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Members of the Scottish Partnership Forum

8 November 2023

I am writing to you about the UK Government's recent laying of regulations to mandate minimum service levels for ambulance services under the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023.

You may already have seen that the UK Government has decided not to apply the regulations to ambulance services in Scotland. Oddly, the regulations extend to England, Wales and Scotland but only actually concern ambulance services and non-emergency patient transport services in England, prescribing minimum service levels in relation to strikes affecting those services only.

Regardless of this somewhat confusing approach, I am pleased that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has conceded to our calls for ambulance services in Scotland to be excluded from minimum service level regulations. I very much hope that this concession will be applied to the regulations for healthcare services in hospital settings, which I understand may be published next week.

The Scottish Government believes that a progressive approach to industrial relations, along with greater – not fewer – protections for workers is at the heart of a fairer, more successful society and prosperous economy.

We consider this inflammatory and provocative Act to be in direct contradiction to that. It cuts across the devolution settlement and fails to recognise the authority of the Scottish Government in devolved areas. The Scottish Government has no intention of asking any employers within its influence to issue work notices, and we will continue to call for this Act to be removed from the statute book altogether.

Yours sincerely,



**MICHAEL MATHESON**

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