



The Rt Hon Jeremy Quin MP
Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London
SW1A 2AS

Geoff Lewtas
Convenor, National Trade Union
Committee (NTUC)

Thursday 5 January 2023

Dear Mr Lewtas,

I am grateful for the engagement and representations I have received on Civil Service pay since taking on the role of Minister for the Cabinet Office, including from FDA, Prospect and PCS.

The Government is committed to holding constructive discussions with recognised Civil Service trade unions and their respective members about what kind of settlements could strike the right balance to avoid prolonging industrial action.

Bringing down inflation must be the Government's number one priority, but we also recognise workers' genuine concerns about the cost of living. We must strike a balance between giving workers a fair and reasonable settlement and taking the steps to continue to bring down inflation and protect households' budgets. Because it is only by getting inflation under control that we stop interest rates climbing, mortgage payments increasing and bills rising for people across the country. The sooner we get inflation down the better for everyone.

We understand the vital role that public sector workers – including civil servants – play in delivering the Government's priorities and the public services on which we all rely. And we recognise that they, like everyone else, are facing cost of living pressures, driven by global economic headwinds buffeting countries around the world – including the aftereffects of the COVID pandemic, and Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

We also know that we come from different perspectives, but we want to work together. Industrial action is disruptive for everyone – for the public relying on essential services and for striking workers themselves, who forfeit their pay at a time when household budgets are tight.

As the Minister for the Cabinet Office, I would like to set out a path for constructive engagement on the matters that impact civil servants, including future pay. This is in recognition of our pay structures, through which pay is set through a pay review body for the Senior Civil Service and by individual departments guided by the cost control document of the pay remit guidance for grades below the SCS.

For the SCS workforce, there is a pay review body process which makes pay recommendations to the government and has operated since 1971. It provides independent, expert advice and is a neutral process in which all parties play a role. We must respect this

independent process whilst continuing open and constructive dialogue about all issues that impact the Senior Civil Service including matters beyond pay.

For grades below the SCS, pay is set by departments in local negotiations with trade unions. The pay remit guidance is a cost control document, which has set a headline range for pay awards which departments can make without further consideration from the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury (HMT). I have also been encouraged to hear of the positive dialogue on future strategy for delegated pay, where departments have come together to identify shared priorities. I know you have positively engaged in this with officials in CSHR who are supporting departments in this work.

Within that context, I would like to invite you to sit down and discuss the evidence Government intends to submit to pay review bodies for both SCS and delegated workforces. The Government wants to hear your views on what you and your members think is a reasonable settlement balancing the wider economic factors, ideas for how to make public services better for workers and the public. In the spirit of openness, we will be publishing our economic evidence to pay review bodies alongside so that union members and the wider public can see the context within which we need to work. I would also welcome evidence to support pay and non-pay demands.

For grades below the SCS I welcome your representations on behalf of your members, which I will consider alongside the advice and recommendations from departments in setting the pay remit guidance. In addition to this offer to meet with me, my officials will shortly be inviting you to additional official-level meetings to hear more on your priorities for pay below the SCS.

We hope that these discussions will help ensure that both the evidence submitted to the SSRB and the pay remit guidance for delegated grades are as considered and informed as possible, including reflecting areas of common ground.

As you will also have seen, the Government has today announced we will be introducing Minimum Service Levels legislation next week, which will protect the ability of workers to strike while ensuring the public are also protected from disproportionate disruption. We do not currently intend to use this legislation in the Civil Service, and instead intend to continue using the relevant voluntary arrangements already in place to ensure we deliver departmental services the public can reasonably expect to receive.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Quin', written in a cursive style.

**JEREMY QUIN MP
MINISTER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE
HM PAYMASTER GENERAL**