

Please **DO NOT** amend any of this advice. If you need advice to adapt for local needs, contact Chris Bartter or Peter Hunter on 0870 7777 006

EQUAL PAY IN SCOTLAND'S LOCAL COUNCILS

No win, no fee lawyers

You may be aware that a firm of 'no win-no fee' lawyers are offering to run equal pay claims in your authority. There may well also be other law firms who will offer their services. You may have seen leaflets promising thousands of pounds compensation. This leaflet offers you some answers to typical questions UNISON has been asked.

1 Is it true that hundreds of people in our authority have possible equal pay claims?

YES. We don't know how many yet, but the number will be significant.

2 Are lawyers the only people taking these claims?

NO. Trade unions are taking these claims. UNISON has hundreds lodged across the UK and has concluded agreements worth millions of pounds.

3 Will UNISON take my case?

Tribunal rules prevent us or anyone else taking hopeless cases, so we need to assess every case, but if you have a good case then we will support you.

4 Is it true that 'No win no fee' lawyers will take some of my compensation?

'No win no fee' lawyers take anything up to 30% of the winnings in the form of a fee. The literature circulating at the moment from Action 4 Equality and Stefan Cross quotes a payment of 11.75% including VAT.

5 If I replied to Stefan Cross's letter am I legally bound to use his service?

NO. But there are penalties for leaving. For example, you will be charged £500 for every six months of work done. Equal Pay cases are notoriously slow.

Some take up to seven years. This could cost you up to £3,500. Maybe even more. If you then pay for another lawyer and win your case you might get a second bill from Stefan Cross.

5 Is there a risk they will abandon me?

The contract we have seen enables the law firm to withdraw without paying you a penny. For example, you might have a winning case which you want to pursue and he disagrees because it doesn't make him enough money.

Other 'No win no fee' lawyers may have similar contracts.

6 What is so good about going with the union?

If you read the press at the moment, you will see that some Scottish Councils have threatened to sack workers to tackle their equal pay debt. UNISON is committed to following through on equal pay in the face of these threats.

'No win, no fee' lawyers don't say how they will help if you and your colleagues are sacked to pay the equal pay bill. UNISON aims to get equal pay AND to protect workers from dismissal. And, we haggle with employers over working hours, overtime, shift payments and the rest.

If you would like us to assess your claim for compensation and protect your job then stick with UNISON.

Back the UNISON Campaign

If you want UNISON to fight for fair pay whilst protecting jobs and services why not join us?

Contact your local rep or phone 0845 355 0845