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Surrey Pay special news sheet June 2018



Surrey County UNISON CONSULTATIVE PAY BALLOT

VOTE  NO

Please cast your vote by 27 June.

UNISON members will receive a link by email to the online ballot

Your UNISON Reps have decided unanimously to recommend a NO vote.



Surrey County UNISON reps from across all the different services met on 16 May to consider the offer from the Council. It was agreed unanimously that the offer was not acceptable and that we would recommend a NO vote to members in our consultative ballot.

(pictured: UNISON members at a Pay meeting in October 2017)

Due to the complicated nature of the offer, and the fact that it will impact differently on virtually every employee, it is very hard for us to explain how it will affect you personally. We are advising members to write/email their line manager and/or HR asking how the pay offer will affect them specifically.

The Final Offer and Supporting Information provided by the council, including comparison charts between proposed and current pay levels can be found under Pay & Reward on the S-Net. Our response letter is printed in full at the end of this newsletter.

The headlines in the Surrey County Council offer are:

- There is no cost of living increase
- Most staff not at the top of their grade will get just a 2% incremental rise
- Staff in career pay model, i.e. social workers, move up one incremental point
- The lowest wage will be raised to £8.75ph. This will have a knock-on effect on some of the lower grades, with some slight upward movement (up to grade 7)
- The council is only committing to achieving a £9 per hour minimum by 2020 - UNISON is demanding a £10 per hour minimum rate
- Anyone at the top of their grade from S8 upward will receive no increase
- All the above increases are subject to achieving a 'successful' rating at their appraisal this year
- Those who achieve 'Exceeding Expectations' at appraisal (after moderation) will receive a non-consolidated payment of 2% of their salary in a lump sum in July.

Many staff have had their pay frozen (or 'capped' at a very low annual increase) for many years. The fact that the Council is effectively offering a zero increase again this year is another slap in the face. Even if you are getting a small incremental increase this year, UNISON is asking that you think of those colleagues who are getting absolutely nothing.

We would not be surprised if you are confused – so are we! We asked the council to send individual letters to staff explaining what the offer will mean in practice. They have so far refused to do this on the grounds of cost. If you are at all unsure, please ask your line manager for written confirmation of what this offer will mean in terms of your annual salary.

Your online ballot paper will be sent to you by email. It is vital that we get a good response. The closing date for the ballot returns is 27th June. If someone wants to vote who is not yet in UNISON, they have until 5pm on Friday 22nd June to return their membership application form to our Kingston office. They will then be sent a ballot form and newsletter. UNISON is recommending a clear NO vote.

UNISON says:

**Surrey
County
Council:**



- ***Ask your manager how the pay offer will affect YOU***
- ***Tell your colleagues to join UNISON by 22 June if they are not already members - then they can vote***
- ***Come to a UNISON meeting on the pay offer***
- ***Make sure you use your vote – voting online by 27 June***
- ***We recommend UNISON members***

VOTE:



UNISON Response to SCC Pay Offer of 11 May 2018 (given to SCC on 23 May 2018)

Our UNISON Reps met on Weds 16th May, followed by our Branch Committee the same day. Both meetings unanimously endorsed the following response:

Firstly, UNISON welcomes the timely offer from the council but we are disappointed that despite your letter stating you would “prefer a negotiated settlement”, SCC have made it clear that this is the final offer. There has been no real negotiation over this.

We reiterate that we regard ourselves in continuous dispute over pay and reward since last year’s imposed settlement. This is true of schools and non-schools staff, as our members voted overwhelmingly in both cases to reject the offers and for UNISON to continue to press for a fair, inflation-linked pay increase and adoption of the UK Living Wage Foundation minimum wage.

In terms of the schools two-year settlement, we would draw your attention to the continued disparity between the pay levels at each grade between schools and non-schools staff and we are seeking advice on whether this could lead to potential equal pay claims - something not addressed in the Equality Impact Assessment carried out on the schools staff pay settlement.

Our response to the council’s offer to non-schools staff is set against a context of:

- Below-inflation pay increases for every year since 2010
- No serious pay progression for the majority of staff since 2010
- Staff salaries being worth anything from 15-20% less in real terms since 2010
- A recent NJC two-year agreed pay deal worth on average 2% per year - and a continuation of incremental rises
- Most Surrey boroughs and districts settling on around 2% CoL increase - and a continuation of incremental rises
- Median Pay in the UK rising by 2.9% this year

Meaning Surrey staff are falling behind many other similar staff groups locally and nationally. We do not accept that the local market dictates a second year of a total cost of living pay freeze.

We are disappointed that councillors voted earlier this year not to lobby central government for more resources to enable them to pay a fair rise to staff. If the budget is not sustainable then we would gladly add our voice to the council’s in demanding more money from central government in order to fund a fair Pay & Reward settlement.

Finally, before looking at the offer in detail, it appears to us that the council’s longer term staffing objective appears to be aimed at employing cheaper, more temporary staff - predominantly being paid at the bottom of their pay scales. Almost all rewards for longevity and long-service have been removed or are proposed to be removed:

- Redundancy Pay was cut a few years ago
- Sickness Pay was cut in 2016 down to 3 months and 3 months, from 6 months and 6 months for long-serving staff
- Annual Leave is proposed to be equalised at 28 days after 2 years rather than 5
- and many of the council’s longest-serving staff will have had no increase in their pay levels for 2 years if this settlement goes through.

We believe this is a very poor way to treat long-serving staff.

Our response to the offer in detail:

1. Simplifying the Pay Models

- Removing the two pay zones. We support this and feel it was already an accomplished fact given the 1% rise across both zones imposed last year

- Changing the criteria for eligibility for pay progression to a 31 December in-post deadline. We believe this is a very welcome change - particularly after the difficult dispute earlier this year in ASC.
- Paying the NCP in one lump sum. We agree that this is a fairer way of doing this. We would again request data on which staff are receiving the NCP as a result of an exceptional rating - by Directorate, Grade and Gender.

2. Pay Band Design and Pay Progression

- No Market Adjustment to Surrey Pay Bands. We feel this is unacceptable. This year around 640 staff will not receive any increase (around 500 of these for the second year running). The slight adjustments to the tops of bands SP1/2 to SP7 equates to only 1% for SP4, 5 & 6, 2% for SP3 & SP7 and 2.5% for SP1/2.
- Raising of the minimum pay point of SP1/2 to £8.75ph. Any rise in the lowest rates is to be welcomed but the trade unions were promised a joint review of the SCC minimum wage rate in November 2017 (when the Living Wage Foundation reviews it's figures) and this never happened. We are committed to pushing SCC towards achieving LWF status and towards a £10ph minimum wage.
- 2% Increase within the Job Family Pay Model - we do not feel this is enough of a move towards the tops of grades.
- An incremental rise in the Career Pay Model - we are in agreement with this proposal. We reiterate our call for Assistant Social Workers and Family Support Workers to be brought onto the Career Pay Model, with appropriate stepped increments. We reserve the right to go into a separate dispute over this issue.
- NCP lump sum payment of 2%. As stated, we would like to see some data on who is receiving this before making judgement.

3. Changes to Annual Leave

- Reducing the time served to 2 years before qualifying for 28 days annual leave. We are in favour of this but we would repeat our assertion that long-serving staff may not now feel any reward for long service or loyalty to the council. We suggest the council considers additional annual leave for those who have served SCC for 10 years or more.
- Removing the provision to sell annual leave. We are in favour of this proposal.

4. Apprenticeship Pay Rates.

This is the first time apprentices pay rates have been included in our collective bargaining arrangements. We are glad to see them included. As a point of principle, we feel every employee should be on at least the minimum wage rate of SP1/2.

We note that the council has made minor changes to the bottom of PS9SC and the top of PS10 as suggested by UNISON - to fully equalise the non-schools pay bands.

Our next step is to carry out a consultative ballot of our members in time for the pay & reward meeting on 28th June. In this ballot we will be recommending rejection, as mandated by our reps and our Branch Committee. In the event that a clear majority of our members reject the offer, on a turnout of over 50%, we will communicate this to the council whilst reserving the right to move to a formal ballot for industrial action if there is no significant improvement to the current offer.

Finally, we would strongly reiterate our recommendation that the council writes individually to all staff with how this offer will impact upon them - or at the very least produce a ready-reckoner that can be accessed online and advertise this to all staff. The pay system is now incredibly complicated and we have had dozens of calls to UNISON asking about how the offer affects different people, grades, teams and services.

Yours sincerely



Paul Couchman, On behalf of the UNISON Pay Team

**PLEASE NOTE:
ONLY UNISON MEMBERS CAN VOTE IN THIS CONSULTATIVE
BALLOT.**

Your Pay Team and elected Representatives are recommending a **NO** vote in this consultative ballot.

This is **NOT** a formal ballot for industrial action.

A clear **NO** vote, with a good turnout, will mean that your UNISON branch can seek national authority to escalate our dispute with the council and commence a formal industrial action ballot to help us win a fair pay settlement. Please just indicate whether you want UNISON to accept the council's final offer.

For more information or any questions regarding UNISON's position, please contact us.



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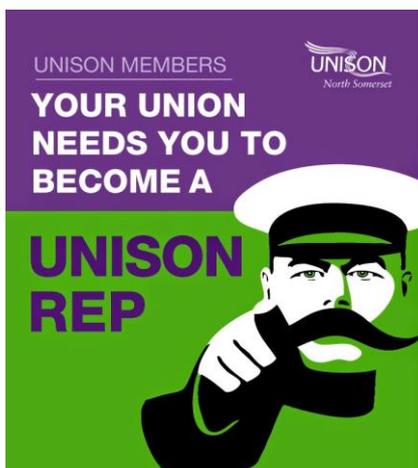
Not on Surrey Pay?

If you work in Bucks Trading Standards, or have been transferred into Surrey under Orbis, or are in some Public Health and Youth and Community Services posts then these proposals may not directly affect you.

Your pay and terms and conditions may be negotiated nationally or separately to those on Surrey Pay. If so, please do not vote in this ballot.

School Support Staff on Surrey Pay are not affected by these proposals. A two-year schools settlement was imposed by the council last year and runs until 1 April 2019.

If you are unsure about any of these things, please contact us.



If you would like to help UNISON by becoming a workplace rep, please get in touch.

We run regular one-day courses for interested members.