

Why should I strike?

UNISON's local government members have voted 70% in favour of a 'Yes' vote for a programme of strike action over this year's pay offer. The first 24-hour walkout will go ahead on 20 August. Make sure you're there. By supporting the strike, you can send a clear message to the employers that pay is an issue that will not go away.

Why should I strike?

Inflation is still rising and is set to continue. The 2.5% pay offer is already a pay cut. Food is up 6%, transport 7%, mortgages 8%, electricity and only recently gas up by an additional 35%. Pay in the private sector is rising by 4%.

I don't agree with the pay offer - but why strike action?

You are doing more for less. Pay rises have been below inflation for five years. It's time to take a stand against low pay.

Is my pay really that bad?

Local government workers are amongst the lowest paid in the public sector. Three-quarters of the workforce are women, but there's a 40% gap between part-time women's and full-time men's hourly pay. A 2.5% pay rise will have a damaging effect on women's pay and would widen the gap between local government pay and rest of economy too.

Shouldn't I be more worried about losing my job through 'efficiencies'?

The union are fighting to protect them. But we need to make a stand on pay now to protect your standard of living and show that we value what we do for local communities – even if the employers don't.

Can local government employers afford to pay more?

This year councils agreed that they did not need to increase council tax – some even cut it! We also know that many/some councils have already budgeted for larger pay rises than that on offer. We don't want big increases in council tax, but our members are the local services. We know that local councils have saved at least £200million in efficiency savings over the last two years – achieved by our members

Management often talk of "affordability", but it is a question of whether they can afford NOT to give their employees a decent wage. If they are to recruit and retain staff in vital jobs, they will have to pay them a living wage – otherwise people will vote with their feet. You can't keep cutting budgets and expect the lowest paid to fill the gap. As at 1 April, 2007 unallocated reserves in Scottish councils were at least £100 million.

But the government won't change its pay policy - will it?

Pressure made the government find £2.7billion to rescue people hit by scrapping the 10p tax band. It can change its mind again, and we've already told the employers that it's 'no deal'.

Will I lose pay when I'm on strike?

Your employer won't pay you and there won't be strike pay, but branches do have discretion to help members with hardship payments for those who need it most.

Can I really afford to strike? Money is so tight at the moment.

We know it's a tough decision but doing nothing now will mean even more hardship next year. Your pay is not keeping up with price rises.

Will my employer pick on me?

You aren't alone. UNISON has over 100,000 members in local government and other employers delivering services for councils. If we stand together, they can't pick us off and they'll know we mean business.

I'm not a member but I want to strike.

Non-members can join the union at any time, and can still take part in the action