

3% a Pay Cut disguised as a Pay Offer

Q: Why have we rejected the 3% pay offer from local government employers?

A: The 3% offer is significantly below our claim of 6.5%, and it fails to address the real terms pay cuts we've endured over the past 15 years. It doesn't even keep pace with the current cost of living.

The pay offer of 3% does not keep pace with the rising cost of living. The UK inflation rate rose to 3% in January 2025 and [is forecasted to rise to 3.7%](#) in the second half of 2025

Accepting a 3% increase means a real terms pay cut, as it does not cover the increased costs of everyday goods and services and would mean accepting another year of financial hardship for local government workers.

Q: But 3% is still a pay rise, isn't it?

A: Well, no, consider this:

- **Inflation:** The latest UK inflation figures show a rise to 3% in January, exceeding predictions. This means the cost of everyday goods is rising at the same rate as the proposed pay rise, effectively cancelling it out.
- **Projected Inflation:** Economic forecasts suggest inflation may stay high or even increase further, meaning the 3% will be even less effective as the year progresses.

- **Energy Costs:** The recent energy cap increase of 6.4% adds an average of £111 to annual fuel bills. This alone wipes out a significant portion of the 3% increase.
- **Council Tax:** Massive council tax rises further erode our take-home pay.

Q: How does the recent energy price cap increase affect local government workers?

A: The recent 6.4% increase in the energy price cap means that the average household will see an increase of £111 on their annual fuel bills². This significant rise in energy costs further erodes the purchasing power of local government workers, making it harder to manage household budgets on a 3% pay increase.

Q: What impact have recent council tax rises had on local government workers?

A: Many local authorities in Scotland have announced substantial council tax increases, seeing hikes of between 6% and 15%. These increases add to the financial burden on local government workers, who are already struggling with stagnant wages and rising living costs.

Value the Services we deliver, Value our Pay

Q: What is pay restoration?

A: Pay restoration refers to the process of adjusting wages to restore their value to a previous level, accounting for inflation and other economic factors. It aims to bring pay back to a level where it reflects the cost of living and the value of work performed, essentially reversing the effects of pay devaluation over time

Q: Why is UNISON calling for pay restoration for local government workers?

A: UNISON is calling for pay restoration to address the long-term devaluation of wages experienced by local government workers. This is essential for maintaining a motivated and effective workforce, ensuring high-quality public services, and addressing recruitment and retention challenges. Pay restoration is needed to achieve a fairer and more sustainable pay structure for local government employees

Q: Why is it important for any pay offer to include an element of pay restoration?

A: Pay restoration is essential to address the long-term devaluation of local government workers' pay. Over the past 15 years, their pay has effectively been cut by over 20% in real terms. A 6.5% pay increase would help restore wage value and ensure fair compensation for their contributions.

Q: Why is UNISON demanding 6.5%?

A: Our 6.5% claim is a fair and reasonable demand that reflects:

- The rising cost of living.
- The need to begin pay restoration, over the past 15 years local government workers have seen the value of their pay fall, for may this has seen a drop in value of over 20%.
- The essential role local government workers play in our communities.
- The need to move closer to a £15 per hour minimum wage, for the lowest paid.

Q: What is a "consultative ballot," and why is it important?

A: A consultative ballot is a vote to demonstrate your collective strength. A strong "I am willing to do something to get a better pay deal" sends a clear message to employers that we will not accept a derisory offer and strengthens the hands of your negotiators

Q: What happens if I don't vote?

A: If you don't vote, you are effectively letting others decide your pay. Employers are counting on apathy. They hope that low turnout will allow them to push through their unacceptable offer. Not voting is the same as accepting the 3% deal. If you don't stand up for yourself, no one else will.

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Q: What are the consequences of accepting the 3% offer?

A: Accepting 3% means:

- Continued financial hardship.
- Further erosion of our pay's value.
- A message to employers that they can get away with undervaluing our work.
- A further step away from a £15 per hour minimum for the lowest paid.

Q: How does the demand for a 6.5% pay increase relate to the goal of achieving a £15 per hour minimum wage?

A: Demanding a 6.5% pay increase is a step towards achieving a £15 per hour minimum wage for local government workers. This goal is essential to ensure that all workers earn a living wage that reflects the true cost of living and provides financial security.

Q: What is the significance of the consultative ballot for UNISON members?

A: The consultative ballot is a critical opportunity for UNISON members to have their voices heard. By voting, members can reject the derisory 3% pay offer and demonstrate their worth. Not voting effectively means accepting the inadequate offer, as the employers are counting on low turnout to push through the pay deal.

Q: What are the consequences of not voting in the consultative ballot?

A: Not voting in the consultative ballot means that you are effectively accepting the 3% pay offer. This outcome would further entrench the financial struggles faced by local government workers. It is essential to vote to show solidarity and demand fair pay. If you don't stand up for yourself, no one else will.

Q: What action will UNISON take if we reject the offer?

A: Demonstrating you are not willing to accept a derisory offer gives UNISON a mandate to pursue further negotiations and, if necessary, to ballot members for industrial action. We are prepared to fight for a fair pay deal.

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