

Finance Ministers call for 1% public sector pay cap to be lifted

The UK Government must set out plans to lift the public sector pay cap and reverse planned cuts in expenditure in this year's Autumn Budget.

This was the message Welsh and Scottish Finance Ministers delivered to the Treasury at the Finance Quadrilateral meeting in London today.

They urged the UK Government to change course on austerity and invest in public services by lifting the 1% public sector pay cap.

Wales' Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford, said:

"We are fully behind our public sector workers and have repeatedly called on the UK Government to end the cap on public sector pay and give workers across the UK the pay rise they deserve.

"However, we have been equally clear this must be fully funded by the UK Government. Those who implemented the cap must be responsible for funding its removal.

"We have already committed to use any funding consequential we receive from the UK Government as a result of public sector pay rises in England to raise the pay cap for public sector workers in Wales.

"I urge the UK Government to do the right thing and lift the 1% pay cap for all public service workers and provide the devolved administrations with the funds to do likewise."

Scotland's Finance Secretary, Derek Mackay, said:

"We believe that the time is now right to give public sector workers, both in Scotland and across the UK, the recognition they deserve.

"We have committed to lifting the 1% pay cap and in the forthcoming budget we will deliver a pay policy that is both affordable and acknowledges the real life circumstances of our public servants.

" However, the UK Government budget will be a key factor in determining the resource that the Scottish Government has available to invest in public services and public sector pay.

"I would therefore urge the UK Government to use any fiscal headroom that they have to reverse planned cuts in expenditure,

lift the 1% pay cap for all public service workers and provide sufficient funds to invest in public services.”

Wind farm funding boost for community projects in Conwy

A training facility for young people with autism and special needs, a replacement bus shelter in an isolated area used by schoolchildren and the elderly and restoration work at a castle are amongst the projects to benefit from Rhyl Flats Wind Farm Community Fund. Rhyl Flats Wind Farm is operated by Innogy Renewables UK Ltd.

Creatasmile have been awarded £10,000 to expand the services they offer and develop a training tea room which will help young people with autism and special needs to gain skills and build confidence working with people from the local community.

The same amount will benefit Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust to support the next phase of work at the Castle which includes the Creation of a coppice in the woodlands and repairs to the Melon House roof.

Community and Voluntary Support Conwy will also benefit from £10,000 investment to support the role of a Programme Development Officer to pilot the Veteran Hub in Conwy. The officer will provide a holistic and bespoke service to each veteran to successfully transition into civilian life.

Sport Conwy is set to gain £9,860 funding to purchase adapted cycles to provide a range of cycling sessions for disabled people.

Benefits Advice Shop is to receive £6,300 in this financial year and again in 2018/19 to continue to provide a weekly outreach service to residents in Abergele and Colwyn Bay to access advice and advocacy.

Abergele Town Council will be supported by £2,257 funding towards the cost of providing a replacement bus shelter located on an isolated and exposed coastal bus route, used by schoolchildren and the elderly.

Funding of £1,900 will help Colwyn Bay Model Boat Club to help control and manage the widespread presence of invasive aquatic weeds at the new boating lake.

Community or voluntary groups, charities, and town and community councils in eligible areas of Conwy are being encouraged to apply to the Rhyl Flats Offshore Wind Farm Community Fund, which is administered by the Welsh Government and provides grants of between £2,000 and £10,000.

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, Carl Sargeant said:

“This funding will be a real boost to local communities in Conwy and help improve lives.

“From helping people gain new skills to supporting local services, the Rhyl Flats Wind Farm Community Fund is investing in projects which are an important part of the area. I encourage all groups interested in applying for funding to find out more about the scheme.”

Katy Woodington, Senior Community Investment Officer for innogy said:

“It’s exciting to see the Rhyl Flats Wind Farm Community Fund supporting such a wide range of projects again this year. I will be really looking forward to hearing more about how these projects use their funding to make a positive difference for local people.

“This funding, which is administered by the Welsh Government, is available each year the wind farm is operational, so please think about whether the community groups you are involved with could benefit from applying for funding in the future.”

If your community group or project is interested in learning more about applying for funding please visit the Rhyl Flats website for further information –

<http://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/regeneration/strategicareas/northwalescoast/communityfund/?lang=en>

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[Welsh and Scottish Finance Secretaries call for end to UK Government austerity](#)

Welsh Government Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford and Scottish Government Finance Secretary Derek Mackay will also call on the UK Treasury to abandon its plans for a further £3.5bn of unallocated cuts in 2019-20.

Speaking ahead of today’s meeting between Devolved Administration Finance Ministers and the Treasury, Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“Our draft Budget was set against the backdrop of the longest period of sustained austerity in living memory – one which has seen our budget cut by 7% in real terms since 2010.

“The UK Government’s failed and unnecessary policy of austerity continues to place unjustifiable constraints on public services in Wales.

“After seven years of sustained austerity the evidence is clear – it is a failed policy and must be abandoned. Public services

across the UK are feeling the pinch and I urge the UK Government to change tack and invest.

“The threat of a further £3.5bn of unallocated cuts to public spending for 2019-20 continues to loom large. This could mean a further cut of up to £175m to the Welsh budget, depending on where these unallocated cuts fall.

“We have worked hard to protect devolved services from the worst of austerity in Wales but if the UK Government continues with the efficiency review it will place further unfair and counter-productive pressure on our already hard pressed front-line services.”

Scottish Government Finance Secretary Derek Mackay said:

“We have repeatedly called for the UK Government to end austerity, invest in public services and reverse the cuts that are damaging our economy and hurting some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

“The UK Government will cut £2.9 billion or 9.2% from our discretionary Scottish budget in the ten years to 2019-20. And that is before taking account of the impact of the UK Government’s further planned efficiency savings of £3.5 billion in 2019-20 – which could cut another £350 million from the Scottish budget.

“While we have done what we can to mitigate the worst effects of UK Government austerity, the continued and sustained real terms reductions in our budget makes this increasingly difficult.

“The UK Government needs to abandon their obsession with austerity. The policy has failed and it is time to stimulate the economy by investing in this country’s future.”