



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Dr Patricia Rice
Chair of STRB
c/o Office of Manpower Economics
Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury House
EC4Y 8JX

21 September 2017

Dear Patricia,

PUBLIC SECTOR PAY 2018 -19

1. Thank you for your work on the 2017/18 pay round. The Pay Review Bodies continue to play an invaluable role in making independent, evidence-based recommendations on public sector pay awards. I am extremely grateful to you and your colleagues for your considered work. This letter sets out the Treasury's overarching approach for the 2018/19 pay round.
2. Our public-sector workers are among the most extraordinarily talented and hardworking people in our society. They, like everyone else, deserve to have fulfilling jobs that are fairly rewarded. The Government takes a balanced approach to public spending, dealing with our debts to keep our economy strong, while also making sure we invest in our public services.
3. The Government will continue to ensure that the overall package for public sector workers is fair to them and ensures that we can deliver world class public services while also being affordable within the public finances and fair to taxpayers as a whole.
4. The last Spending Review budgeted for a 1% average increase in basic pay and progression pay awards for specific work forces, and there will still be a need for pay discipline over the coming years, to ensure the affordability of the public services and the sustainability of public sector employment. However, the Government recognises that in some parts of the public sector, particularly in areas of skill shortage, more flexibility may be required to deliver world class public services including in return for improvements to public sector productivity.
5. As the Office for Budget Responsibility's Fiscal risks report published on 13 July reminds us, at nearly 90 per cent of GDP, our public debt is still too high. So, while continuing



to invest in and improve our public services, we must also maintain our ambition to reduce debt at a pace which is sensitive to the needs of the economy.

6. With a more flexible policy it is of even greater importance that recommendations on annual pay awards are based on independent advice and underpinned by robust evidence, submitted by departments, that takes into account the context of wider economic circumstances, private sector comparators, and overall remuneration of public sector workers (including progression pay and pension entitlements). The role of the Pay Review Bodies is therefore more important than ever.
7. The Government values hugely the role of the Pay Review Bodies and appreciates the length of time it takes to complete a thorough process. As you know, the forthcoming 2018/19 annual pay round also marks the shift to a Single Fiscal Event in the autumn which will delay your receipt of departmental evidence. The process will therefore run to a later timeline this year: a letter will follow this in due course from relevant Secretaries of State and written evidence will likely be received in December rather than September as is usual for most PRB workforces.
8. I realise that the change in timing will impact on when the Government can expect to receive your report and, as a consequence, on when individuals will receive their pay award. I recognise that this is far from ideal as our hard-working public servants are entitled to receive their awards promptly. However, on balance given the importance of the process and the change in timing that has already occurred, I feel it is important we work to a later timeline rather than condensing the process. I hope that by making the timing clear at the beginning of the process workforces can be made aware, with plans put in place to work to a later timeline, and for you and your PRB members to manage your own time. The Office for Manpower Economics will be able to support you in this but, do get in touch if you have concerns in this regard.
9. I appreciate that you may have further questions about this change in approach and I would be pleased to discuss this further when we meet soon. I look forward to working with you over the coming years.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Elizabeth Truss'.

RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP