

Chancellor's 'fiscal firepower' needs action not rhetoric



Extension of furlough welcome, but promises to do 'whatever it takes' will ring hollow if pay is frozen and sick pay not addressed

GMB Union, which represents more than 600,000 workers in the public and private sectors, cautiously welcomed the extension of the furlough scheme ahead of the Chancellor's budget - but warns more must be done to drive a post-covid economy.

Rishi Sunak is tomorrow expected to announce an extension of the UK-wide scheme until end of September - with workers receiving 80% of current salary until the scheme ends and employers contributing throughout July and August.



Warren Kenny, GMB Acting General Secretary, said:

“Protecting jobs must be the first step to protecting incomes and ensuring the country can get back on its feet.

“Any extension to furlough is welcome, but as always with the budget the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

“We’ve seen time and again how Minister’s real policies don’t always match skilfully crafted briefing in advance.

“Talk of ‘fiscal fire power’ and ‘continuing to do whatever it takes’ will ring hollow to millions of workers who know that Statutory Sick Pay isn’t enough to live - or self-isolate - on, and to public sector workers if another pay freeze is on the agenda.

“There’s a very clear choice about how we recover from the pandemic: investment in public works, public services and working people, or more of the same austerity that has left local government and social care crippled.

“The Chancellor is talking about honesty, let’s start with that.”

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