

Austerity is Over... Time for a Pay Rise

In clear pre-General Election campaign mode, the Conservative Government has announced the end of austerity and turned the spending taps back on for the public sector, after almost a decade of huge cuts.

This welcome change will be a relief to our struggling NHS, to social care and to our schools that are in financial crisis. Local government is often the last area to be mentioned by Government, yet it is local authorities, particularly Labour Councils, that have faced the biggest cuts.

Pay for council workers has been cut by a staggering 22% in real terms since 2010! That means workers who struggle to keep cut services going, year after year, working harder than ever before, take home a fifth less in the value of their pay. If the Tories have finally found Corbyn's 'magic money tree', then we deserve a pay rise.

The NJC Pay Claim 2020-21 is:-

- A real living wage of **£10 per hour** for NJC SCP 1
- A **10% increase** on all other NJC/GLPC pay points

In addition:

- 1 day increase to the minimum annual leave entitlement
- 2-hour reduction to the standard working week
- A national review into the causes of workplace stress and mental health issues in local authorities.

Furthermore, the claim is for this pay rise to be funded by the Government so that there are no cuts in jobs locally to pay for any award.

- Inflation is at 3% and is likely to go higher if there is a no-deal Brexit.
- Private sector pay awards are running at 4%.

Sandwell Council Backs Pay Claim

Sandwell Labour Council has supported the trade union pay claim of a fully funded 10% increase. So too have a number of Labour controlled councils across the region.

This is welcome news. Sandwell UNISON was part of the lobby of our employers across the West Midlands region in Birmingham. (see picture below).

A 10% rise would be a sea change to what we have received over the last decade, but it is not impossible with the Tories finding the magic money tree and Labour supporting our claim. However, political lobbying alone is unlikely to win 10%, or the other elements of our claim. The chances are we will need to undertake at least a consultative ballot for industrial action, unless a serious offer is made. We are expecting to receive an offer in December.

Look out on our website for latest news www.sandwellunison.co.uk.

