



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Robert Buckland QC MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

Tim Flesher
Prison Service Pay Review Body
8th Floor
Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury Square
London
EC4Y 8JX

MoJ Ref: 80985

20 August 2020

Dear Tim,

PRISON SERVICE PAY REVIEW BODY 20/21 ENGLAND AND WALES REPORT

I am writing to acknowledge the concerns raised in your letter of 21 July regarding the Government response to PPSRB 20/21 report.

I recognise that the PPSRB are disappointed with the Government's response to the PPSRB's recommendations this year – specifically in relation to "recommendation 3", the £3,000 total uplift in pensionable pay for all Band 3 Prison Officers. The Government has neither accepted nor rejected the recommendation at this stage, and we are already considering this issue in further detail.

The costs associated with accepting this recommendation as stated, at a time where there is a great deal of economic uncertainty as the government continues its response and recovery from COVID-19, are considerable. I very much acknowledge the rationale behind this recommendation, and I am grateful to the PPSRB for setting this out and drawing upon a range of informative evidence. However, given the current circumstances and the increased economic uncertainty, it is ever more important that I fulfil my duty to the tax payer to consider whether investment of any kind offers best value for money. As part of this, it is necessary to consider how such an uplift in pay could be made affordable by also achieving workforce reform and subsequent efficiencies.

We must also consider this year's prison service pay award in the context of the pay awards that have been given to other key public-sector workforces, and consider the implications of a significantly higher award to one particular workforce.

I would like to reassure you and the other members of the PPSRB that the work to explore how we might implement this recommendation in a mutually beneficial way is already under way. With the help of key stakeholders, we hope to agree a way forward that balances the need to ensure fair pay for prison staff with the need to ensure value for money for taxpayers, whilst also meeting the increasing demands placed on the justice system.

I would be most happy to keep you informed of any updates and progress made, and to meet at a later date to discuss these outcomes.

Your efforts and expertise as articulated in this year's report are much appreciated. May I take this opportunity to thank you and your colleagues for all your hard work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Buckland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and 'B'.

RT HON ROBERT BUCKLAND QC MP