



Dear INSERT NAME MSP

### **NHS Borders – Safe Staffing Levels**

The health and care system is under pressure to ensure services are delivered in a safe and timely manner, and the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified existing pressures on staffing and resources in all health and care settings.

The NHS has been tested to its limits, and so have many of our members. Staff in NHS Borders are reporting serious concerns to their union all underpinned by safe staffing concerns, issues include:

- Dangerous staffing levels for both patients and staff.
- Staff not receiving proper rest breaks.
- Staff not being given opportunities to report serious incidents on Datix, the NHS electronic incident reporting system.
- Serious breaches of health and safety regulations.

In June 2019 the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act became law, the first legislation in the UK to set out requirements for safe staffing across both health and social care services. The political announcement and assent of the Act have been rightly celebrated as a significant step towards a safer environment for patients and staff.

Whilst UNISON accepts that COVID19 has delayed much of the developmental agenda it is concerning that the implementation of the Act, which is fundamentally concerned with safe staffing and patient safety, seems to have been forgotten.

The Act places a duty on NHS and social care providers to make sure that, at all times, there are suitably qualified and competent staff working in the right numbers to ensure safe and effective care.

UNISON feels that it is essential that safe staffing is central to our NHS and that the full implementation of safe staffing is prioritised by the Government and NHS Borders. We therefore ask that you use your position as an elected member of parliament for our region to ensure that the Act is implemented without further delay.

The NHS can only recover if workers are thriving in their jobs, as things stand, our members are telling us that they can no longer cope.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further we would be happy to send a branch delegation to meet with you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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