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Dear Ash, Humza and Kate

**UNISON MEMBERS NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOU STAND**

UNISON is Scotland’s largest trade union; our members are central to the delivery of major public services and represent a significant section of the electorate. It is rightly for SNP members to determine who the next leader of their party is. Equally it is right that our members know where candidates to be the next First Minister stand on a range of issues. We are therefore seeking some clarity on where all of the candidates stand on issues that are crucial to the future of Scotland’s public services and our members.

We will share your answers.

Many thanks for your participation. Here are our questions to you on behalf of our members:

1. UNISON believes that powers and responsibilities should be devolved from the Scottish Government to more local democratic control and accountability. How will you increase devolution within Scotland within existing powers?
2. Local government needs [more funding](https://unison-scotland.org/wp-content/uploads/23-2-1-Cllrs-Hagmann-Buchanan-to-Ms-Sommerville-Teacher-numbers-and-learning-hours.pdf). UNISON is the largest local government trade union and has a positive [manifesto](https://unison-scotland.org/wp-content/uploads/17-03-22-Manifesto-Local-Govt-elections-22-FINAL.pdf) for our councils. Will you commit to using the powers available to you to deliver a real terms sustained increase in local government funding, to enable Cosla to meet the SJC unions pay claim? Will you seek to extend the Scottish Government’s no redundancy policy to local government? Will you commit to abolishing the council tax and replacing with a better and fairer property tax?
3. Whilst we are recommending the current pay offer to our members in the NHS, UNISON is equally clear pay is only part of the problem. What will you do as First Minister of the current Scottish Government to address the [staffing crisis](https://unison-scotland.org/wp-content/uploads/NHS-staffing-crisis-an-introductory-note.pdf) and the wider workforce issues in the NHS?
4. UNISON welcomes the decision to delay progressing the National Care Service Scotland Bill. [UNISON supports a National Care Service](https://unison-scotland.org/national-care-service-campaign/) but this bill is not fit for purpose as it leaves profit at the very heart of service provision, massively destabilises local government as well as creating an even more insecure workforce. Will you commit to full engagement with UNISON with the aim to come forward with a proposal for a National Care Service which we can support and where services are not delivered for profit? Will you commit to deliver £15 per hour for social care workers and if so on what timescale?
5. The environment is a pressing concern to UNISON members, many of whose work is at the front line of tackling climate change. UNISON has been at the forefront of calling for a just transition and [investment in public services to get to net zero](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2021/11/26609.pdf). Would the SNP, under your leadership, remain committed to the target of Scotland becoming Net Zero by 2040, commit to follow the advice of the Just Transition Commission and to fund public services to move to Net -Zero as soon as possible?
6. UNISON fed in to the work that led to the STUC publication last November [*Options for increasing taxes in Scotland to fund investment in public services*](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjWp_jTmL39AhWTM8AKHd5kAvAQFnoECBIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstuc.org.uk%2Ffiles%2FReports%2FScotland_Demands_Better_Fairer_Taxes_for_a_Fairer_%2520Future.pdf&usg=AOvVaw24NkA-J_ZH3BH2aAt4WCym). [Jubilee Scotland](https://www.jubileescotland.org.uk/campaigns/exposing-private-financing-in-scotland/) have highlighted the wasteful PPP process of funding capital projects in Scotland. Will you commit to expanding the tax base for public services, giving local government more tax raising powers and ending PFIs and PPPs?
7. 2023 is UNISON’s [Year of Black Workers](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2023/01/27147_2023-Year-of-Black-Workers_leaflet.pdf). What immediate steps will you take as First Minister to challenge racism in the workplace and our communities and how can we measure their impact?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**TRACEY DALLING**

**Regional Secretary, Scotland**