



NHS PAY UPDATE

11/04/2018

2018 NHS PAY PROPOSALS

Dear Ambulance member,

We are writing to you about the pay proposals for NHS staff in England. A lot has been said about the proposals on social media and we wanted to respond to a couple of frequently raised questions.

Ambulance staff are an integral part of the NHS and it will be NHS staff who make the decision on whether to accept the current offer.

The proposals would

- end poverty pay in the NHS,
- deliver shorter pay bands meaning staff reach the “rate for the job” quicker
- deliver higher starting salaries for all entrants into each Agenda for Change band.

We believe that this is a good deal for all NHS staff, including ambulance staff. For example, the starting salary for a band 3 Call Taker or an Emergency Care Assistant would increase from £16,968 to £19,737.

A band 4 Associate Ambulance Practitioner/EMT, at the middle of the pay band would see their basic salary rise from £21,363 to £24,157 over 3 years, meaning their basic earnings increasing by £2,894. This represents a 13.61% increase in basic earnings. The increase in earnings is based on three elements – restructuring the pay band, percentage cost of living increases and incremental pay progression. And those at the top of the band, who will not benefit from the restructure or incremental progression will get 6.50% over 3 years, plus an additional cash lump sum on 1 April 2019 (worth £330 for band 5).

Newly Qualified Paramedics currently on year 1 of the NQP programme would move from £22,128 to £31,365 at the end of the three years. This represents an increase of £9,237, a 42% increase in basic earnings. Band 6 Paramedics, currently on pay point 24 would move from £29,626 to £33,779, an increase of £4,153 and 14.02% increase to basic earnings

Information

You can see from some of the examples how the pay proposals affect people differently until we move into the new pay structures from April 2021. At this point around 85% of NHS staff currently in the system will be at the top of the pay band structures. We think this is good for ambulance staff.

In 2013, the Agenda for Change agreement was altered to remove unsocial hours from staff when sick from work for non-work related absence. Due to UNISON's involvement, we were able to argue that this did not affect ambulance staff as they were on Agenda for Change Annex E/5, not Section 2 where the changes were made. For the last 5 years ambulance staff have received their unsocial hours whilst off sick whereas the rest of the NHS have not. However, as part of these proposals, a move to Section 2 is one of the employers demands. UNISON argued that this should not be a forced move, but one that will be voluntary, made as an individual choice by ambulance staff with all the facts at their disposal.

Moving to Section 2 would change the way your unsocial hours are calculated. It would also mean you would not get unsocial hours paid during sickness absence unless your absence is wholly or mainly attributable to your work. For some, the move would mean increases in unsocial hours payments, for some a drop in unsocial hours payments. The main thing is that you will get the chance to decide and that voting for the pay proposals does not mean you would move to Section 2 automatically.

Finally, we have also seen the GMB advising a rejection of the pay proposals. Locally this has meant them criticising UNISON's involvement in pulling together this offer, but not recognising they were also involved in the negotiations right up to the last minute. Only now, they are recommending rejection of this offer but not giving their members an alternative strategy to get a meaningful pay rise.

UNISON is clear. We believe this offer is better than you could expect through the NHS Pay Review Body. If you accept the offer, we will work with ambulance employers to implement the pay increases as quickly as possible and ensure they deliver the voluntary move to Section 2 fairly and in the spirit of the agreement. However, if NHS staff are not convinced and want to reject the offer then we have a strategy for where to go next and may return to ask you whether you will support action to deliver our pay claim, submitted to the NHS Pay Review Body last year.

Importantly, you get to decide. Our voting system will go live in mid April so please make sure we have your up-to-date details so your voice will be heard.

Your sincerely,

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Chair, UNISON National Ambulance Sector

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UNISON National Officer for Ambulance Sector