

# UNISON's top

# 10 asks for Welsh councils

The budget for day to day spending in Wales will have fallen, in real terms, by £718m to £13.781bn by 2015/16<sup>1</sup>. Not only is the Wales Government giving local councils less money in grants, it is also saying their 'need to spend' is reducing. As a result councils in Wales are cutting jobs and services. UNISON is deeply concerned about the human cost of these cuts and the damage to the social fabric.

The responsibility for the dismantling of local services lies squarely with the UK government. UNISON believes in strong local government, central to the life of local places. UNISON wants to work with councils to implement progressive policies, but we also want councillors to join with us to demand a fairer deal for Wales from the UK government.

## UNISON's 'top ten' asks for councils are:

- 1 Fair pay not poverty pay:** Advocate and budget for decent annual pay awards to redress real terms pay cuts. Include the Living Wage as the minimum rate for direct and contracted out workers – they're worth it!
- 2 Value your own workforce:** Employ your own staff and trust their expertise. Reduce spending on agency staffing and consultants' fees.
- 3 Employment relations:** Uphold good industrial relations. Resist attacks on trade union facility time. Provide adequate time and support for the vital role of your UNISON representatives – they save the council time and money, and ensure workers have a voice and a stake at work.
- 4 Quality service delivery:** Support a strong core of in-house services to maintain your flexibility, control and accountability. Always include a public sector comparator with a service improvement plan in any options appraisal.

- 5 Value for money:** Scrutinise outsourced contracts regularly and consider insourcing. Learn from other councils' experiences with contractors. Introduce a local 'community right to call in' failing contracts for scrutiny.
- 6 Collaboration not 'co-operatives':** Devolve power to council-employed staff to work collaboratively with the communities they serve. Reject bogus co-operatives that are just a Trojan horse for more privatisation.
- 7 Open government:** Establish a presumption in favour of full transparency and against withholding information on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.
- 8 Maximise resources:** Raise council tax to increase your tax base now and in the future. Increase fees and charges in a socially responsible way and minimise financial penalties. Examine new ways of generating income.
- 9 Prudent financing:** Ensure reserves are prudent but not excessive. Review earmarked reserves. Finance capital investment by borrowing while interest rates are at an all-time low. Minimise the use of revenue to pay for capital expenditure.
- 10 Ethical care:** Adopt UNISON's Ethical Care Charter for homecare commissioning and extend its principles to other types of social care.

We also want all councillors to work with us locally and nationally to take the local government cause to the Wales Government and Westminster. Together we can:

**Stand up** for our local democracy and quality services

**Join in** the campaign for a new system of needs-based funding for local government, backed by greater resources and greater powers

**Speak out** about the devastating human cost of the Westminster government cuts in our local communities

Join UNISON's mailing list for councillors and receive regular news and briefings – just email [ServiceDelivery@unison.co.uk](mailto:ServiceDelivery@unison.co.uk) and ask to be added.

**See below for three simple ways that councillors can join UNISON**

## Three simple ways to join UNISON today and get essential cover wherever you work



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[joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org)



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