

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Department of
Justice

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Via email PSPRB@beis.gov.uk

Dear Tim,

Thank you very much for the 12th report of the Prison Service Pay Review Body for the remit groups in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, which I now invite you to publish.

There are a number of points in the Report which I would wish to address.

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for your work in producing this report. I am aware of how much time and commitment all the members of the Body give to issues relating to the Northern Ireland Prison Service. However, I wish to clarify the position on a number of issues.

Paragraph 3.20 - "*the pay effective date of the SRA should be moved to 1 September to match that of the NITA*": I have previously outlined the issues around separate negotiations and separate employers. In addition, any link to the NITA means

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implementation would only follow approval from the Department of Finance for the PSNI pay award.

Paragraph 3.26 - *“a lack of a clear long-term strategy for the pay structure as a whole”*: I do not accept this in light of the fact that officials met the PSPRB in advance of the pay round to set out the strategy, which was further expanded on in oral evidence.

Paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11 - *“1 April pay effective date” and “multi-year pay award”*: These are not realisable and only serve to raise false expectations. Progression is performance based and appraisal reports must be completed and returned by mid-May. Public sector pay guidance must be published before approval can be granted. Only single year budgets are currently being agreed. NIPS officials previously sought to move the settlement date to mitigate against the timing issue, but this was rejected.

I am disappointed that the proposals from NIPS Management did not receive acceptance. The proposals affected the vast majority of staff with additional headroom for all of our recruited to grades from Senior Officer post 2002 and below, in addition to moving CPO recruits more quickly from the band minimum.

Given the announcement from the UK Government in respect of restraint and targeted awards with a partial pause on public sector pay in 2021, we will be severely restricted in our approach to the key aims of addressing lower pay, and differentials, and any out-workings of the grading review. I believe 2020 represents a missed opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



NAOMI LONG MLA
MINISTER OF JUSTICE