



To: COSLA

From: SJC Trade Union Joint Secretaries

Date: 16th March 2021

Subject: SJC Pay 2021

Colleagues,

SJC Pay 2021

We write following receipt of COSLA's pay offer for the SJC workforce dated 15th March 2021 and our SJC Steering Group meeting this morning.

Before outlining our response we believe it is important to reflect on the context in which this offer is made.

The past year has been unlike anything any of us have ever experienced before. Our members and your workers have gone above and beyond in their response to the Covid pandemic – keeping local services going in the most difficult of circumstances. You have frequently praised their efforts. You have previously committed to us that questions of reward and recognition would be addressed through these pay negotiations. In short we do not believe they have been.

We are disappointed by this offer and urge you to improve it. We note that the offer:

- Falls far short of the flat rate or % increase outlined in our claim. The amount offered would result in an increase of less than £10 per week for those on the lowest pay.
- Does little to address issues of low pay which have become endemic following a decade of austerity.
- Contains no provision for restoring pay to pre-austerity levels.
- Contains no provision to pay the registration fees of workers who are required to maintain a regulatory registration to undertake their role (including those, who have been redeployed to such posts during the pandemic whose substantive roles do not require a registration) or any other costs associated with undertaking their role.
- Contains no commitment to explore a no-detriment reduction in the working week or any other measure to address the increased demands placed on our members or their ability to maintain a work-life balance.
- Contains no assessment of the pay gap against any of the protected characteristics (something that could easily have been prepared and submitted to the trade unions in the months since the submission of our claim and in advance of our meeting today to help inform our discussions).

We would also ask for clarification on a number of issues:

- We understand that COSLA Leaders have requested a meeting with the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Finance to discuss further the issue of local government finance. When is this meeting due to take place?
- We understand it is widely expected that there will be additional monies coming to local government via Barnett consequentials. Given this why can those additional monies not be used to improve this offer?
- How many employees (as a percentage and total number) are covered by each of the proposed uplifts e.g. how many workers would get the flat rate, how many would get 2%, how many would get 1% etc.
- How can you ensure SJC workers receive no less than parity is delivered given the SNCT discussions are likely to pause from 25th March to 7 May?
- Can you confirm whether the proposed flat rate of £800 would be applied before or after the uprating to £9.75?
- Why is it proposed to exclude the First Aid allowance from the uprating of other allowances?

We would be grateful for a speedy response to these issues as soon as possible to enable our discussions to continue at pace.

We would reiterate that the SJC Trade Unions submitted our joint pay claim on the 16th December 2020. This offer comes three months after submission of our claim. The implementation date for any pay review is 1st April 2021.

Such a late response to our claim, and failure to address many of the issues in it as outlined above, makes it increasingly likely the implementation date will pass without these workers receiving any recognition or reward for their efforts through the unprecedented events of the past year.

That would not be acceptable in normal times but in a year when these workers have given so much we find it deeply disrespectful of their sacrifice. They deserve better.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Johanna Baxter
SJC Joint Secretary
UNISON

Wendy Dunsmore
SJC Joint Secretary
UNITE

Drew Duffy
SJC Joint Secretary
GMB