



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

National Chair: Mark Fairhurst
General Secretary: Steve Gillan

Headquarters:
Cronin House
245 Church St.
Edmonton
London N9 9HW
t. 020 8803 0255
f. 020 8803 1761
e. general@poauk.org.uk
w. www.poauk.org.uk

North Regional Office
1 Linden House
Sardinia St.
Leeds
LS10 1BH

t. 01132 428833
f. 01132 429075
e. adminnro@poauk.org.uk

Northern Ireland
Castell House
116 Ballywalter Rd.
Millisle Co Down
BT22 2HS

t. 02891 861928
f. 02891 861839
e. adminni@poauk.org.uk

Scotland
21 Calder Rd.
Edinburgh
Scotland
EH11 3PF

t. 0131 443 8105
f. 0131 444 0657
e. adminscot@poauk.org.uk

POA Circular 158/2020

23rd November 2020

Dear Colleagues

POTENTIAL PAY FREEZE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

Please find the attached letter sent to the Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary Mr Robert Buckland QC and MP which is self - explanatory.

We all know that Prison Staff as key workers have without complaint attended work during this pandemic to keep Prisons safe during this terrible time. The speculation has not been confirmed but the Spending Review will be announced on Wednesday 25th November 2020 so we will all see the outcome and indeed the detail of the announcement.

The speculation in the media attempts to justify a Public sector pay freeze by comparing workers in the public sector with their terms and conditions compared to those in the private sector. This is not a time to pit worker against worker as this should not be a race to the bottom. All workers whether in the public sector or private sector should be on decent pay and terms and conditions. By all workers having spending power this is the best way to stimulate the economy and get better growth going forward. I hope my letter has some traction on behalf of POA members with the Government and they take a step backwards from making an announcement that will be a betrayal to the men and women who have risked their health and well-being to keep the service operating to a high standard.

POA members do not deserve this sort of speculation after the work they have done in keeping everyone safe.

Yours Sincerely

STEVE GILLAN
General Secretary

ENCLOSURE



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

National Chair: Mark Fairhurst
General Secretary: Steve Gillan

Headquarters:
Cronin House t. 020 8803 0255
245 Church St. f. 020 8803 1761
Edmonton e. general@poauk.org.uk
London N9 9HW w. www.poauk.org.uk

North Regional Office
1 Linden House
Sardinia St.
Leeds LS10 1BH
t. 01132 428833
f. 01132 429075
e. adminnro@poauk.org.uk

Northern Ireland
Castell House
116 Ballywalter Rd.
Millisle Co Down BT22 2HS
t. 02891 861928
f. 02891 861839
e. adminni@poauk.org.uk

Scotland
21 Calder Rd.
Edinburgh
Scotland EH11 3PF
t. 0131 443 8105
f. 0131 444 0657
e. adminscot@poauk.org.uk

Our Ref: IR - 681 -20 - SG

20th November 2020

Dear Mr Buckland

PAY REVIEW BODY RECOMMENDATION 3

As you know the Pay Review Body system was set up on the 17th April 2001 as a statutory instrument to deal with pay in relation to the remit group in Prisons. This was also described at the time as a compensatory mechanism for Prison Officer grades not having the right to strike since the Criminal Justice Public Order Act, Section 127 in 1994 became law.

The review body reports on its recommendations directly to the Prime Minister and you as Secretary of State. It is common knowledge that in July 2020 the review body made clear recommendations with robust evidence to back those recommendations. In your statement to Parliament you made clear that Government accepted recommendations 1,2,4 and 7 which the POA welcomed but made clear that it in no way made up for the years of austerity where POA members had endured crippling pay freezes and pay cuts along with increases to their pension contributions meaning on average the loss of pay my members suffered was over £3000.

During that statement to Parliament in relation to recommendation 3 which would have seen Band 3 Prison Officers on fair and sustainable terms and conditions getting a consolidated overall increase of £3000 from September 2020, it was determined not to reject it or accept it as Government wanted time to consider the recommendation.

Furthermore you stated that Government would wish to open discussions with recognised trade unions on the implications of this recommendation and how any such uplift in pay might best be implemented in an affordable and mutually beneficial manner alongside workforce reforms that deliver the best value for money for tax payers. The POA made clear that we stood ready to enter without prejudice negotiations. It is with regret that your statement to Parliament has not come to fruition and there has been no dialogue with the POA who are the recognised trade union in respect of recommendation 3 nor have we had any discussions on workforce reform as outlined in your statement on 21st July 2020.

Recommendation 3 is vitally important to our members in Band 3 fair and sustainable because they are poorly paid for the job that they do on behalf of society. The Pay Review Body have clearly recognised this and the POA have been arguing this for a long time that the pay model in the Prison Service is broken and not fit for purpose.

I am also bitterly disappointed after all the good work we have done in a collaborative approach with Government and employers during COVID 19 pandemic to preserve life in a fragile prison estate environment that we find out through the media “leaks” of the intention to introduce pay freezes for public sector workers. As key workers this will be a kick in the teeth to POA members if this comes to fruition and indeed the wider public sector workforce.

If it is correct your Cabinet colleague Chancellor Rishi Sunak is expected to say it is only fair that public sector wages are frozen when many in the private sector face pay cuts or job losses then that is completely illogical as this should not be a race to the bottom and pitching public sector workers against private sector workers. If that is a Government tactic then it is ill thought out and doomed to failure in my view.

Since becoming the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice you have always championed the work that Prison staff do and we have supported your view on many issues but I hope the championing of Prison staff is not just warm words and that you have championed the magnificent work that my members have done not just during this pandemic but the vital work they have carried out over the years in very difficult circumstances with your Cabinet colleagues in Government and resisted this pay freeze. They deserve reward not further pay freezes or further cuts which will demoralise morale further as emergency keyworkers.

At a time when 50.3 per cent of Band 3-5 Officers have less than 5 years- service and 19.8 per cent have less than 2 years- service Government can ill afford to treat these professional key workers with contempt in relation to pay.

If you want HMPPS to attract the very best to an important public service pay freezes are not the answer.

The Pay Review Body wrote what I can only describe as a scathing letter in relation to recommendation 3 and I am sure that body of individuals will be keeping a close eye on developments next week with the prospect of announcements that go against their recommendation which had nothing to do with COVID 19 or the pandemic it was a reality of the poor pay and leaving rate coupled with training costs to the tax payer. In actual fact by implementing recommendation 3 could well be self-financing and no extra cost to the public purse.

The POA as you know have also instructed our legal team on the issue of recommendation 3 as our members affected would expect us to but as we mentioned in previous correspondence on this matter we would rather negotiate than litigate on this issue.

I urge Government to treat Prison Officer grades with respect along with other public sector workers and desist from any proposed pay freeze.

I look forward to your urgent response given the short timeframe to the spending review announcement.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Gillan', with a small horizontal line at the end.

STEVE GILLAN
General Secretary

Cc: The Prime Minister – Boris Johnson
Kier Starmer
David Lammy
Frances O’Grady
Chair of Pay Review Body

Sent via email to; secofstate@justice.gov.uk

Rt Honourable Robert Buckland MP QC
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ