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| Our Ref: WD/FM Your Ref: |  |
| Willie Duffy  w.duffy@unison.co.uk  |   |
| 29 September 2021Humza YousafCabinet Secretary for Health and Social CareThe Scottish GovernmentSt Andrews HouseRegent RoadEDINBURGH EH1 3DG  | UNISON House14 West Campbell StreetGLASGOW G2 6RX www.unison-scotland.org.uk |

Dear Cabinet Secretary

**STAFFING PRESSURES AND SHORTAGES**

I write to you on behalf of UNISON Scottish Health Committee in respect of the above staffing matters.

What was reported at our meeting last week was the deep concern about the pressure being put upon staff on a daily basis preventing them from delivering the very best and safe level of care patients should receive in hospital.

The current and constant demands on staff are taking their toll and staff are struggling to continue to provide safe and quality services. We are finding that staff are being unable to take their meal breaks on a regular basis. They are working way beyond their contracted hours and working overtime shifts to keep services afloat.

This is unsustainable in the longer term and something has to give to allow these staff to be able to function properly and without the pressures that they are currently under.

In NHS Fife the local UNISON Branch conducted a survey of their members which had a very good return from our members and I am happy to send you a copy of that report if it would assist.

NHS Fife held discussions with the Chief Executive and Senior Staff to discuss some of the outcomes of the survey and are willing to work with them to try and resolve some of the issues that have been identified. Earlier this week the Employee Director in NHS Fife wrote to the Board Chair and Chief Executive on behalf of all of the trade union and professional organisations and representatives within NHS Fife to highlight a number of serious concerns to the Board in respect of providing safe services for the community that we serve.

I would add, however, that this is not only an NHS Fife issue and as indicated earlier most representatives at our Health Committee last week commented on difficulties around staff breaks; staff turnover; skill mix and staff are now just very tired and drained at the end of their working day.

It is also my understanding that these issues were raised at the Workforce Senior Leadership Group held on 29 September 2021 and actions need to be taken to support staff as many now are burnt out and this cannot continue.

I understand and appreciate how busy you are but I would be grateful if you would arrange to meet with myself and a number of colleagues in order that we can have a wider discussion around this matter.

Yours sincerely



**WILLIE DUFFY**

**Head of Health UNISON Scotland**