

Ivan McKee MSP
Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise
By email

12 January 2023

Dear Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise

This week, the UK government announced a new Energy Bill Discount Scheme to support businesses and charities with rising energy costs. While we are still working with our members to understand the detail of the impact of the changes, the overall drop in support available from £18.4bn over 6 months to £5.4bn over 12 months is in itself cause for significant concern.

We know that voluntary organisations across the country are under huge pressures due to rising costs, and that the difficulties of sourcing income to meet these rises can lead to concerns about ongoing viability, regardless of the size of the organisation or the levels of energy use. We must therefore find solutions that are accessible across the sector.

While many of these possible solutions sit within the remit of the UK government, the Scottish Government's national frameworks for the Supply of Electricity and Supply of Natural Gas provide a potential lifeline for the OSCR registered charities and SCVO members who are eligible to join.

I understand that the Risk Management Committee which oversees the frameworks is keeping its decision to close the frameworks to new members under review, and I would urge you to work with the Committee to re-open the scheme to eligible voluntary sector members as soon as possible.

Without access to some form of support, we fear that large numbers of voluntary organisations will become financially unviable in coming months, resulting in the loss of services and supports to communities just when people need them most.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Anna Fowlie'.

Anna Fowlie
Chief Executive, SCVO