

**A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL,  
IAN PEARSON**

**2003 PAY AWARD**

I am taking the unusual step of writing to every member of staff in the eleven Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration about the 2003 pay award, on behalf of the Secretary of State and my colleagues, Jane Kennedy, John Spellar and Angela Smith.

I know there has been concern about the 2003 pay award and appreciate the willingness of so many staff to continue to work through the dispute. The pay award for 2003 will cost Government 3.67%. As you know, this includes the step up the pay scale that goes with satisfactory performance — which most people in the private sector do not get — and the amounts payable to each person vary considerably. I want to make it absolutely clear that this really is the final amount for 2003.

The simple fact is that we cannot increase the pay award above 3.67% — it is the furthest we can go within Government pay policy. Here in Northern Ireland, as in all parts of the UK, the Government has major plans for services to the public such as health and schools. To make that possible we have to make sure as much money as possible goes into actual improvements for those who most need the services.

I support the right of staff to take lawful industrial action. But whatever form that takes, it is also right to withhold pay where work is not being done. As Ministers, we have to do all that is necessary to maintain the services on which the public — and especially the most vulnerable in our society — depend.

**IAN PEARSON**