

Dear UNISON member,

You have an important decision to make.



Along with this letter you have received important voting papers that you need to fill out and return in the freepost envelope provided.

Why? What do I need to do?

This is your decision on your pay. Your employer has offered you, and other council and school workers, a pay increase of £1,925. This is the amount for full-time workers; if you work part-time or you're a term time only worker, you'll get a proportion of that amount.

This might sound like it's better than nothing. But we are in the midst of a cost of living crisis, and inflation is really high. Food prices, energy prices and transport prices are all much higher than they were even a few months ago. The Government itself predicts that inflation will average over 10% across 2023. This means that whatever spinal column point you're on, this pay offer is below inflation. So it's actually a real terms pay cut. **Every pound in your pocket really counts, and this offer doesn't give you the increase you need.**

This comes after more than a decade of declining pay. The value of your pay is now around 25% lower than it was in 2010! Year after year, it's been chipped away. Local government was once a decent employer, providing good, secure, fairly-paid jobs. Now, we have to fight just to ensure everyone gets a living wage.

That's why we are asking you 'rise up to get up', use your vote, and say YES to taking action.

We know this is not something you, as public servants, do lightly. Your job is incredibly important, and people rely on you. But unless we say 'enough', the value of your pay will fall further, and those holding the purse strings will get away with it.

You are not alone. UNISON is balloting 375,000 people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. That could be 375,000 rising up and taking a stand for decent pay. It's a powerful message when you all say it together. And you will have the backing of the UK's largest union behind you – that's 1.3 million people on your side.

We only ask members to go on strike as a last resort. We will continue to use every means possible to make your employer improve their offer through negotiation and campaigning. But if they don't, we need to stand firm together. So we are asking you if you would, in principle, be willing to go on strike. I can guarantee we will be with you every step of the way.

Your vote is vital – without it, we cannot move forward. Under government rules, if the majority of members vote YES for strike action, we can only take action if more than 50% of members vote. So we need every single one of you to return your ballot papers. We are asking you to 'Vote yes!' for strike action.

Your vote must be returned by 4 July and we will announce next steps soon afterwards. If you have further questions, or need more information to make up your mind, please go to our information hub at www.unison.org.uk/LGpay.

You should be extremely proud of the job you do. Our members in councils and schools provide a huge range of services, helping the public in so many ways. Let's protect this vital work for future generations. **Vote YES for strike action.**

Best wishes

Jon Richards

PS. Don't forget to post your ballot paper back so it arrives by 4 July. If it has been spoiled or you've lost it, just request a replacement by logging into 'My Unison' at my.unison.org.uk or call the hotline on 0800 0 857 857 – it's open between 5 June and noon on 28 June.