

Single Status Action News 12



Council Withdraw “Progression Paper”

The Joint Trade Unions have had two meetings with management since our strike action on the 23rd and 24th April. They have agreed to withdraw their tabled progression document and start with a blank sheet. However since our last communication the joint trade union side have learnt that a cabinet report has been presented which identifies £120m of savings in their Medium Term Financial plan through the ‘avoidance of incremental pay drift’. We have asked management to urgently explain what this means as it appears to suggest that cashable savings are planned by restricting incremental progression – If this is the case then genuine talks on movement through the incremental scale cannot take place as a serious financial restriction would already be in place. The Councils Financial Director is attending the progression meeting on Weds 14th May to clarify the information in the report.

The trade unions have insisted that any progression criteria must be equality proof, relevant to the job & grade, career based and that ‘one size does not fit all!’ Additionally, we have made it clear that progression once the agreed standards or qualifications have been attained is not barred by business or budgetary needs.

Reports from the Strike and Rally



Another Brilliant Strike and Joint Rally

Despite the Councils best efforts to disrupt the two days of action we know that thousands of our members took part, resulting in the closure of many schools, neighbourhood offices, libraries, depots & day centres. The lobby & march on Thursday 24th saw thousands of members from the council, teaching & civil service unions taking to the streets around the city centre in a loud & lively lobby. The joint trade unions are now discussing sectional strike action – more news will follow.

Equal Pay Claims

Unison's Regional Equal Pay Unit recently wrote to members asking you to indicate if you believe you may have an individual equal pay claim. Consequently, they have been busy identifying potential further Equal Value Pay Claims for former APT&C 'white collar' employees & we will be sending out communications to those groups in due course inviting members to come into the branch & complete the appropriate paperwork.

Remember: In order to qualify for historic pay discrimination & have an equal pay claim you must work in a predominantly same sex job where a comparator of the opposite sex has historically been paid more than you or your group but whose job has been scored at an equal or lower value. Unfortunately, due to employment legislation & the imposition of the new contract there is a strict deadline for submitting claims of 6 months from any contractual change!

Legal Action – Challenging your losses.

Unisons policy agreed by you at members meetings is that we would look at supporting members to put in legal challenges to losses in pay. UNISON is seeking expert legal advice on your behalf & will be reporting back to you very shortly.

Appeals Process

Branch negotiators are meeting with management next week to discuss the Appeals process.

- We have already had reports from stewards and members that managers, having signed and agreed appeal documents, are now returning them to members saying they do not agree with the evidence provided, or they didn't read them properly and so want them changed!! Our advice is that once the appeal has been signed & returned to you as accurate then it belongs to you & should not be returned to the manager for further amendment. You should send your signed forms to the chief officer as per the procedure.
- Members are being told their appeals may take 2 years to be heard. We have no idea where this timescale is coming from. Clearly the process is likely to be a lengthy one given the expected volume of appeals but the joint trade union side is prepared to facilitate twice weekly appeals panels to hear appeals. We also have a previous commitment from the council that losers appeals would be prioritised & heard first.

Weekly Action Supporters Meetings

The Branch is inviting all members, stewards and activists who wish to help us win the dispute to our regular weekly activists meeting at the branch office. These meetings are held to update members and to plan what the branch is doing.

5.00pm – 7.00pm every Thursday.

Branch Strike Hardship Fund

So far the branch has received over £5,000 in donations to our strike fund. There are hardship application forms at the branch office and anyone facing hardship following our action can apply.

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Membership forms available from the branch office, or UNISON Direct 0845 355 0845.