



To: Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP

UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY

Tel: 0800 0 857 857
Fax: 020 7121 5101
Text tel: 0800 0 967 968

unison.org.uk

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Dear Secretary of State,

Following your appointment to one of the most important roles in government, I am writing to request your most urgent action to address the NHS retention crisis as your first priority.

Health workers deserve to know government plans on NHS pay before facing further cost hikes over the summer.

UNISON's lead committee of health workers met yesterday and were clear with me that continued delay to the pay timetable will simply convince them and their colleagues that the government is pushing the interests of NHS staff and patients to the bottom of the queue.

The ambitious targets to reduce waiting times and remove the elective backlog will not be met without urgent pay action from you to prevent people leaving the health service.

Health workers were due their pay rise on 1 April. Further delay now will mean our pay conversations will run on into winter pressure periods and that health staff will face changes to their pension contributions on 1 October before they receive any uplift.

NHS staff cannot afford to wait for the leadership matters in your party to be settled before announcing your pay position. I will be talking to other unions about coordinating our plans, including consultative ballot options over inaction.

I would urge you to release the PRB report and let health staff know now if the inflation-busting pay rise they deserve will be delivered.

As always, I am happy to meet with you or your officials to discuss how we can stop the NHS staffing crisis from worsening.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Gorton', followed by a period.

SARA GORTON
Head of Health, UNISON