

Ms Phil Ní Sheaghdha
General Secretary
Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation
The Whitworth Building
North Brunswick Street
Dublin 7
D07 NP8H

13th February, 2018

Dear Ms Ní Sheaghdha,

I refer to your letter of 5th February, 2018 which was received on the 6th February, 2018. I note your confirmation of my earlier response regarding your request to make an oral presentation to the Commission and I acknowledge that your organisation will make themselves available if required to do so.

I note your concern about the survey and structured interviews that are proposed as part of an independent research initiative being undertaken on behalf of the Commission. As you are aware, the examination of the underlying difficulties concerning recruitment and retention which the Commission is required to investigate, is a matter of some complexity and will require consideration of multifarious issues. Accordingly, the Commission has sought detailed information and submissions from relevant trade unions and associations and from relevant public service employers. It has also commissioned independent research to further assist it in its considerations of these issues. This is consistent with Section 3 of the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 which provides, *inter alia*: -

The Commission will conduct a comprehensive examination and analysis of the particular issues in question, commissioning external expertise as required, and taking into account the full range of causal factors in each case. The Commission will be asked to generate options for resolving the issues identified. In this regard the Commission will develop specific methodological and analytical criteria to support it in carrying out this exercise.

This initiative is also comprehended by our overall Terms of Reference, which state that the Commission should “*Commission such external expertise as the Commission deems necessary to inform its deliberations in the context of the methodologies developed*”. This is also consistent with the Commission’s Statement of Approach which issued to all parties in November 2017.

The aim of this research is to objectively identify some of the main drivers in respect of recruitment and/or retention. This strand of our work is at a very early stage and contracts with Research Matters Ltd were only signed on 30/1/2018. Questionnaires have not yet issued in respect of the survey. Research Matters Ltd are currently seeking information from the national HR, Directorate of HSE, the National Doctor Training and Planning and the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director. The information being sought relates to the understanding of these bodies in relation to issues of relevance to the recruitment and retention of these staff. The information disclosed by this research will be considered together with that provided by trade unions, including INMO and that obtained from the other bodies from which submissions were received.

I can assure that there will be no management input to the design of the survey or the selection of respondents. Nor, as I am sure you will appreciate, can there be any input from other parties that may have an interest in the outcome. The design of the survey and structured interviews are being carried out by Research Matters Ltd, in accordance with the Commission’s specifications which require that they be undertaken objectively and independently. This process is being overseen by independent academic advisors to the Commission (separate to the research), experienced in the field of research and surveys, to further ensure the robustness and objectivity of the process. The independence of this process is extremely important to all of the members of the Commission.

Once the sampling strategy is agreed and the survey and structured interviews are designed we will be writing to the relevant unions, staff associations, employers and registration boards to assist in the promotion of this important strand of the Commissions work. The Commission would be most appreciative of the INMOs support in these communications.

Yours sincerely

P.P. 

Kevin Duffy

Chairman

Public Service Pay Commission