

FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
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Dr Peter Knight
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Office of Manpower Economics
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18 January 2018

Dear Peter

THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE 2017/18 PAY ROUND

Further to correspondence between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) Secretariat, I am writing to withdraw the activation letter sent to you on 15 February 2017 from Claire Sugden, then Minister of Justice.

Ronnie Armour, Director General of the NI Prison Service, and I have both reluctantly agreed that this is the only solution to enable completion of the pay round within this financial year. This decision is being taken in the context that:

- there is no Northern Ireland Assembly in place and therefore no Minister to take receipt of the PSPRB Report;
- the PSPRB need to retain the integrity of the process, and the receipt of written and oral evidence within the normal timeframe would not allow for completion of a report within this financial year;
- the pay award is outstanding from April 2017 (albeit contractual progression was implemented and backdated in October salaries); and
- the Department could face difficulties accruing monies into the next financial year if no firm agreement has been reached by year-end.

Hugh Widdis, Permanent Secretary within the Department of Finance (DoF), has taken legal advice and is content that he can, in the absence of a Minister, determine public sector pay policy and guidance for 2017/18. He has, therefore, written to Permanent Secretary colleagues to bring forward pay remits for DoF consideration.

NIPS has agreed with the Prison Governors Association and Prison Officers Association that there will be direct negotiations in respect of 2017 pay in order to finalise a pay settlement within the current financial year.

Ronnie and I both value the significant benefits to be gained from the independent recommendations of the Review Body. It is regrettable, but unavoidable, that we request you note the outcome of the 2017 pay settlement. I hope we will soon be in a position to seek your re-engagement for the 2018 round.

Yours sincerely



N P PERRY CB