

Cuts stem from political choices – not wage claims

The Scottish government are saying that they are having to make cuts because of pay claims from workers in public services, particularly council workers. This isn't true – and is a cynical attempt by politicians to divert attention away from their own failings.

The refusal of government to properly fund services isn't the fault of the people who deliver the services. It is the fault of the Scottish government who have starved local government of funds, refused to raise money themselves and prevented councils from raising their own revenue.

Scottish government budget has increased by 37% - yet since 2013/14 the increase in the local government budget over the same period has been 1.3%. The impact of these cuts is clear to all who work in local government and those who use the services. Detail available [here](#).

The value of local government pay has fallen by 25% over the last 14 years and low pay in local government still proliferates – many of UNISON's school support staff members who took industrial action last year must claim Universal Credit.

While this has been happening the Scottish government have been making little use of the powers they have to raise money and have prevented councils from raising their own money. The Council tax freeze needs to be reversed - **In 2022/23 council tax accounted for 13 per cent (£2.7 billion) of total funding.**

The Scottish government continues with it's Scottish Government Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS). **This is a handout to business costing over £270m per year** for which [research by the Fraser of Allander Institute](#) conducted for the Scottish government could "find no empirical evidence that identifies the SBBS as supporting enhanced business outcomes"

Meanwhile despite promising to do so in 2007 and three separate reviews (all of which UNISON contributed to) Council tax has not been reformed

In 2022, we put forward [11 ways](#) to raise local government revenue including tourism taxes, reducing business bonus schemes, taxing 2 and 3rd homes, local inheritance taxes,

improved NHS workforce planning.

- Ending or reducing the **Scottish Government Small Business Bonus Scheme**,
- If the rates for **Land and Business Transactions Tax (LBTT)** were adjusted to increase revenue, even by as little as 10%, this would raise an extra £40m
- Increasing the **Additional Dwelling Supplement** – the LBTT charged on second or third or buy to let homes – by 2% to 6% would raise another £56m
- A March 2021 IPPR Scotland report indicated that **reducing the threshold for higher income tax to £40k** (from the current £43k) would raise £690m
- **Increasing the landfill tax** from the current UK level.
- Pursuing a solution with the UK Government to Scotland raising the **Air Departure Tax** above the UK equivalent Air Passenger Duty
- Since 2016, the Scottish Parliament has had the ability to **levy any tax it wants provided the money is used to fund local government**.
- **local inheritance tax** could be introduced using local tax powers in Scotland, provided the revenue went to local government.
- **Tourism taxes** are widely used elsewhere (but only now, maybe, about to be used here)
- **Land value uplift taxes** for businesses could be introduced
- In the NHS, **improved workforce planning** could save the money spent on the very high numbers of bank and agency nursing and midwifery staff.

Similar [work was done](#) by the STUC. If the Scottish government are saying they have no money – it is because of decisions they have made,

The Scottish government shouldn't turn round and blame the lack of free school meals on the women who cook them. As UNISON [Scotland's Regional Secretary Lillian Macer put it](#) "It's cowardly to blame hard-working public service workers for government decisions"

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