



Subject:	Motion: NHS Pay – Response from Minister of Health
Date:	19th November, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider a response to a motion on NHS Pay which was passed by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response and take such action thereon as may be determined.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The Council, at its meeting on 1st September, passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Matt Collins and seconded by Councillor Michael Collins:

"This Council notes with concern the 3% pay offer set to be made to health workers. This offer falls way short of satisfying the health unions' demands for a substantial pay uplift.

Our health workers deserve a real pay increase for their efforts throughout the pandemic. A 3% pay increase is only 1% above the UK inflation rate and is not nearly enough recognition for health staff and their efforts in these difficult times.

The Council notes that this offer comes at a time when health workers are under considerable strain, with Northern Ireland currently struggling with one of the highest Covid-19 death rates across the world.

The Council also notes with concern the recent reports of understaffing in our health service, with 1,800 nursing positions currently vacant in the North, while a further 1,000 vacancies exist in the social work and domiciliary care sector.

In order to retain a vibrant and world class health service, we must reward staff for the vital work which they carry out. Pay disparity with other jurisdictions has left many seeking employment elsewhere and low pay has contributed to staff resigning from the profession altogether.

The pandemic has shown how vital our health service is. Yet many NHS staff still suffer poverty wages and continue to be paid less when compared with other regions in the UK.

The Council resolves to write to the Health Minister, Robin Swann, calling upon him to refuse to bring forward the 3% pay offer, urging him, alongside the First and Deputy First Ministers, to lobby the British Government to award a substantial offer and asking him to bring forward proposals on safe staffing.

The Council also resolves to convene a cross-party meeting with Political Parties in Belfast City Council and Trade Unionists in the Health service, to discuss the urgent need for a more substantial pay uplift for NHS staff, and the practical steps which can be taken to achieve this."

3.2

A response has been received from Mr. Robin Swann, MLA, Minister of Health, a copy of which is attached.

3.3	<p>The Minister begins by stating that the Department of Health is in receipt of the 34th NHS Pay Review Body Report and the 49th Report of the Review Body for Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration, both of which recommend a 3% uplift in the salaries of relevant staff from April, 2021. He has already written to Trade Unions to confirm that he has fully accepted the pay recommendations set out in the reports.</p>
3.4	<p>He points out that the funding held by his Department does not go far enough to meet the recommendations of the Pay Review Bodies. Furthermore, the Treasury has confirmed that it will not be providing any additional funding for the pay uplifts to NHS England. As a result, there will be no additional funding coming to Northern Ireland through the Barnett Formula for these awards.</p>
3.5	<p>The Minister concludes by stating that he has written to the Minister of Finance, who has indicated that he will support his request for Executive in-year monitoring to help fund the recommended uplifts for this year via the October monitoring round.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.7	<p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	<p>Document Attached</p>
	<p>Response from Minister of Health</p>