

Cllr Alison Evison
President
COSLA
Verity House
19 Haymarket Yards
Edinburgh
EH12 5BH

Tuesday, 7 January 2020

Dear Cllr Evison

I have recently written to Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government, to highlight the knock-on effects of delays in the Scottish budget for voluntary organisations across Scotland, including those funded by local government. Today I have had a response from Ms Campbell committing to maintaining funding for the voluntary sector organisations within her own portfolio (through the the Third Sector Unit) for the first quarter of 2020/21. Ms Campbell has asked Cabinet colleagues to consider following suit in their own portfolios.

I have today written to Derek Mackay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work, to ask him to lend his weight to that ask, and I am writing to similarly ask for your support.

As you know, most of the essential services provided by the voluntary sector are not funded directly by Scottish Government or its public bodies, but through local authorities. Contracts and grant awards are largely made on an annual basis, and voluntary organisations are looking now for reassurance from funders that these will continue in 2020/21. Where this reassurance is not available, voluntary organisations will in many cases have to consider issuing redundancy notices to staff, impacting both on staff wellbeing and the beneficiaries of these services.

I understand that Councils are themselves in a very difficult position with uncertainty over their own budgets, the bulk of which come through Scottish Government. However, I would ask you and COSLA's members to think at an early stage about the impact of delays on already precarious voluntary organisations, and to start early discussions with them about it. I would ask Councils to make a similar commitment to that of Ms Campbell to guarantee quarter one funding, until there is more clarity about 2020/21 budgets.

I believe that councils are committed to the voluntary sector as a key partner in achieving the National Outcomes and serving local communities. So I would ask you to give your commitment to ensuring that the negative impacts of the budget delay on voluntary organisations is minimised.

With all best wishes for the new year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anastasia', is written below the typed name.

Anna Fowle
Chief Executive