

4588/PL/MJ

28 March 2023

Humza Yousaf MSP  
First Minister of Scotland

**Head Office**

Voyager Building  
2 Furness Quay  
Salford Quays  
Manchester  
M50 3XZ

T 0161 224 2804/249 2400

E [enquiries@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@usdaw.org.uk)  
[www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)

**Paddy Lillis**

General Secretary

Dear Mr Yousaf

**Usdaw Members in Scotland**

I would like to offer my congratulations on behalf of Usdaw on your recent election. As a trade union with more than 37,000 members in Scotland, Usdaw represents the interests of workers in sectors including retail, distribution, road transport, food manufacturing, which are essential to Scotland's economic success. We are keen to engage with you and your Government to enable job security, better pay and fair working conditions in those sectors, and to ensure that public services can better support the wellbeing of our members and their families.

The cost of living crisis is, unsurprisingly, the foremost current concern for many Usdaw members. Our most recent survey found that one in five retail and distribution workers were missing meals every month to pay their everyday bills. Low paid workers with insecure contracts are being hit hardest by this crisis, and it is, therefore, having a disproportionate impact on women, Black workers and disabled workers across Scotland.

Now, more than ever, it is essential for the Scottish Government to take meaningful action to support fair work across Scotland and we urge you to make this a priority as First Minister.

Usdaw has been closely involved in the Industry Leadership Group for retail, and our Regional Secretary, Tracy Gilbert, chairs the Fair Work working group, which is developing a Fair Work Agreement for retail. We hope that the Scottish Government will continue to engage with workers and employers to ensure that this work reaches its conclusion, and that it has a meaningful impact.

With RPI inflation rising to 13.8% last month, it is clear that the cost of living crisis is far from over. We are calling on the Scottish Government to extend the rent increase cap beyond 1 April, protect renters from eviction, and take all possible steps to get essential living costs back under control.

The cost of living crisis has heightened the economic pressures facing the retail sector, in the context of long-term, deep seated structural challenges, which put the job security, pay and conditions of our members under considerable pressure. We would like to work with the Scottish Government to tackle these challenges, through:

- Action to create a more level playing field between online and bricks and mortar retail, including a fundamental overhaul of the non-domestic rates system.

- A co-ordinated approach to protect and create new jobs within the sector, particularly in the context of new technology/automation and the transition to net zero.
- Significant and long-term investment in skills funding for retail workers.
- Action to prevent retail crime including police resources to enforce the legal protections against violence, threats and abuse of retail workers.

Finally, Usdaw urges you to reconsider the Scottish Government's position on New Years Day closure of large retail stores. The current legislation allows Ministers to extend the ban on Christmas Day trading to cover New Years Day. In a 2021 consultation, there was widespread support for the idea of giving retail workers a decent break at New Year, in recognition of the special nature of this holiday for Scottish workers. I hope that you will take this into account and show your support for key workers in the retail sector, who play such an essential role in their communities.

I, or my colleague Tracy Gilbert, would be pleased to meet with you or members of your team to discuss our priorities for Scotland and for our members, when it is convenient.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paddy Lillis".

**PADDY LILLIS**  
General Secretary

cc Tracy Gilbert, Scottish Regional Secretary