

# Strikes at Scottish Water to start again

**Scottish Water staff will resume strikes after unions representing the workers Friday accused management at the company of 'playing games'.**

UNISON, Unite and GMB said negotiations at arbitration body Acas intended to resolve a pay dispute have been 'fruitless' as they broke down today when the company made a u-turn a previous proposal.

The unions say that Scottish Water had proposed an improved offer for pay and conditions worth an additional £1.2 million earlier this month, most of which was through a staff bonus scheme.

**However, the unions say the additional bonus money was taken off the table today and an inferior offer put forward.**

Unions say they are 'bitterly disappointed' with the outcome of the talks and have accused senior managers of playing games over pay.

Strike action will resume from Monday 2 June for seven days.

On 5 May Scottish Water said that the new pay proposal "is a combined average value of around 7% of salary for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026, well above inflation. Those in lower graded roles could receive total salary increases of almost 11% over this period.

"All Scottish Water employees are also eligible for an annual out-performance bonus and the business recently reduced the working week to 35 hours from 37 hours previously."

On Friday a Scottish Water spokesperson said: "These pay negotiations have been going on for 11 months. In that time Scottish Water has made seven offers.

"Our new proposal would see an average pay increase of around 7% over two years – comfortably above inflation.

"It would mean, for example, a Treatment Operator on a current salary of £31,205 would move to £33,980 (an increase of almost 9%).

"We have also included a minimum increase in each year which, when combined, comes to £2,775. This means some employees could see their base salary increase by 11% in that period.

"This is a good deal. It balances rewarding our hard-working people with investing customers' money sensibly.

"It is now time for the joint trade unions to put the details to their members in a ballot so that our people can get these above inflation pay increases.

"Our employees have told us that they want this concluded so that they get their pay increases. We believe the offer we have made today can achieve this."

UNISON Scotland regional manager Simon Macfarlane said: "Unions are bitterly disappointed with today's talks. After eleven months of fruitless negotiations, there seemed to be some progress.

"But making staff an inferior offer to the one previously proposed is just playing games.

"Each union will consult its members on this latest offer, but the company should be clear that strike action is back on next

month.

“The people of Scotland deserve better. Scottish Water workers want to be out in communities providing a world-class water system at a time when the dry weather is putting the service under strain. But instead they’re having to fight to get fair pay.”

GMB Scotland organiser Claire Greer said: “As the rest of the country basks in the sunshine, management in Scottish Water have once again managed to throw shade at all of their employees.

“An offer was on the table in a bid to resolve this ongoing dispute and it is now clear that it was utterly disingenuous. Once again Scottish Water has absolutely shattered employee relations and has completely misread the situation.

“Management’s ability to play games with unions and employees is staggering. A second offer that Scottish Water has scattered to the winds has left us with no option other than to continue with industrial action.”

Unite Scotland regional officer Sam Ritchie said: “It is extremely disappointing that Scottish Water management has chosen to place itself in this position.

“We have engaged in wage negotiations in good faith and, as a gesture of that good faith, suspended our planned industrial action. However, the offer presented to the unions nearly two weeks ago now appears to have been disingenuous.

“Scottish Water management continues to disregard the voices of the workforce we represent, responding instead with actions that reflect a concerning disconnect.

“Furthermore, chief executive Alex Plant, whose salary exceeds that of the prime minister, has once again declined to engage directly with the representatives of his workforce.

“This lack of meaningful engagement has left the unions with no viable alternative but to move forward with industrial action.”

