

SJC PAY CLAIM 2017

This is a claim by the SJC Trade Union Side for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

The Trade Union Side Claim is as follows;

- **A settlement that runs for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018**
- **A Flat Rate payment of £1000 for all employees**
- **The continued uprating of the Scottish Living Wage**
- **The development a future pay strategy that seeks to identify and redress the imbalance in pay caused by previous pay awards below the rate of inflation.**

The Trade Union Side considers that this claim is realistic and fair and it is hoped that the employer's side will give our claim full consideration and engage constructively in negotiations to achieve an early settlement.

BACKGROUND

Since 2010, pay uplifts within the SJC have been as follows;

2010 – 0.65%

2011 – 0%

2012 – 0%

2013 – 1%

2014 – 1%

2015 – 1.5%

2016 – 1%

It is recognised that the Scottish Local Government Living Wage was introduced and applied from 1 April 2013 and has subsequently been uprated in line with the Scottish Living Wage. The last settlement agreed that the percentage award would be applied after the Living Wage uprate had taken effect.

This is illustrative of how pay increases within the SJC have failed to keep pace with increases to the cost of living. Based on the Office of National Statistics analysis, RPI over the period from January 2010 to December 2015 saw a rise of almost 20%. The Treasury average of independent forecasts predicts that RPI inflation will rise by 1.8% in 2016, climb to 2.6% in 2017 and then accelerate to 3% or over every year between 2018 and 2020. Whilst we recognise that our claim this year, even if met in full, will not bridge the gap, a future pay strategy should seek to address this and the ongoing inflation predictions and we invite the employers to constructively engage with us.

On top of this our members have also suffered a 1.4% reduction in their pay packets as a consequence of the rise in National Insurance payments from 1 April 2016. For someone on

£25,000 per year this means their monthly salary will reduce by approx £22 putting a further strain on already stretched family budgets.

In reaching agreement on the settlement applicable to 31 March 2017 it was agreed that the employers would consider a flat rate claim if the trade unions pursued this in the next round. Whilst we welcome the ongoing commitment up until now of the Living Wage and recognise that this has been beneficial to our many low paid members, this does not in itself eradicate low pay. As an indication of the disparity that low pay workers have to endure, The Office of National Statistics found that, among the lowest spending households, average annual inflation ran 1% higher than the highest spending households between 2003 and 2013. The cumulative result was that the prices of products purchased by the lowest spending households grew by 45.5% compared with just 31.2% for the highest spending households. In this claim we seek ongoing commitment to paying the Scottish Living Wage but would also seek a flat rate payment of £1,000 payable to all staff in scope of the SJC.

As trade unions we do not underestimate the effect that austerity economics is impacting on local authorities. We deal with this on a daily basis across all 32 authorities and their partner organisations. 87% of job loss, equating to 40,000 jobs, in the public sector in Scotland since 2008 has been in local government. However whilst many services have been cut or outsourced the staff remaining are being expected to do more for less impacting on staff morale and job security. The key to the future of local government will lie with the dedicated staff who provide the services to our communities. This must be recognised and staff properly rewarded through this pay round and in the future in redressing the balance of earnings against cost of living.

CONCLUSION

The SJC Trade Unions believe that this claim realistic, fair and justified. It is being submitted at this time to seek to influence ongoing discussions over future local government settlements and to seek an agreed conclusion to pay discussions in order that the anniversary date of 1 April 2017 can be met.

The SJC Trade Unions seek the Scottish Employers response to this claim.

Douglas Black

Joint Secretary

UNISON

Willie McGonigle

Joint Secretary

UNITE

Tony Dowling

Joint Secretary

GMB