

## As NJC 2021 pay is settled... Prices Keep Rising

Food, petrol, energy. Everything is going upwards. RPI inflation for January was 7.8%, making the 1.75% NJC pay award for 2021 seem totally inadequate. The award will be backdated to April 2021, meaning your March pay will see an extra lump sum.

While the extra money is welcomed it's not enough to stop us all feeling the pinch in our pockets. The energy companies have been sending emails to their customers saying they are putting prices up by over £1,000 per year! And these are prices before the war in Ukraine.

The challenge is, what do we do about pay in 2022? The trade unions will submit a pay claim as usual, but unless members vote for possible action in any ballots sufficiently enough to pass the legal 50% turnout threshold, then the union will not be in a position to negotiate or leverage more than what will be offered from a Government that is still preaching pay restraint.

Those that did vote in the 2021 ballot voted by 70% to take industrial action. However, the turnout was well below the required 50% of all members. The lesson from 2021 is that we need members to use their vote. All members can play their role in reminding colleagues to use their votes during ballot periods, wherever you work.

Pay matters. Votes matter. Let's resolve in 2022 to make the votes matter for the future of our pay.

### 2022 Pay Claim at SLT

The Joint Trade Unions at Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) submitted a 2022 pay claim of 10% or a return to the NJC. Unions were informed that there is no negotiating mechanism at SLT, and no offer would be made until after May. Each trade union conducted consultative ballots on the pay claim with all passing the 50% thresholds. UNISON members voted by 98% for action on a 72% turnout. Formal industrial action ballots are now being co-ordinated, which could see staff having a mandate to take strike action during the Commonwealth Games.

## Fire and Rehire Fight Continues

UNISON members at Portway Lifestyle Centre and Tipton Leisure Centres took strike action against being fired and rehired by Sandwell Leisure Trust on 28 January and 24 February.

The Council has now made the decision to end the contract with Sandwell Leisure Trust in running nine leisure centres across the Borough.

However, the longest running dispute ever in Sandwell continues as staff are still to be returned to national NJC pay.

UNISON is lobbying the Labour Council to apply Labour values and place staff back on national NJC pay, terms and conditions as part of any decision on the future running of these centres.



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