



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Andrew Stephenson CBE MP
Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care*

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Iain Stewart MP

By email to: iain.stewart.mp@parliament.uk

5 April 2024

Dear Iain,

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 March on behalf of a number of your constituents about the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023.

I am grateful to you for raising your constituents' concerns.

I would firstly like to say how grateful I am for the high-quality, compassionate and safe care nurses and other frontline staff provide in the NHS. I recognise the extreme pressure nurses often work under and the public rightly place huge value on this workforce.

The Government firmly believes that the ability to strike is an important part of industrial relations in the UK, rightly protected by law, and understands that an element of disruption is inherent to any strike. However, we need to have confidence that peoples' lives and livelihoods are not put at risk when workers strike.

Our priority is to ensure that our health services can continue to deliver vital treatment and support to patients at their time of need. Minimum service levels aim to balance the right of unions and their members to strike with protecting the lives and health of the public during industrial action.

Given the significant risk to patients caused by industrial action, we held a public consultation on whether minimum service levels should be in place for hospital services during strikes. We are now considering the responses we received to the consultation as part of the development of our policy.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**THE RT HON ANDREW STEPHENSON CBE MP
MINISTER OF STATE**