PIONEER UNISON

ROCHDALE

www.unison-

unison@rochdale.gov.uk 01706 925951/52 August 2021

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Unions oppose yet another below inflation rise

Staff working for councils and in schools are worth more than the 1.75% pay offer put forward by employers after working through the worst of times, say unions representing local authority workers.

UNISON, GMB and Unite are urging local government employers to rethink their revised pay offer of a 1.75% pay rise (with 2.75% for those on the bottom pay point) for 2021/22 by awarding an increase that will properly and fairly reward council and school support staff.

The unions say the offer falls well short of the 10% claim they put forward for this year. Last month, the unions offered to work with the Local Government Association (LGA) on a joint campaign to make the government provide additional funds to finance the wage rise. However, the LGA rejected the move, refusing to put pressure on government to improve pay.

UNISON deputy head of local government Mike Short said: "A 0.25% increase on the initial 1.5% offer is insignificant. Council staff have kept communities clean and safe, protected the most vulnerable, and worked in schools throughout successive lockdowns to allow others to work.

"Their courage and sacrifices need to be rewarded, yet the employers are failing to recognise their efforts. There'll be a huge impact on morale.

"Employers say they'd like to give council staff more, but they've refused to work with us to get the money.

"These workers, mostly women, are amongst the lowest paid in the country and have seen their pay drop substantially in recent years. This 1.75% offer is nowhere near what's needed. Reps from across England, Wales and Northern Ireland will now decide the next move."

Please check that your UNISON colleagues have received this newsletter electronically

if not please ask them to contact the branch
on
01706 925952
or
email unison@rochdale.gov.uk

so we can update their membership record

Stay Safe

Salford City UNISON call on Greater Manchester Pension Fund to take action

Salford City UNISON have launched a petition calling on Greater Manchester Pension Fund(GMPF) to divest from fossil fuels. GMPF the pension fund that Rochdale Council workers pay into has the largest fossil fuel holdings of any of the local government pension funds in the country. Here is what the petition says and there is a link below where you can add your name:

In March 2019 (the most recently published data) Greater Manchester Pension Fund had £1.7 billion of its members' pensions invested in fossil fuel extraction. Burning fossil fuels, as we all know, is causing greenhouse gas emissions and dangerously overheating the planet. We have already felt the effects in summer droughts, winter flooding, air and water pollution, stripping the land bare of wildlife habitat and causing mass extinctions.

These are inconvenient truths, which science recognises, but policy makers are slow to abandon ingrained habits. GMPF talks of achieving Net Zero (greenhouse gas emissions) by 2050. But we are running out of time. Within a decade we will have crossed a tipping point, from which there is no return – melting permafrost in Arctic regions is exposing methane gases to the atmosphere, far more potent even than CO2 in causing global heating.

Investment in low carbon industries, climate resilient infrastructure, upgrading homes and transport links, reskilling and retraining the workforce to enable a Green and Just Transition, is vital in order to avoid disaster.

Due to the Covid crisis, oil prices have plummeted. Shocks like this will become increasingly common in a more fragile world. Investment in these industries cannot be sustained.

We ask that GMPF divest from fossil fuels within the next two years, instead putting its members money into scaling up low carbon industries.

Sign here: https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/protect-our-planet-protect-your-pension?clear_id=true More information here: http://fossilfreegm.org.uk/

Claim tax back for expense of working from home

Last year Rochdale UNISON gave advice on how you can claim tax back for expenses incurred from working from home during the pandemic. You can claim again this year. If you have worked from home for one day (or more) because of the pandemic then you can claim for the whole of the tax year 2021-2022. It is relatively straightforward. If you claim £6 per week then you do not need to provide receipts. If you did not claim tax relief for working from home for the previous tax year you can still put in a claim now for last year and claim for this year at the same time.

The website is here:https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home

There for You- UNISON can help if you are in financial difficulty

There for You is proud to support thousands of members and their families every year with things such as:

- general living costs
- household appliances
- urgent repairs
- disability equipment and adaptations
- utility bills
- funeral costs

Eligibility
To be eligible to apply for financial assistance, you must have been a member of UNISON for at least four weeks and up-to-date with your subscriptions. Also the financial difficulties that led you to apply occurred after you joined. Partners or dependents can also apply.

For more information and to apply for assistance follow this link: https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/financial-assistance/