

8 November 2022

The Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris, MP  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

By email

Dear Secretary of State

We are writing to you on the matter of pay for our members working in the Health Service in Northern Ireland. We do so in the context of the absence of our devolved government, a health minister, plus your intention to address the UK parliament on Wednesday November 9<sup>th</sup>. We understand you will be setting out your intentions as Secretary of State on a number of matters.

The absence of a mechanism to uplift pay to health workers in Northern Ireland is a matter of serious concern for the thousands of staff we represent in Northern Ireland. Together with all health unions in Northern Ireland, as the lead trade union we have been attempting to find a way forward.

At this very moment more than 35 000 workers are being balloted on industrial action. One union has already declared a vote for strike. This scenario has unfolded as our unions across the UK are also balloting. They are doing so to secure additionality to the imposition of the Pay Review Body recommendation.

All health trade unions within the UK believe an inflation-busting pay rise is necessary to protect struggling working families against the cost of living crisis. Health workers in Northern Ireland are now voting without having received this minimum payment. Pay parity with NHS England restored after a Northern Ireland -wide strike in 2019/2020 and endorsed by the NI Executive has once again been

ended .Our health workers are angry and feel disenfranchised and this will no doubt be reflected in their response in the ballots underway.

Given your intention to set a course over the coming weeks we ask you to bring your influence to bear on the Prime Minister to allow scope for and fund further UK-wide uplifts in 2022 to deliver protection against inflation. This would also provide scope for you to address the consequent omission of the PRB recommendation here in Northern Ireland, and ensure that a returned devolved Northern Ireland Executive has discretion to additionally resource pay improvement for 2022.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Speed." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**ANNE SPEED**  
**Head of Bargaining and Representation**