



Mike Kirby  
Scottish Secretary  
Unison Scotland  
FAO Unison Members

Unison Campaign  
19 February 2021

Dear Unison Member,

Thank you for your email asking the Cabinet Secretary for Finance to support UNISON's campaign to invest in public services, support a fair recovery, and give public servants the pay rise they deserve. I have been asked to respond on her behalf.

Scottish Ministers recognise the fast pace of change facing all of us in this critical and challenging operating environment. We are hugely grateful for the heroic efforts of all key workers across Scotland, who in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic have kept essential public services running.

The Scottish Government remains fully committed to embedding and mainstreaming Fair Work across Scotland as part of our wider agenda for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth and a wellbeing economy. Through our Fair Work First agenda, by attaching fair work criteria to public funding wherever appropriate, we will continue to ensure Fair Work is at the very heart of our economic recovery. This promotes and enables a more inclusive, people-centred culture of work that supports employees and employers to shape their organisations together.

Scottish Ministers have a strong record in recent years of delivering progressive pay awards that have restored pay to pre-2010 level for the very lowest paid and consistently paid more across sectors than the UK Government. The 2021-22 pay policy, announced on the 28 January 2021, continues to take a progressive approach to public sector pay awards, one that protects the lowest paid and most vulnerable, tackles inequalities and promotes wellbeing as we work towards rebalancing our economy. Given its role as a benchmark, this year's pay policy will play an even more significant role in shaping public sector pay awards across all sectors.

We believe all workers should be paid fairly and that everyone should receive the real Living Wage as a minimum. The Scottish Government has long championed the payment of the real Living Wage and the benefits to our economy of treating people who work fairly.



However, employment law is a reserved matter therefore only the UK government can set the legal minimum wage. Despite this we have taken a number of distinct steps to promote the real Living Wage. These include leading by example and becoming a Living Wage Accredited Employer and providing funding to the Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Initiative to promote the real Living Wage to help increase the number of employers across Scotland paying it.

In spite of the many challenges present in the 2021-22 Scottish Budget, this government has prioritised its spending plans to form a central and positive part of Scotland's recovery and renewal. Our spending plans, which include pay for our public service workforce, will be framed by the need to support wellbeing equitably in the context of significant challenges to the wider economy and stark affordability pressures.

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance continues to meet regularly with representatives from Unison Scotland to hear their views and to discuss these issues. The Scottish Government values the partnership with Trade Unions and can assure you that through our Fair Work First agenda, Public Sector Pay Policy and Programme for Government we are continuing to deliver the best value for the people of Scotland.

Yours Sincerely,

Finance Pay Policy  
Public Spending Division  
Budget and Public Spending Directorate