



18th October 2022

Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP
Secretary of State
Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Sent by email: ministerial.correspondence@levellingup.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State,

GMB Union is writing to express concern that to date, you have not yet responded to the letter from the Chair of National employers for Local Government Services dated 25th July to your predecessor, Rt Hon Greg Clark MP and to highlight to you how this is impacting our members.

The letter from Cllr Sian Golding was seeking an “urgent commitment from the government that the cost to local government employers of central government’s policy on the National Living Wage (NLW) will be met for this year, 2022-3 and in future local government settlements.” The letter also stated that without “the estimated £800m cost of workable NLW compliance being met by central government some councils and other employers will have significant difficulty in affording the pay award” which would result in jobs and services being put at risk.

At a time of economic crisis for millions of people, with the cost of living spiralling out of control there should be clarity and leadership from Government, and it is disappointing that your department has chosen to ignore such an important issue.

As Government departments now face being tasked with identifying efficiency savings, GMB cannot express strongly enough how unacceptable further cuts would be. The letter sent to you in July set out the crisis within Local Government and School funding and this needs to be properly addressed, not further exacerbated by cuts. At a time of rising inflation, high energy costs and increased mortgage and rent payments our members deserve a fully funded, inflation linked pay rise. It is not acceptable that Government is failing in its responsibility to ensure sufficient funding for vital public services and that its’ failure to do so may potentially mean that merely ensuring compliance with the NLW, could result in job losses and cuts to public services.

GMB members, many of them in schools working with the most vulnerable pupils, deserve to be paid a decent wage and yet the local government workforce is on average the lowest paid. Working across communities and delivering some of the most important public services should be properly remunerated and instead years of underfunding, pay freezes and pay cuts has resulted in one third of Local Government workers being paid the National Living Wage.

It is unacceptable that a letter seeking an urgent commitment has been ignored and this lack of response and commitment could result in job losses. GMB Union is calling on you to urgently address this pressing matter and offer financial support to protect jobs and services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Harrison'.

Rachel Harrison
Acting National Secretary

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