



Gail MacGregor, Resources Spokesperson, COSLA
Alison Evison, President, COSLA

- Sent via e-mail -

9th May 2020

Dear Gail and Alison,

Covid-19 – Next Steps

As you know UNISON members have responded heroically to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis - providing support to the most vulnerable members of our communities, looking after the children of key workers, collecting our refuse and manning temporary body storage facilities for the deceased (to name but a few examples).

Their extraordinary efforts and the critical value of the roles they perform deserve to be rewarded.

That is why we asked, as part of our regular COVID Workforce Issues Group meetings, for us to set up a short-life working group to look at how we do just that and also how we plan for the new world that will emerge following the crisis. We proposed a Terms of Reference for that working group and look forward to those being agreed.

As you know we have been very concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on Local Government finance and the possible consequences of this on our members. We wrote to the cabinet Secretary for Finance, Kate Forbes MSP, about this on 30th April and 9th May – copies of that correspondence are enclosed.

It is against that backdrop that UNISON's Local Government committee are today launching a campaign – ***'Fighting Together Today For A Better Future Tomorrow'***.

Our campaign brings together four key strands of work;

- **Rewarding local government workers** – Local Government workers have delivered against the odds during this crisis and we believe there should be a COVID-19 premium that recognises the vital service they provide to our communities.
- **Securing the long term financial stability of Local Government** – UNISON will continue to lobby for further investment in Local Government to protect jobs and pay for the future. Whilst we continue to make representations to the Scottish Government about this we expect that any additional funds secured from them will be used by COSLA to protect jobs and terms and conditions into the future.
- **Shaping local government for the future** – UNISON believe that some roles will have, and will continue to, change as a result of COVID-19. Where this is the case we believe the job evaluation of those roles should be reviewed. Additionally, we have already flagged to COSLA that care at home workers will have a SSSC qualification requirement from September this year which will require a re-evaluation of those roles.

- **Consolidation of the Living Wage** – Full consolidation of the Living Wage was a hard fought commitment secured as part of our last SJC pay deal and should not only put money into the hands of those on the lowest pay in Local Government but have positive effects throughout the pay scales. But it is yet to be delivered. This commitment needs to be fulfilled.

UNISON recognises that a single payment for a select group will not solve the systemic underfunding of local government workers – that’s why our plan calls for sustained long term investment to protect jobs, deliver a reduction in wage inequalities and for UNISON members to be engaged in shaping the lockdown legacy.

We are keen to discuss this with you in more detail and look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Best wishes,

Johanna Baxter
UNISON Scotland Head of Local Government

Mark Ferguson
UNISON Scotland Chair of Local Government Cmtt

c.c. Simon Cameron, COSLA
Jane O’Donnell, COSLA