

West Lothian Council SNP Group

Leader: Cllr Janet Campbell
Depute Leader: Cllr Robert De Bold
Secretary: Cllr Mary Dickson

Dico Tibi Verum, Libertas Optima Rerum Nunquam Servili!



West Lothian Council Meeting -Tuesday 14th May 2024

Motion: Opposition to Minimum Service Levels

Agenda Item 20

Trade unions stand as a cornerstone of Scottish democracy. The right to strike is a fundamental freedom of the Scottish workforce which is protected by international law; this can be seen in the Human Rights Act, Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Convention 87 and Article 6(4) of the European Social Charter;

The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023, introduced by a reactionary Tory Government which was resoundingly rejected by the people of Scotland, sets out that when employees in relevant sectors democratically vote to strike, they can be required to work by use of a "work notice" and sacked if they don't comply. An amendment tabled in the Lords would have exempted Scotland and Wales by adding the phrase "but applies only to England" to the bill. However, all six Tory MPs from Scotland voted to ensure the act will apply to Scotland.

The Joint Committee on Human Rights has expressed concern that this legislation is not compatible with the UK's (current) commitments to human rights for workers and trade union members and further the Regulatory Policy Committee determined that the impact assessment for this law at the Bill stage was 'not fit for purpose'.

West Lothian Council believes the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 is a direct attack on the fundamental freedoms which generations of Unions have won for ordinary working people, the right to withdraw our labour and further that this Government, instead of tackling the causes of the cost-of-living crisis, are attempting to cut through the recent wave of strikes by trying to shift the blame from profiteering bosses who have manufactured unsustainable levels of inflation, on to ordinary workers who are exercising their right to fight for dignity and fair pay at work and in their lives.

The Scottish Government is vehemently opposed to this draconian legislation and have officially communicated with the Westminster Tory Government stating the position in Scotland. Scottish Ministers have already stated they will not enforce any minimum service obligations upon employers. However, the Scottish Government is unable to intervene if staff working on cross border rail services or border security staff (for instance) seek their legitimate and hard won right to strike.

West Lothian Council agrees to write to Sir Keir Starmer and demand he pledges an incoming Labour government to reverse fines and other measures taken against any union under the terms of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023, including all with any members in Scotland affected by this unnecessary and hostile piece of legislation.



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Cllr Janet Campbell- SNP Group Leader

