Prime Minister Elizabeth Truss
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

15 September 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

CONGRATULATIONS FROM CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONERS' ALLIANCE (CSPA)

I am writing on behalf of the CSPA to offer you our congratulations on your appointment as Prime Minister.

This year, we are marking 70 years since our organisation was first established to protect the value of The Civil Service Pension. Many retired civil servants, dedicated to public service, have worked hard to deliver government policy during their careers. Sadly, many of our members and older people in general, are now facing some hard challenges in the aftermath of the Covid -19 Pandemic and the extreme cost of living crisis.

We are mindful of the national period of mourning following the death of the Queen, but wanted to write to you immediately, to bring to your attention the serious issues that are being faced by our members and older people.

Now that you are Prime Minister, we urge you and your team to deliver on the following:

Pensions must rise with cost of living

Although we were glad to see the energy price cap frozen at £2,500 for the next two years, the cost-of-living crisis is already biting hard. The State Pension has fallen behind in value following suspension last year of the triple lock upgrade. It is imperative that both State and Civil Service pensions are increased in line with the rising cost of living.

Sustainable funding and staffing of the Social Care System

Care must be accessible to all who need it, when they need it. Central and sustainable funding for the long term must be found to ensure care workers are retained and their key worker status is reflected in pay,

professional development, and support. Unpaid carers need the financial and practical help they deserve. Those in receipt of their pension should also be allowed to receive Carer's Allowance, currently £69.70 per week.

Improved access to the Primary Care GPs, Dental and Optical Treatment

We were pleased to see you highlight in your first speech as Prime Minister that you *"will make sure people can get doctors' appointments and the NHS services they need."* Good access to primary care services must be available across the country. Failure to ensure these services are provided when required, will mean more serious and chronic conditions, increasing the pressure on hospitals.

Access to Hospital Treatment

A backlog of patients waiting for treatment means that lives are being lost and many are struggling in chronic pain. Despite the plans launched to help fund the NHS, we fear the allocated money is insufficient. We are not aware of any significant strategies or plans to address the immediate shortages in staff, or to turnaround the increasing numbers of trained doctors and nurses leaving the service.

Digital and Financial Exclusion

An increase in the shift of services online has excluded many from accessing the help they need. It costs money to buy digital equipment and pay for broadband connections. Many lack confidence in the security of online banking or local/central government services. Alternative methods must be provided to ensure everyone has fair access to these facilities. We also ask that you secure continued access to cash for those who do not use card and contactless payments.

As you and your team begin work on the many challenges that the country faces, the CSPA urges you to ensure that policies focus on the needs of those who are older, more vulnerable, and reliant on a fixed pension income. We all deserve a secure and rewarding later life.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Ray
General Secretary, Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance

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