



NHS

Martin Jackson, Committee Chair, explains why GMB is asking members to reject the NHS Pay offer.

GMB is alone among NHS trade unions in advising members to reject the NHS Employers pay offer, but while officially all other unions are backing the deal, many of their members have reservations.

GMB is a general union, with significant membership in the NHS, including Ambulance Service Trusts, and it was a GMB Pay conference, consisting of NHS workers from GMBs Regions which made the unanimous decision not to recommend the pay offer.

When Agenda for Change was first agreed over 13 years ago it was far from perfect. There was unfinished business including pay bands that were too long, overlaps between bands, and points which were too close together. These issues have been made worse by eight years of pay restraint.

The pay deal is rather complicated and its impact will vary from individual to individual. The complications are already causing confusion among NHS staff, and many staff are asking why they are such wide differences between increases GMB is recommending to members that they vote to reject this offer. The reasons are quite clear; while some of the pay increases for new staff will appear attractive for some roles, experienced, existing staff on the top of their pay bands will see increase over three years below the expected level of inflation. GMB does not believe that the pay of experienced staff should be held back to allow NHS Trusts to recruit new staff. The pay increase for those on the top points of their pay bands is only 6.5% over three years, while inflation is forecast to be 9.3% or higher. The increase is even lower for those on the top pay points in the higher grades.

Ending the payment of unsocial hours payments during sick leave for all staff; (the equivalent of a fine for being off sick); Ending automatic annual increments, with staff staying on the same point for between two and five years, and then having to justify their progress to the new point. Many GMB activists and members are concerned that cash strapped departments and NHS Trusts will find ways of preventing staff from progression and a way of saving money and contributing to deficit reduction. The increase for Higher Cost Area Supplements, is pegged to the increase of the top pay point, ie 2018 3%, 2019 1.7%, 2020 1.67% - less than predicted inflation, which is often higher in HCAS areas anyway.

There are other elements of the deal which don't affect nursing staff, but overall it appears that the framework is designed to speed up recruitment into the NHS, at the expense of experienced nurses on or near the top of their pay bands. If the Government and the employers were serious about recruitment and retention, they would ensure that those at the top of their pay bands got a decent pay rise, so that they stay with the NHS, and it would encourage recruitment of nurses by bringing back the bursaries."



“LET’S STICK TOGETHER AND RETAIN OUR HARD FOUGHT TERMS AND CONDITIONS”

Steve Rice, GMB National Ambulance Committee Chair explains why GMB members should reject the NHS Pay offer.

The proposals include changes to unsocial hours enhancements for the Ambulance sector. With effect from 1 September any new starter in the Ambulance Service will have their unsocial hours payments paid via Section of the NHS Terms and Conditions Handbook. From this date any existing staff member moving roles will be moved from annex 5 to Section 2 if they are not already on Section 2.

This effectively means that unsocial hours payments will not be included in sick pay, unless it is an industrial injury that is “wholly or mainly attributable to your employment”.

A sickness lasting more weeks or longer will effectively wipe out any pay rise.

The employers did offer that staff could stay on existing terms until they move jobs, but longer serving staff will remember what happened with Whitley contracts a few years ago. It resulted in a two tier workforce that caused no end of problems.

These arrangements will also apply to the lowest paid staff in bands 1 and 2 who currently get unsocial hours payments in their sick pay. This will kick in in April 2019.

These staff will also see a 3% cut in their unsocial hours payments over the three year period, which is being used to partly fund the increase in their basic pay. Any staff working permanent nights or weekends will see no increase over the period of this deal.

Automatic increments will also end and staff will need to demonstrate that they have met the “required standards of training and behaviour”. Pay steps will be closed and will only be opened if you have had satisfactory annual appraisals and have no disciplinary sanctions. You may reach the top of your band quicker but it will only happen if your line manager lets you. What is clear is that hard pressed departments and Trusts will look it use this to savings.

Introducing these systems can lead to favouritism and discrimination which is inherent in performance related pay.

The GMB ballot is now underway. Everyone please attend any briefing meetings and hear in more detail why GMB recommends that you vote to reject the pay offer.



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GMB contacts members by email, phone and SMS about issues related to membership, membership services and campaigns.

Tick if you DO NOT wish to be contacted by: Email Phone SMS

GMB has a political fund to pay for political campaigning, which you can opt-in to for 1p a week. In the past, the fund has helped win rights such as the minimum wage and maternity leave. There will be no detriment to you if you do not opt-in.

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Section

Branch number

Membership number

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