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OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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Lindsay Chapman, Prospect

Dear Full-Time Trade Union Officers,

CQC pay offer 2026/27

Thank you for your constructive engagement throughout this year's pay negotiations and for the claims submitted by our recognised trade unions.

The joint claim submitted by UNISON, the Royal College of Nursing, Unite and Prospect prioritised an above-inflation consolidated pay increase, revalorisation of grade minima and maxima, and significant increases to allowances. PCS submitted a separate claim in relation to the 2026/27 pay award and have also written to CQC separately as part of its national campaign across the Civil Service and related areas.

This letter sets out CQC's formal pay offer and responds to those elements of the pay claims that relate directly to that offer.

We have carefully considered the issues raised in both claims, alongside CQC's financial position, workforce priorities and our responsibility to maintain fair, affordable and sustainable pay arrangements.

CQC is not a Civil Service employer but is within the scope of the Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance. We have now received the necessary approval from the Secretary of State for our 2026/27 pay remit submission within the permitted 3.5% Increase in Remuneration Cost and are therefore able to make the following formal offer.

The offer

With effect from 1 September 2026, CQC is offering:

- a 3.5% pay increase for colleagues in Grades A to E;

- a 4.0% pay increase for Grade F colleagues;
- a 3.5% increase to London Allowance, Home Worker Allowance, Operational Car User Allowance and On-call Allowance; and
- revalorisation of pay-scale minima and maxima for Grades A to F.

For information, and outside collective bargaining arrangements, CQC also intends to increase Executive 3 salaries by 3.0%. The Executive 3 pay-scale minimum will be revalorised, while the maximum will remain unchanged.

The proposal uses the full available remit. Its total Increase in Remuneration Cost is approximately 3.494%, against the maximum permitted 3.5%.
Salary increases will normally be applied on a consolidated basis. Where application of the increase would take an individual's salary above the maximum of their pay scale, the amount above the maximum will be paid as a non-consolidated payment. Salary and allowance increases will be pro-rated where appropriate.

Proposed pay scales

The proposed salary ranges from 1 September 2026 are:

Grade	Proposed minimum	Proposed maximum
Executive 3	£77,438	£107,896
Grade A	£57,103	£70,740
Grade B	£43,516	£52,873
Grade C	£36,111	£40,860
Grade D	£31,436	£34,148
Grade E	£27,769	£29,939
Grade F	£26,857	£26,857

Proposed allowance values

The 3.5% increase would result in the following annual allowance values:

Allowance	Proposed annual value
London Allowance	£6,061
Home Worker Allowance	£621
Operational Car User Allowance	£540.50
On-call Allowance	£3,647.50

Response to the joint trade union claim

Pay increase:

The joint trade unions requested a consolidated, above-inflation pay award and identified a significant percentage increase for all colleagues as their highest priority.

PCS requested a 10% consolidated, across-the-board increase and an £18 minimum hourly rate.
CQC cannot accommodate the PCS proposals within the permitted 3.5% Increase in Remuneration Cost. Instead, CQC is offering consolidated increases of 3.5% for Grades A to E and 4.0% for Grade F, using the full available remit and providing a higher percentage increase to colleagues in the lowest-paid grade.

The award has been structured to maximise the benefit available to colleagues within the funding available to CQC.

Salary increases will be applied in accordance with the arrangements set out above.

Revalorisation of pay-band minima and maxima:

The joint trade unions identified revalorisation of grade minima and maxima as their second priority. PCS also requested the maintenance of meaningful pay differentials between grades. This element of the claim has been reflected in the offer.

We are proposing to revalorise the pay-band minima and maxima for Grades A to F. This is intended to maintain the relative position of CQC's pay scales and support our competitiveness within the wider health and care employment market.

The higher percentage increase for Grade F provides additional support to colleagues in the lowest-paid grade while retaining CQC's wider grade structure.

Allowances:

The joint trade unions requested a significant increase to all allowances and highlighted Home Worker Allowance as an area of particular concern. PCS also requested a minimum London weighting of £5,000, with payments above that level increased in line with the pay award.

CQC's London Allowance is already above the minimum sought by PCS. The offer increases it from £5,856 to £6,061 a year.

CQC is also offering a 3.5% increase to Home Worker Allowance, Operational Car User Allowance and On-call Allowance. Larger allowance increases cannot be accommodated within this year's remit without reducing the amount available for salary increases.

Contractual pay progression:

PCS requested contractual progression to the maximum of each pay range within five years or less.
CQC is not proposing to introduce contractual pay progression through the 2026/27 pay award. Such a change would require separate consideration of its ongoing cost, affordability and implications for CQC's wider pay arrangements.

Questions about progression and the operation of CQC's pay ranges remain relevant to longer-term work on pay and reward and we intend to continue discussions with our recognised trade unions through that work.

Longer-term pay

PCS requested a multi-year plan intended to address its concerns about the longer-term value of pay and protect pay against inflation in future years.

CQC cannot commit through this annual award to a multi-year pay plan or to future awards above inflation. Decisions on future awards will be informed by the government pay framework in place, affordability and the necessary governance and approval processes.

We have, however, committed to ongoing discussions with recognised trade unions over CQC's longer-term pay and reward arrangements.

Within this year's framework, CQC is using the full 3.5% Increase in Remuneration Cost available and is proposing to revalorise pay-band minima and maxima.

Pay flexibility and settlement date:

PCS asked CQC to make full use of the flexibilities within the Pay Remit Guidance, including developing a pay flexibility business case, and to consider moving CQC's settlement date to April.

This offer uses the full 3.5% Increase in Remuneration Cost available under the standard 2026/27 remit.

We recognise the concerns raised by colleagues and trade unions about aspects of our current pay arrangements. As communicated to colleagues, these issues are being considered through separate longer-term work on CQC's pay and reward arrangements.

CQC is also not proposing to change the settlement date through the current pay process. Any change would require separate consideration of its operational, financial and employee implications, together with any necessary external approvals.

Wider matters raised by PCS:

PCS has raised a number of wider matters relating to jobs, pensions, terms and conditions and industrial relations as part of its national campaign. These matters are separate from CQC's 2026/27 pay offer and are not addressed through this pay settlement.

The Civil Service Chief Operating Officer has responded separately to PCS on the matters raised nationally. CQC remains committed to constructive engagement with its recognised trade unions on matters falling within CQC's own consultation and collective bargaining arrangements.

Scope and implementation

The offer applies to eligible colleagues in Grades A to F who are covered by CQC's collective bargaining arrangements. Information relating to Executive 3 colleagues has been provided but is not subject to collective bargaining.

Subject to completion of collective bargaining and the necessary approvals and checks:

- the award will take effect from 1 September 2026;
- salary and allowance increases will be implemented through the earliest practicable payroll;
- payments will be backdated to 1 September 2026; and
- salary and allowance increases will be applied in accordance with the relevant pay arrangements and will be pro-rated where appropriate.

The detailed treatment of colleagues who join, leave or change role between 1 September 2026 and implementation of the award will be managed in line with CQC's established pay arrangements and communicated as part of implementation guidance.

Conclusion

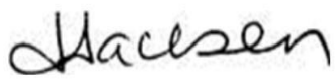
We recognise the strength of feeling expressed by trade union members about pay, the cost of living and the longer-term competitiveness of CQC's reward arrangements. We have sought to respond to those concerns as far as possible within the framework available to us.

This offer uses the full remuneration cost permitted under the 2026/27 Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance. It provides salary increases of 3.5% for Grades A to E and 4.0% for Grade F, revalorises pay-band minima and maxima, and increases CQC's main allowances, reflecting the key priorities raised through this year's pay claims.

We believe the offer represents a fair and balanced outcome that maximises the available benefit to colleagues while remaining affordable and sustainable for CQC. It represents CQC's response to the pay-related priorities raised during this year's negotiations within the approved remit and funding available.

Thank you again for your constructive engagement. We ask that you now consult your members on the offer and confirm the outcome of that consultation.

Yours sincerely



Jackie Jackson
Director of People and Culture