



Ms Shona Robison MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

UNISON House
14 West Campbell Street,
Glasgow
G2 6RX

Tel: 0141 342 2899

11 Oct 2017

Dear Ms Robison,

Re: NHS Pay 2018-19

UNISON have traditionally given full support to the Pay Review Body process.

In last year's pay round, we put forward a strong case for breaking the 1% pay policy, arguing that another year of pay restraint would further damage the health workforce and undermine the legitimacy of the Review Body mechanism.

The Review Body issued strong and specific warnings about the unsustainability of the 1% pay policy in its report – particularly in light of rising inflation during 2017 – but felt constrained by considerations of affordability to stick to the 1% limit as that was all that had been funded.

Last year we warned that health staff are unlikely to put up with the NHS Review Body being bound by a 1% pay cap for future rounds. Yet just six months away from our April 2018 review date it is still not clear whether the Review Body will be allowed free rein to make recommendations for 2018-19 which start to address the mounting morale issues and staffing shortages.

Nor is it clear whether central funding will be made available to fund the level of pay rise that is needed for all NHS staff. Without a commitment on funding, the PRB will be rightly concerned that any pay rise it recommends can only be delivered through cuts at organisational or country level.

Ahead of your budget this autumn, I am writing on behalf of UNISON Scotland Health Workers to set out what our members believe would be a reasonable settlement for pay for 2018-19.

We would like to see a fully funded Scottish pay settlement that does five things:

- Enables NHS staff to keep up with costs by matching RPI inflation or 3.9% whichever is the greater;
- Starts to restore pay lost during the years of austerity, giving a consolidated sum of £800 to all;
- Restores the living wage for Healthcare Students including Student Nurses
- Invests in improving the NHS Pay structure, making it better able to support workforce productivity improvements;
- Maintain your commitment to the realignment of all bands with special attention given to career progression for Band 5 nursing staff.

We urge you to use your budget to identify the funding needed to meet our claim. Doing so will enable the Scottish Government to regain its legitimacy in the eyes of NHS staff and start to address worsening NHS staffing problems. It will also show that your government values hard-pressed NHS staff and understands the negative impact pay restraint has had on them and the services they provide.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Waterson

Chair

UNISON Scotland – Health Committee

Matt McLaughlin

Regional Organiser

Head of Health- UNISON Scotland