



STRONGER TOGETHER

CONGRESS

Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Northern Ireland Committee

9TH December 2019

The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP
Secretary of State for NI
Stormont House
BELFAST
BT4 3SH

Dear Secretary of State,

I write to you on behalf of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC-ICTU) which represents over 200,000 workers through our 24 affiliate unions across Northern Ireland.

I and our leadership team are seeking an urgent meeting with you to discuss two serious and important items.

- **The current health crisis** – As you are aware a number of health unions are engaged in industrial action and strike action and others are currently balloting on action. The health service in Northern Ireland has been in crisis for some time and our health care workers are to be commended for delivering the best service possible notwithstanding the clear shortfalls in structural funding particularly when it comes to pay, resourcing and staffing numbers. We believe your government (particularly in the absence of a devolved government) has the ultimate responsibility when it comes to policy actions to set the Northern Ireland NHS on a course to where it needs to be. We believe the resolution of the current industrial dispute must involve direct engagement and a process with the relevant health unions. But we wish to engage with you on policy matters which affect not just our members but wider Northern Ireland society.
- **Welfare mitigations** – We are aware that five of Northern Ireland's political parties from across the political spectrum have written to you asking you to intervene and ensure that in the absence of a function Executive at Stormont that you extend these necessary mitigations beyond March 2020 in order to avoid unnecessary hardship to many people, including working families on low pay. We support this call and wish to discuss this matter with you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY

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