action ballot.

Dougie Black, regional organiser for UNISON Scotland, said: "Local government workers have suffered years of pay restraint and their pay is worth far less now than ten years ago. The cost of food, gas and electricity, travel and childcare continue to rise and, as a consequence, their living standards have been severely eroded. This can not continue.

"If pay had even just risen with inflation a home care worker,

for example, would be paid £19,900 a year when instead they are paid just £16,900; an early years' worker would receive £24,100 instead of £20,400 and a library assistant would earn £26,400 instead of £22,400. And that's just to keep up with the cost of living.

"Fair pay remains a priority for UNISON. Our members are the cogs that keep local government services turning and they deserve to be treated fairly."

This was the leaflet in which the union advised local government employees to reject the offer from employers. The vote ended on Friday 7 April 2017.



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