



## Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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From the Chair

Sally Loudon  
Chief Executive  
Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities

1 February 2021

Dear Sally,

I am writing to you following recent reports that, despite Government advice that people should only leave their home for work where they cannot reasonably work from home, some employees have reported being pressured by their employers to return to their workplace. Others have reported being told to return to work in businesses that have remained open despite being “non-essential”.

Despite some employees reporting that their workplaces are still not Covid secure, the Committee has seen reports that the Health and Safety Executive has not taken any enforcement action against employers during the current lockdown. It would be helpful to have answers to following questions on action taken by local authorities in Scotland:

- 1. In your view, are local authorities in the best position to enforce the closure of premises that are in breach of Covid regulations? Do local authorities need any additional powers to carry out this work?**
  - a. If not, where should responsibility for this lie?**
- 2. What powers do local authorities in Scotland have to close workplaces where employees may be at risk of Covid transmission?**
  - a. In your view, do local authorities in Scotland need more—or tougher—powers to close premises where employees may be at risk?**
- 3. What guidance has the Scottish Government provided to local authorities on using their powers to close workplaces that may be unsafe? In your view, is there a need for more detailed guidance?**
- 4. Given the current lockdown and number of coronavirus cases, do local authorities have the resources and staffing levels they need in order to investigate and take action against premises that may be open in breach of Covid regulations?**

- 5. We have seen evidence that some local authorities take different approaches to enforcement of Covid regulations than others. Who, if anyone, is responsible for ensuring that local authorities take a consistent approach?**
- a. What guidance or support, if any, does COSLA provide to local authorities on enforcement of the regulations?**

It would be helpful to have a response by Friday 12 February.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Timms', with a horizontal line above the name.

**Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP**  
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee