



Stephen Kinnock
Member of Parliament for Aberavon



Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

Our Ref: SNK/CM

30 August 2017

Dear Theresa,

Re: Public Sector Pay

Public sector workers carry out vital work delivering the services that we all rely on. From emergency services to social services and refuse collections, public sector workers keep us safe, healthy, educated and cared for. They are dedicated to providing us with the services we depend on.

However for the past seven years public sector workers have been subject to a pay freeze and then a 1% pay cap, which has resulted in falling wages. While the cost of living has risen by 22% between 2010 and 2016, public sector pay rose by just 4.4% on average during the same period.

Since 2010 local government has faced unprecedented cuts to funding by Westminster. As a result jobs have been slashed, pay and terms and conditions have been ripped apart as councils struggle to balance their budgets. In my own local authority of Neath Port Talbot, they have done a tremendous job in avoiding compulsory redundancies, but they have undergone a huge exercise in early retirement and voluntary redundancies. This has seen 2,000 jobs lost from the Council, as a major employer in the area we cannot afford to lose this number of jobs.

On top of this the workforce took a voluntary pay cut and have contributed around £8million from their own pockets to subsidise the funding gap caused as a direct consequence of the Westminster Government's austerity policies. They have gone above and beyond, and should not have to endure this pay cap any longer.

Public sector workers in local government have faced an escalating workload and increase pressures as they are expected to do more and more for less and less. A recent Unison survey found that three-quarters of local government workers felt their workload had increased in the last year, sixty percent are working extra hours beyond their contracted hours, and nearly a quarter are working extra hours that are unrewarded or uncompensated every week.

Under such conditions the pay cap has had a significant impact on the recruitment and retention in many sectors, exacerbating the impact of job losses and putting local services under increasing pressures.

Tel: 01639 897660

Unit 7
Water Street Business Centre,
Water Street, Port Talbot, SA12 6LF

Email: stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk
www.stephenkinnock.co.uk
Twitter: @SKinnock



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Public sector workers need to be paid properly for the hard work they do. The public sector pay cap cannot remain in place until the end of the next parliament. If the Government continues with this policy then public sector workers on a median wage in 2016 will see their pay drop by at least another £2,202 by 2022. The Institute For Fiscal Studies has warned that another four years of the public sector pay cap would see public sector wages reduced to their lowest level, relative to the private sector, since at least the 1990s.

Public sector workers are the first people on the scene when an emergency happens, they are the people we call when something goes wrong, and they are the ones that provide use with the services we depend on. Work should provide them with security and fulfilment but when wages are falling because of a pay cap, this cannot happen.

It is vital that the UK Government does the right thing and acts now to scrap the 1% pay cap for public sector workers, make money available for an immediate pay rise for all public sector workers and end Government interference in bargaining arrangements for all public sector pay.

Public sector workers have made difficult decisions to help contribute to reducing the deficit, but since the cap was introduced government debt has increased to £1.7trillion. The Government cannot go on attempting to balance the budget off the backs of public sector workers. It is time the Government paid public sector workers for the work they do.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Kinnock
Member of Parliament for Aberavon

cc. Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer