

Mr Conor Murphy MLA
Chairperson of the Finance and Personnel Committee
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BT4 3XX

21 September 2011

Dear Mr.Murphy

Re: N.I. Civil Service Equal Pay Settlement

I am writing to you in relation to the equal pay issue for retired civil servants as I understand that the DfP Committee is continuing to investigate this and that you may be taking evidence from the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance (CSPA) in the near future. CSPA is a constituent member of Age Sector Platform and we have a keen interest in the outcome of you enquiries.

Age Sector Platform (ASP) is a charity which represents the interests of older people in Northern Ireland. It was launched in 2008 to support older people to make their voice heard on the issues that matter to them. Managed by an Executive Committee of twelve representatives, Age Sector Platform currently has a membership base of 30 older people's organisations and networks which represent approximately 200,000 older people across Northern Ireland. It was with great alarm that we heard the outcome of the NICS Equal Pay Settlement last year. CSPA have been very active in trying to have the Minister's decision to exclude pensioners from the Settlement reversed and we fully support their efforts.

Age Sector Platform regards this as a form of age discrimination which the Minister has tried to justify by claiming that he has no legal obligation to pay the pensioners. That may be so but equally there is, to the best of our knowledge, no legal impediment to compensating the pensioners who had worked alongside serving officers who have already been paid; and there is an overwhelming moral argument in favour of doing so.

The removal of pensioners from this Settlement has also affected the level of pension they receive and we are sure that many of those affected would see great benefit during the coming winter months in receiving what they were entitled too. As those affected would be on a small pension many will no doubt be, like so many older people, struggling to cope with the effects of fuel poverty at this time.

Age Sector Platform believes that the retired civil servants have been treated very unfairly in this matter and have been left financially worse off through no fault of their own. I do hope that once you have completed your enquiries you will be able to make a firm recommendation to the Minister that the pensioners should be compensated for their loyal service.

Yours sincerely

Eddie Lynch
Chief Executive
Age Sector Platform

cc Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk