

Date: 28/02/2023

For the attention of The Prime Minister Rt Hon. Rishi Sunak MP

CC. Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Rt Hon. Steve Barclay

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to inform you of our intention to take strike action on the most recent NHS Pay Award following a successful ballot of our members in England. The British Dietetic Association (BDA) and our members are dismayed that the 2022/23 pay increase is far below inflation and fails to meet the needs of dietitians and other NHS professionals.

Our NHS has acted admirably over the past few years in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and managing an NHS system that has consistently been placed under pressure. They deserve a pay increase that is at a minimum above inflation, particularly given the current cost of living crisis that is squeezing our members. A failure to issue an above inflation pay increase will continue to exacerbate the workforce crisis that we are seeing within our NHS.

The Health & Social Care Committee's July 2022 Workforce Report, of which your Chancellor the Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt was an author, showed dietetics and nearly every workforce within the NHS is facing workforce shortages. Pay is a crucial element of this with many in our NHS being deterred from joining due to current pay arrangements and many experienced staff leaving the NHS to find better paid or lower stressed work elsewhere. This means that we're losing crucial experience within our NHS and failing to recruit new people to fill the ever-widening gap, which places greater strain on those who remain.

Strike action is not something that we or our members have taken lightly and is not our first course of action. However, we've been left with little choice due to the lack of engagement from the Department for Health and Social Care on this matter. At the foremost of our and our members minds is patient safety, but the NHS cannot safely continue under current arrangements and an above inflation pay rise will be one crucial step in addressing this.

We're therefore calling on your government, and in particular the Rt Hon. Steve Barclay Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to come to the negotiating table and engage with the BDA and other recognised NHS trade unions. Together we can come to solution that delivers for both NHS staff and patients.

Until your Government agrees to come to the negotiating table with all trade unions challenging the current pay award, we will continue take all actions available to deliver the pay reform we need. We want to work with you and your Government and are looking forward to your Government engaging proactively and positively with us and all trade unions involved in the NHS Pay Campaign.

Sincerely

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Director of Trade Union and Public Affairs

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