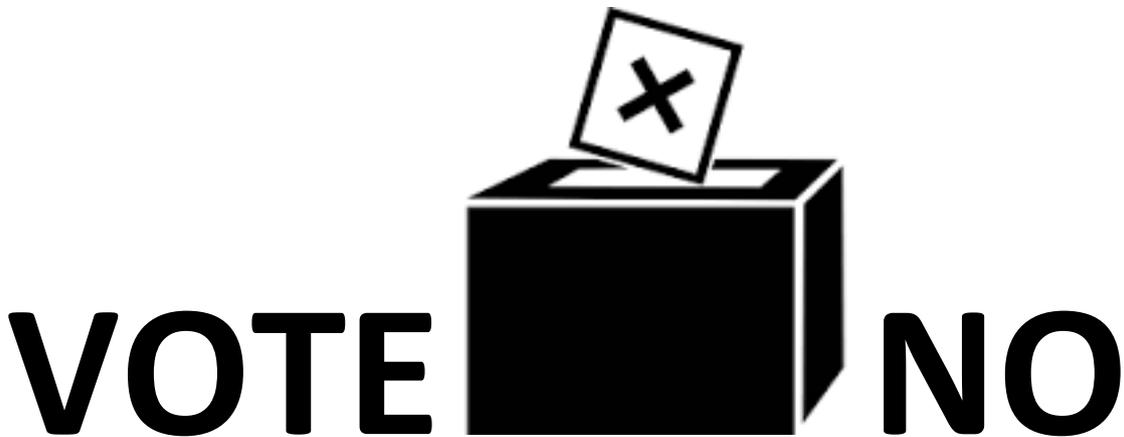




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SCC Pay Ballot special news sheet August 2017

## Surrey Pay **BALLOT**



**Return your vote by 31 August**

**UNISON Reps have voted unanimously to recommend a NO vote.**

Surrey County UNISON reps from across all the different services met on 1st August to consider the final 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 this month's ballot.

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 asking how the pay offer will affect them specifically.

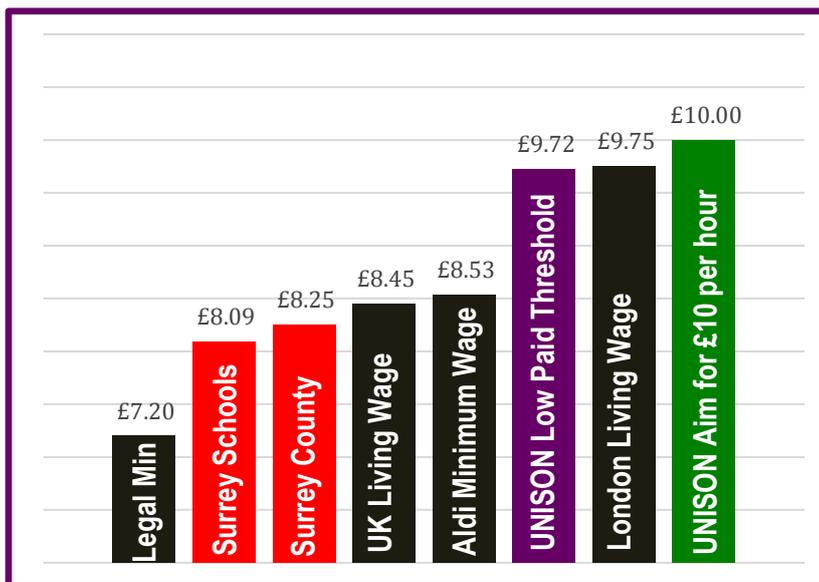
The Final Offer and Supporting Information provided by the council, including comparison charts between current pay levels and the final offer, can be found on our website here:

[http://unionsurreycounty-unionsoutheast.nationbuilder.com/surrey\\_pay\\_vote\\_no](http://unionsurreycounty-unionsoutheast.nationbuilder.com/surrey_pay_vote_no)

This website will be updated regularly with information about the pay ballot.

## The headlines in the Surrey County Council offer are:

- Most staff who are not at the top of their grades will get just a 1% incremental rise
- Staff in career job families, i.e. social workers, move up one incremental scale point
- The lowest pay point will be raised one penny per hour above the UK Living Wage Foundation minimum of £8.45ph and will be reviewed in November when the Foundation updates its levels
- This will have a knock-on effect on some of the lower grades, with some very slight upward movement (up to grade 6)
- The council is only committing to achieving a £9 per hour minimum by 2020 - UNISON is demanding a £10 per hour minimum rate (see table below)



- Anyone who is at the top of their grade from S7 upward will receive no increase except for a notable exception at grade S12
- 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 one-year non-consolidated payment of 1% of their salary divided over 12 months.

Many staff will have had their pay frozen (or 'capped' at a very low annual increase) for many years. The fact that numbers of our members are effectively being offered a zero increase this year is a slap in the face. Even if you are getting a small increase this year, we would ask you to think of those colleagues who are getting nothing.

We would not be surprised if you are confused – so are we! We asked the council to send individual letters to staff (like last year) explaining what the offer will mean in practice. They have 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 ballot paper is included in this mailing. It is vital that we get a good response. The closing date for the ballot returns is 31st August. If someone wants to vote who is not yet in UNISON, they have until 5pm on Monday 21st August to return their membership application form to our Kingston office. They will then be sent a ballot form and newsletter. UNISON are recommending a clear NO vote.

- **Ask your manager how the pay offer will affect YOU**
- **Tell your colleagues to join UNISON by 21st August if they are not already members - then they can vote**
- **Make sure you use your vote - return your ballot papers by 31st August.**

## **Some of the arguments we have put to SCC**

The Government's own report from the Office of Manpower Economics shows that public sector workers' pay levels have dropped steadily over the past 7 years. This has featured in the news recently and several senior government figures have expressed disquiet - particularly given the high profile role of the public sector in recent disasters such as the terrorist attacks and Grenfell Towers. Downing Street has said it would consider potential wage increases on a "case-by-case" basis after a string of top cabinet ministers signalled they backed an end to the blanket 1% pay cap. Our members have had year-on-year real-term cuts in pay levels and many are now struggling to make ends meet – Particularly those at the lower end of the pay scales.

### **Surrey**

A recent report by the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS) shows that in-work poverty has risen considerably over the past 4 years (since their last report). They described their statistics as "shocking" and said that people would be surprised that they relate to Surrey. Some of our members have told us they now have to revert to foodbanks at the end of the month to survive. Surrey Uncovered (the CFS report) shows that 10% (22,640) of Surrey children live in poverty, of which two-thirds live in working households struggling to manage. In 17 Surrey neighbourhoods, at least 30% of children live in poverty.

### **Minimum wage**

Our position is that the minimum wage in Surrey County Council should be at least equivalent to the outside London UK Living Wage Foundation rate (currently £8.45ph). We welcomed the fact that (after UNISON pushed for this) Surrey have recognised the need to pay staff above this figure (raising the SCC minimum to £8.46) and that they are aware of the annual November adjustment and are looking into including a review to potentially match this when it happens. We do not accept the low level of commitment shown to ending low pay in SCC by the target of £9ph by 2020. We believe the aspiration for SCC should be far higher and set at the level of £10ph – widely accepted as a fair target by opposition parties and trade unions.

### **Incremental increases**

We welcome the offer to allow members to move up their pay scales this year but do not believe 1% is a reasonable incremental increase.

### **Tops of Pay Scales**

At present, we could not recommend acceptance of any offer which freezes the tops of pay scales. Given the current economic and political climate, we believe an offer must include an increase in pay for all staff, although we could support a freeze on Senior Pay levels.

SCC have given the explanation that 'market data' demonstrates that there is no justification for raising the tops of the pay scales. As the council refuses to include London, or the private sector, we do not believe this is a fair market-based analysis.

### **What about the GMB?**

Members will know that we negotiate jointly with the GMB union. As has been the case for many years, UNISON researched and developed our own claim which we presented to the council in December. This was later accepted by the GMB and became a joint claim.

Our understanding is that the GMB are not making any recommendation to their members in their ballot as they believe that there are 'winners and losers' in this offer.

We work closely with the GMB on all matters involving pay and terms and conditions of employees but we have not agreed a joint way forward on the pay offer this year. Our workplace reps and UNISON Pay Team members have unanimously voted to recommend rejection and to go into dispute with the council in the event of a large NO vote. We hope that GMB members will also vote overwhelmingly to reject so we can have a serious joined-up campaign to Scrap the Pay Cap.

**REMEMBER:  
ONLY UNISON MEMBERS WILL BE ABLE TO VOTE IN THIS  
BALLOT.**

**(The GMB will be balloting their members too)**

Your Pay Team and elected Reps are recommending a NO vote. A clear NO vote, with a good turnout, will mean that UNISON will go into dispute with the council and start the process of formal industrial action balloting. Any final settlement will be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

This ballot is NOT a ballot for industrial action. 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 our Pay Team advisor, Kala Rosser on 02085419091 or email [kala.rosser@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:kala.rosser@surreycc.gov.uk).

**TIMELINE**

- **UNISON claim given to SCC – Dec 2016**
- **First detailed offer – May 2017**
- **Final Offer – July 2017**
- **Last date for new members to receive ballot papers – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2017**
- **UNISON Ballot deadline – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017**
- **Pay Team meet SCC – 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017**
- **If we get an overwhelming NO vote, on a good turnout then we will go into dispute with the council and expect negotiations to resume**

**Not on Surrey Pay?**

If you work in Bucks Trading Standards, or 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 and separate pay negotiations for 2017/18 are ongoing. Any schools settlement will be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April.

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



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County**

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[www.UNISONsoutheast.org.uk](http://www.UNISONsoutheast.org.uk)

Facebook Page:  
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