

Royal College of Nursing
Ty Maeth
King George V Drive East
Cardiff
CF14 4XZ

Helen Whyley, RN, MA
Director, RCN Wales

18 January 2023

Mark Drakeford, MS
First Minister of Wales
Welsh Government
5th Floor, Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear First Minister

I am writing to you as I have yet to receive a full response to my letter, 19 December 2022.

On 23 December you acknowledged my letter saying that you would respond after the 'short festive break'. We are now well into January, and I have not received a response. I am disappointed that you have not responded, my members feel that your government is not taking seriously the challenges facing the nursing workforce and, by extension, the patients who depend on them.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Wales first notified you of our formal trade dispute with the Welsh Government and NHS Wales Employers in accordance with s.244 Trade Union & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 on the 13 October 2021. Over 15 months has passed since the dispute was first raised and the Welsh Government has not taken meaningful action to resolve the dispute. It is for this reason I have announced further strikes days for Wales.

Continued

Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol y Deyrnas Gyfunol/Royal College of Nursing of the United Kingdom
20 Cavendish Square
Lundain/London W1G 0RN
Ffôn/Telephone
+44 (0) 20 7409 3333
RCN Direct 0345 772 6100
rcn.org.uk

Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol Cymru Swyddfa Gogledd Cymru/Royal College of Nursing Wales
Ty Maeth, Rhodfa Ddwyrainiol/
Brenin George V/
King George V Drive East
Caerdydd/Cardiff
CF14 4XZ

Llywydd/President
Sheilabye (Sheila) Sobrany RGN
PGCert HE MA HE SFHEA
Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol a Phrif Weithredwr/General Secretary & Chief Executive
Pat Cullen
Cyfarwyddwr, RCN Cymru/Director, RCN Wales
Helen Whyley

Mae'r RCN yn cynrychioli nrysys a nyrsio, gan hyrwyddo rhagoriaeth mewn arfer a llunio polisiau iechyd
The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
Rydym yn buddsoddi mewn llesiant Arian

Mae'r Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol yn Goleg Brenhinol a sefydlwyd drwy Siarter Frenhinol ac Undeb Llafur Cofestr Arbennig a sefydlwyd a dan Ddeddf Undebau Llafur (Cydgrynhoi) 1992.

The RCN is a Royal College set up by Royal Charter and a Special Register Trade Union established under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

In a press conference last week, you said you were unable to offer a higher, consolidated pay award to create “a platform for the future”. Yet low pay continues to drive nursing staff away from NHS Wales. A platform for the future is exactly what is needed.

The offer of a one-off payment demonstrates the Welsh Government’s lack of understanding regarding the nursing crisis we are facing in Wales. Registered nurse vacancies in the NHS are exceeding 3,000 and agency spend has risen once again to £152 million. A one-off payment will go nowhere near what is needed to resolve the nursing staffing crisis and therefore the RCN dispute with your government. A one-off payment offers no certainty for the future of our profession and therefore of patient safety.

The Minister for Finance and Local Government recently confirmed the existence of £215.8 million in unallocated resource funding. Service improvements and pandemic recovery begins with the workforce, without which all services would cease to exist.

I urge you to reconsider your approach and in the spirit of social partnership come back to the table with an improved, substantive, and restorative pay award.

Yours sincerely

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

**HELEN WHYLEY, RN, MA
DIRECTOR, RCN WALES**

cc: Russell George MS, Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee