



To: Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance & the Economy  
Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing & Local Govt  
Shirley-Anne Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills

From: SJC Trade Union Joint Secretaries

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Subject: SJC Pay 2021

Dear Cabinet Secretaries,

### **SJC Pay 2021**

We write following your meeting with COSLA representatives last week at which you discussed the issue of Local Government finance and the impact of funding on the money available to improve the pay offer to local government workers.

Our understanding is that your discussions not only failed to produce any further money for local government but that disparaging comments were made about the contribution of local government workers to the pandemic response and their entitlement to expect a better offer.

If, as we have been led to believe from multiple sources, it is true that the Scottish Government's position is that "Local Government workers are not on a par with Health workers" we would challenge this in the strongest terms and suggest it is nothing short of a slap in the face to these workers who have gone above and beyond in keeping our services running during what has been a difficult and devastating year for everyone.

If we have been misled as to your position we trust you will wish to clarify this and reassure the 200k strong local government workforce of their value to public service.

If the financial pressures on local government are not clear we would point you to the recent Accounts Commission report 'Local Government in Scotland – Overview 2021' which highlighted the forecasted financial pressures of Covid alone totalling £855m in addition to the £400m loss of income councils have experienced.

The same report also outlines the pressures on staff due to the pandemic and the fact they have 'demonstrated versatility whilst working at pace and under challenging circumstances'. Indeed the Scottish Government must recognise that the local government workforce kept the vulnerable safely in their homes; created and supported school hubs; delivered food and medical supplies to care homes that were ravaged with COVID-19; and continued to maintain public health – all in the face of adversity – which

prevented our NHS and Health workers from being overwhelmed, as per the First Minister's continued plea.

The case for additional funding is clear. The situation is now urgent. Our members are at breaking point and will no longer tolerate being used as a political football between yourselves and COSLA.

All three trade unions are currently preparing statutory industrial action ballots and it is anticipated that our members working in schools will be central to co-ordinated industrial action which will disrupt schools following the summer break.

This could be avoided. We would be happy to meet with you to explore all options for doing so.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

**Johanna Baxter**  
**SJC Joint Secretary**  
**UNISON**

**Wendy Dunsmore**  
**SJC Joint Secretary**  
**UNITE**

**Drew Duffy**  
**SJC Joint Secretary**  
**GMB**

c.c. Cllr Gail MacGregor, COSLA Resources Spokesperson  
Simon Cameron, COSLA SJC Secretary