



**The Professional Trades Union for Prison,  
Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers**

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## **POA Circular 040/2020**

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Colleagues

### **SPECIAL PAYMENTS SCHEME**

In relation to the above there appears to be much misinformation being placed on social media in particular by individuals promoting the Criminal Justice Workers Union. We understand that individuals setting this up are merely in our opinion self-publicists who are frustrated that they do not have a seat at the table with the employers who recognise the POA.

It is important though to set the record straight in the misinformation that is circulating by this small group of individuals who are attempting to undermine the POA at every turn in recent months. We note that some of the misinformation has been taken down on their open Facebook page and replaced from its original format.

It is claimed by the CJWU that the Special Payments Scheme was a “negotiation” by the POA and wasn’t enough and then went on to promote another “negotiation” praising their efforts against ours. The fact of the matter is it was not a negotiation. Treasury only released money on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020, after this Union had asked for additional monies and resources to assist with this crisis. We were consulted on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 about the scheme and we made our representations in what was a 4 hour turn around. We made it clear because it was a voluntary scheme that we would neither endorse it or reject it and made it clear that no amount of money could ever replace safety during COVID-19. We believe having adequate PPE and testing facilities for our members was more important.

We did recognise however, that many of our members would wish to volunteer and the POA would not discourage any individual from doing so whether that was an OSG or Bands 3 to 5 grades. We also made representations to the Director General and indeed the CEO and as late as last night to the Secretary of State for Justice our concerns about a scheme that divides staff. We also gave solutions to a scheme that would be fair to all but in the interests of a partnership approach we are not going to put obstacles in the way or make and provoke issues on social media.

In our view the attack on the POA NEC at this vital time is ill thought out, calculated and not in the interests of HMPPS at this critical time. It is self-serving and also to see postings inciting our members not to volunteer goes against everything that this Union has been promoting in the last few weeks. This is not a game it could be a matter of life and death because COVID-19 is so serious.

We will continue to do everything in our power to safeguard the membership and indeed those in our care and will not be distracted from doing so. The NEC have worked hard and we note that Northern Ireland have seen a bonus scheme introduced on very much the same lines as have been achieved here, as have the Private sector where we are recognised after discussions and consultation with them.

Treasury have released monies for our members, perhaps not as much as we would have wanted, but spare a thought for the hundreds of thousands of workers who are losing their jobs and not getting any bonus schemes whatsoever. We need to be united and we believe the vast majority of our members are, unfortunately there are a few disaffected that will continue to go their own way and at every opportunity talk this great Trade Union down. We thank you for all your efforts at this difficult time and we will continue to work with employer and Government to get you all through this testing time.

Yours Sincerely



**STEVE GILLAN**  
General Secretary

Yours Sincerely



**MARK FAIRHURST**  
National Chair