

2022 Welsh local government elections

What are UNISON's priorities?

Every single local authority employee showed their dedication keeping vital services running throughout the pandemic. We know public services are the glue which holds our communities together and investment here is the best way to tackle poverty and inequality.

These are UNISON Cymru Wales' priorities for the 2022 local elections to make our towns happier, fairer and healthier places for all. We're asking council candidates to demonstrate they put the priorities of working people first by pledging their support.



1 Bring outsourced services back under direct council control

Many councils across Wales now acknowledge bringing back outsourced services and running them directly will deliver better services because they would be entirely focused on what local people need and there is democratic accountability.

Every penny spent on local services should be money invested for the good of local people and not removed from the community as private profit.

Outsourced services run down the pay and employment conditions of the locally based workforce whilst user charges go up.

Neath Port Talbot, Powys, Blaenau Gwent and Pembrokeshire are part of a growing movement of councils UK-wide to have taken landmark decisions in the good of their constituents to bring leisure services or social care back in-house.



2 Councils operating social care directly. No more commissioning

The introduction of commissioning into social care has badly failed the care workforce and those people requiring care support.

The introduction of profit-making possibility has resulted in corners being cut and the largely female workforce suffers very low pay.

Most social care should rest within local government and come under the local government budget.

A National Care Service would set industry standards, ensure consistency in the quantity and quality of social care across Wales.

All-Wales sector level collective bargaining would help set fair wages and a standard employment contract governing sick pay, contracted hours and pay for all hours on duty, including 'sleep ins,' travel time, time off, as well as a national framework for training and development.

Creating statutory minimum standards would organically return social care to where it should be: under local government's direct control.



3 Job evaluation and review all-Wales for consistency

Every workplace needs to have a fair and transparent system for assessing what pay different jobs should get. It is therefore key for all employers to ensure there is a fair and transparent pay evaluation process in place.

It is over a decade since this type of job evaluation was implemented in Wales' 22 local authorities and there is now a pressing need to review and update this process.

UNISON is calling for councils to agree to develop and sign up to an updated Wales wide job evaluation process to provide fairness and consistency across all local authority jobs in Wales and replace the current 22 fragmented versions currently in operation.

4 Ending the scandal of term-time pay for school support staff

Thousands of mainly female, low paid staff in Wales suffer the further injustice of term-time pay. They are paid for 39-43 weeks of the year disguised by being paid over twelve equal monthly payments and accrue annual leave over that time which is taken in school holidays. Support staff are not paid for the summer six weeks, but are bound to the school and can't 'sign on' or get another job during this period. Heads and teachers though are paid for a full working year of 52 weeks.

The summer months are the most expensive, not to mention the detrimental effect this has on pensions later in life. This must be rectified.



5 Local government tackling climate change

Welsh government has signalled the Welsh public sector should lead the way to net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, by setting ambitious targets.

Local government should be at the forefront and public service workers want to be part of that conversation and planning too, encouraging authorities to help drive change in their communities, including through their supply chain purchasing and being exemplar green employers.

6 An urgent social housing and council house building programme

A shortage of affordable housing has created a housing crisis placing hard-pressed families under intolerable pressure and shrunk opportunities for young people. Local authorities must build thousands of new council homes to meet housing needs. This will also create jobs and boost the economy. Green, well-insulated and low energy homes will help us tackle climate change.

7 Investment in public services to build a fairer Wales

The continued inflation-plus funding for local government in Wales must be invested to improve services and there is no need for any cuts.

Severe spending cuts over the last decade have damaged council service provision and harmed our communities as a result. Extra monies councils have been provided with should be invested in things like leisure and library services – as we emerge from Covid we need to ensure we are doing everything possible to improve people's mental and physical health.

8 Valuing trade unions means better services

Embracing trade unions, the expertise they bring and including workers in all strategic decisions will result in better planning and better services for the public.

Social partnership is on the Welsh government's agenda and it should be embedded in councils. For it to function properly, engagement has to be meaningful and unions must be involved at an early stage and account taken of their views.

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