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The Newsletter for all UNISON Stewards and Activists in the North West Region

Oct
2014

PAY: A REAL ISSUE FOR REAL PEOPLE

TAKE ACTION:
See overleaf for details >

Join the action – break the freeze

This week sees an unprecedented level of action against the government's endless austerity programme as the majority of UNISON members take part in some form of industrial action over the declining value of their pay. Years of zero increase are being followed by maximum 1% rises meaning the majority of public sector workers are now 10-20% worse off than they were just four years ago.

Here's a quick round up of the issues around the services. If you can, join the strike action. Join a picket line. Attend any rallies taking place. You can also write to your councillors and MP asking them to do what they can to start giving their staff a fair deal. Meanwhile staff in the private sector are getting awards that almost match inflation with United Utilities staff for example receiving 2.5% cost of living rise this year.

Health

Health workers feel they have no option but to take action as pay is down by over 10% since 2010 and now the Government has refused to pay most NHS workers even the 1% recommended by their Pay Review Body. So only those at the top of their pay scales - just 40% of staff - will get the 1% pay rise and even this will not be consolidated into pay scales!

UNISON members in the NHS will be on strike from 7am – 11am on Monday 13 October. This will be followed by action short of a strike from 14-17 October, during which time staff will not work during scheduled break periods.

UNISON is campaigning for:

- An immediate payment of the PRB-recommended 1% on all hourly rates and the Living Wage of £7.65 per hour minimum
- No pay-freeze in 2015-16
- A commitment to cost of living pay increases in the future

Local Government

Council workers and staff in thousands of schools will be on strike over pay on Tuesday 14 October – following the very successful day of action in July. Three years of zero pay increases followed by last year's 1% rise has left staff 20% worse off since 2010.

While the NJC employers have offered just 1% almost half a million council and school support workers currently earn below the living wage of £7.65 per hour. To add insult to injury since October 1 the bottom point on the Local Government pay scales has been illegal – being below the National Minimum Wage!

The unions' pay claim is for an increase of £1.20 an hour for all staff – which would mean the lowest paid would receive the living wage and be able to come off in-work benefits! Four out of every ten local government staff now require in-work benefits to make ends meet.

STOP PRESS: The national negotiators met on 25 September to discuss a revised set of proposals from the employers. The proposals which did not amount to a formal offer were rejected as being almost identical to

the current 1% offer over 2 years! A really strong turn out on the 14th is required to show how angry we are about treated with utter contempt by the employers.

Academies

UNISON's members who work in academy schools that apply the National Joint Council's pay award scheme have voted for strike action on pay. They will join colleagues in local government in the day's strike action on 14 October.

Police

Police staff have had their wages cut by 13% in real terms since 2010. The employers have offered only 1%. The unions' claim is for 3% or £500 – whichever is higher. After a consultative ballot indicated support for industrial action, a formal ballot will now take place.

Food Standards Agency

Since 2010 real pay levels have been cut by 16%. The employer imposed a pay offer in 2014 of just 0.75%. Two four-hour walkouts took place in August. UNISON is now in informal discussions with the employer and ACAS to seek a resolution.

... and other public sector unions are taking action on pay too

UNISON members will be joined in taking action by up to ten other health unions, and by Unite and the GMB in local government. Civil servants in the PCS union are also due to take strike action over pay on Wednesday 15 October.

Time to Lift the Cap

Angela Rayner, UNISON North West Regional Convenor



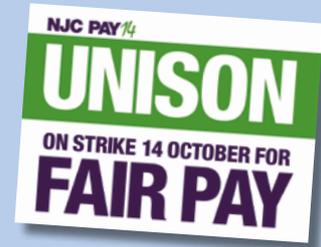
Thousands of public sector workers across the North West are gearing up for strike action over pay. This will be a challenge to

the Government's public sector pay policy of unprecedented scope and scale and will clearly demonstrate that people are not prepared to accept permanent austerity.

Meanwhile, Chancellor George Osborne has announced his

intention to extend the pay cap until 2017 if the Conservatives are in government after the election – that would mean seven consecutive years of falling living standards for public sector workers.

We must make sure that the employers and the Government are in no doubt that this huge wave of action by public sector workers must lead to a change of direction in pay policy. It is not right for people to be asked to tolerate year after year of worsening living standards, and it's reached the point where this cannot hold any longer.



A clear pattern has emerged across the public sector. After years of below-inflation pay rises, offers of 1% or less this year cannot be tolerated. We have been pushed too far.

Let's all make sure we all play our part in the coming days.

It's time for us to stand up. It's time for the employers to pay up.

Join us: Britain Needs a Pay Rise

A mass demonstration takes place in London on Saturday 18 October, making the case that *Britain Needs a Pay Rise*.

Organised by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) the march starts on Embankment, with form-up from 11am. Join from the rear at Blackfriars to avoid a crush further up Embankment. After moving off, the march will go along Embankment to Northumberland Avenue, across Trafalgar Square, along Regent Street to Piccadilly Circus, and then along Piccadilly to Hyde Park Corner, where it will enter Hyde Park. The rally in Hyde Park will start as the march reaches the stage. **It's designed as a**



**JOIN US AT THE
MARCH AND RALLY
SATURDAY
18 OCTOBER
2014**

family-friendly event so come along and make your voice heard!

People are currently facing the biggest squeeze on their incomes since Victorian times, and wages have fallen in real terms every year since 2010.

We believe that as growth returns to the UK economy, everyone should get a fairer share in the recovery. The time has come for Britain to get a pay rise.

Further info on the TUC website:
www.britainneedsapayrise.org

If you have empty spaces on transport down to London or if you want to go but can't find any transport contact Judith Holt at Arena Point on 0161 661 6712 who'll try and do some match-making!