

The RT Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Monday 19th June

Dear Prime Minister,

By your own admission, austerity, and a lack of investment in the public sector was a significant factor in the general election result. Many have said that the pay freeze in the public sector was in part to blame for your failure to secure a parliamentary majority, alongside senior health leaders who agree that people who work in our NHS should be fairly rewarded for the work they do.

Organisations that represent patients and our NHS workforce are calling for the Queen's Speech to mark a clear change in direction.

People who are working in the NHS are delivering care to the best of their ability but we are very worried that care is becoming unsafe. Our services are struggling to make do without the staff they need.

The Public Sector Pay Cap has forced professionals out of jobs they love. Those who stay are overstretched and under pressure to do ever more with less. The longstanding cap stands in the way of recruiting and retaining the best in health care. It is having a profound and detrimental effect on standards of care for people at a time when the NHS is short of staff across every discipline. This is alongside an uncertain future for EU nationals working in health and care.

Next month, our vital national service turns 69. In its seventieth year, you have the opportunity to show the country how much you value the lives of people who work in the NHS, and the people they serve.

We call on you to prioritise patient safety by guaranteeing safe staffing across all of our services and changing your policy on NHS pay. Government should remove the pay cap and address the real-terms loss of earnings so the NHS can retain and attract staff, resolve the workforce shortage and ensure safe patient care.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Davies, Chief Executive & General Secretary
Royal College of Nursing

June Chandler, Lead Officer
British Association of Occupational Therapists

Mick Armstrong, Chair
British Dental Association

Annette Mansell Green, Head of Employment Relations
British Dietetic Association

Dr Mark Porter, Chair
British Medical Association

Lesley Anne Baxter, Chair
British & Irish Orthoptic Society

Karen Middleton CBE, Chief Executive
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Geoff Lester, National Negotiator
Federation of Clinical Scientists

Kevin Brandstatter, Public Services Section and
National Lead Organiser
GMB

Dave Prentis, General Secretary
UNISON

Jon Restell, Chief Executive
Managers in Partnership

Steve Gillan, General Secretary
Prison Officers Association

Jon Skewes, Director for Policy, Employment
Relations and Communications
Royal College of Midwives

Richard Evans OBE, Chief Executive
Society of Radiographers

Martin Furlong, Interim Head of
Employment Relations
The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists

Gail Cartmail, Assistant General Secretary
Unite