

Unison Rejects Latest Pay Offer

John McDermott UNISON NEC (PC)

The National Joint Council of UNISON that represents 800,000 workers in Local Government has rejected the latest pay offer from the Employers and Government.

The latest offer amounted to 19p per hour for the lowest paid and £6.66 per week for workers on £14k per year.

The Employers saw this as an improvement averaging just below 2.5% from the previous offer of 2%. In the last 12 months the rate of inflation has averaged over 4% and average pay rises are 3.8%.

The employers have the money to offer more and have admitted they have budgeted for between 2.5% and 3.5%.

The National Joint Council rejected this offer by a vote of 24 to 4; they have called for an industrial action ballot recommending rejection and strike action. This means that there will be a national ballot involving Local Government workers in October with strike action in November.

There will be some



who will think this is a good deal after the previously insulting 2% offer, but workers should not be deceived. This is still not good enough for people delivering local services who have already saved the Government over £1Bn in 'efficiency' savings.

Full time workers on £14k per year will receive an increase of £6.66 per week, The lowest paid, such as Catering, Cleaning and Caretaking workers, will only receive an increase of £380 per year £7.31 per week before tax.

The difference between the current offer and 2% is £3.75 per week for the highest paid and £3 per week for the lowest.

By any standards the offer is poor. Inflation, including house prices, is still above 4% and has been for over 12 months, meaning this is still a pay cut. The average worker will also have to pay more pension contributions from next year.

The original pay claim is for 5% or a £1000, the latest offer is less than half that and only a few workers earning £40k per year, will get an extra £1000.

We must not forget that Local Government workers are a significant part of the public sector workforce and what we do or accept will influence offers to other workers

I am sure many workers across the country will have been encour-

aged by the postal workers massive strike action in rejection of a 2.5% pay offer. If Local Government workers accepted this latest offer then the postal workers will be left isolated.

Workers in the Department of Works and Pensions have been offered even less and will be looking to other big groups of workers to set the benchmark.

Health workers are currently being consulted on a miserly offer totalling 2%, shamefully without a recommendation to reject from senior UNISON officials.

The 81% rejection of the 2% offer will have focused the minds of the employers and government, We need to focus it again by an equally big vote for strike action -local government workers who deliver vital services to the community want and deserve a decent pay rise not a pay cut.

Inside this Newsletter:

September 18th Pay Rally

Details of the campaign meetings

Teachers Pay

PCS Campaign Update

Public Sector Pay Campaign

Attention all Public Sector workers

A number of Public Sector Trades Unions in Leeds have set up regular meetings with the following aims,

Share information
Organise mutual support
Organise events
Discuss local and national disputes.
Build rank and file support

These meetings are supported by, PCS, NUT, UCU, Leeds Local Govt UNISON, Leeds Trades Council and LCC Joint Trade Union Committee.

The next meeting will discuss
Public Sector pay rally 18th September
Stall on 8th September
Update on pay negotiations.

Date Tuesday 4th September
Time 7.30pm
Place UNISON Branch Office
160a Woodhouse Lane
(Opposite The Fenton Pub)

The meetings are open to members and activists of all Public Sector Trade Unions.

For more information please contact
John McDermott, 2458442, or Tim Hales 2304385

Leeds public service worker

Smash Brown's Pay Freeze Stop Privatisation

Gordon Brown's pay freeze is beginning to have an effect on all public sector workers.

All major public sector trade unions are either in dispute or consulting about poor pay offers.

Postal workers have been on strike and Prison Officers walked out over pay.

Come to the Pay Rally to find out more.

Speakers will be there from all major Trade Unions.



COMMUNICATION
WORKERS UNION



Public and
Commercial
Services Union



Leeds Local
Government
Branch



Tuesday 18th September
7.30pm – 9pm
Council Chamber, Civic Hall

For more information contact

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2% WON'T PAY THE RENT!

Teachers' Pay 2007

Patrick Murphy, Leeds NUT Secretary and National Executive member for West Yorkshire

Teachers are in the midway point of a two-year pay settlement covering the period 2006-8. In September 2006 we received a 2.5% pay increase which is to be followed by another 2.5% rise this September. Teachers' pay for 2009-11 is to be decided by the Secretary of State for Schools and Families later this year.

For the National Union of Teachers there are two linked issues that could lead to industrial action over pay. First the government has broken a promise to review our pay award for 2006-8 if inflation exceeded the levels they were predicting. 2.5% was supposed to be at least a cost-of-living increase but with inflation at well over 4% on average over the last 12 months it has, in fact, been a pay cut. There was a 'trigger mechanism' built into our pay deal which allowed any party to request a review if inflation was above 3.25%. Since January the NUT have been requesting a review and the other teacher unions joined this request in May. In June the Secretary of State rejected a review. To muddy the waters slightly he said that the teachers' pay review

body could consider this issue when they reported on a pay award for 2009-11. This 'breach of honour' leaves teachers with a pay cut for two years unless we take action to insist on a change of policy.

The second issue is the 2009-11 pay award. In their evidence to the Review Body the government have made it clear that there should be no award of more than 2% in line with Gordon Brown's pay freeze directive. So after

two years of a pay cut we face a further three years of the same. The review body report is expected at the end of October and then the Secretary of State will respond to the recommendations. He has the final say.

The debate in the NUT is about what the best timetable for action. The dominant view at the moment is that we should ballot after the Review Body reports as we are then not vulnerable to the claim that we are threatening ac-

tion without knowing what we are being offered and there may be more change of the other teacher unions taking action with us. There is a significant minority who argue that we need to ballot sooner than later just as much to the school support staff unions (eg Unison Local Government) as to the other teacher unions. It is likely that the last chance to push for an earlier ballot will be at the September 7th National Executive meeting.

PCS Campaign to Protect Wages Jobs and Services –update

By a West Yorkshire PCS activist

PCS are in a campaign to protect our wages, jobs and the services to the public our members provide. We have had two successful days of strike action this year involving our 320,000 members. Along with the rest of the public sector we are having a 2% pay limit imposed on us, despite the current rate of inflation being more than twice that and our members already doing some of the lowest paid jobs in the public sector. 25% of Civil Servants earn less

than £15,300 a year. Some PCS members who's job is to provide Family Allowances have to themselves claim the benefits they give out.

We are also fighting against the announcement by the then Chancellor Gordon Brown of a cut of 104,000 Civil Service jobs. We are being told there is no money to pay for our wages and jobs at a time when £7.2 billion is being spent on consultants in

the Civil Service, not to mention the money being wasted on fighting illegal and unpopular wars overseas.

Our General Secretary Mark Serwotka and the majority of our members are pushing for joint action with other public sector unions to make this government see sense over providing decent public services.