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***FAQ’s PAY AWARD***

### What is UNISON’s response to the government’s announcement on NHS pay in England?

General secretary Christina McAnea has said the increase falls short of what NHS staff deserve after the past 16 months. UNISON’s lead committee of elected NHS workers finds the government’s decision unacceptable and says it falls far short of our One Team 2k claim. The 3% rise:

* does not increase pay by £2,000 for anyone other than staff in band 8c and above
* stretches the gap between the highest and lowest paid in the NHS
* does not embed the real Living Wage as the minimum.

### What is UNISON doing now?

UNISON is running an online consultation in England to find out what you think of the 3% pay decision – and what you want to do next. We need to hear from members about how we should go forward collectively as a union – whether the majority want to oppose the outcome and are willing to take part in industrial action to try and secure change. If enough members vote for this in the consultation, the next stage would be for the union to run a formal ballot.

### ****How do I vote?****

UNISON is running an online consultation. From Friday 30 July, all eligible members in England will be emailed with a secure voting link which will enable you to vote directly. This is the quickest and easiest way of voting so please do check your junk mail in case the email has been sent there. If you do not have an email address, you can vote at nhspay.org, verifying your membership using your membership number or national insurance number plus your date of birth and surname.

### What is industrial action?

Industrial action can include strike action (which is any concerted stoppage of work), or action short of strike action such as ‘go-slows’ or ‘working to rule’. [You can read more about industrial action here](https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/disputes-grievances/industrial-action/). You can also talk to your branch about what industrial action could look like where you work.

 Strict trade union laws mean that industrial action can only take place following a lawful postal ballot of affected members, in which more than 50% must vote and (in important public services) more than 40% of those voting must vote in favour of taking action. These laws apply in England, Scotland and Cymru/Wales.

### So is this a vote to strike?

Not at this stage. First of all, UNISON needs to establish whether the majority of affected members in England want to oppose the outcome and are willing to take part in industrial action to try and secure change. If enough members vote for this in the consultation, the next stage would be for the union to run a formal ballot. The bar for this is high, but achievable, provided a large majority of UNISON members in the NHS in England want to do this.

### Will the pay rise be offered to all NHS staff in England? The media has not mentioned some roles.

We know that all staff working in a wide range of roles within the NHS, help to keep it running. Although we are waiting for more detail from Government, we know that the pay rise announced will be for all staff directly employed by the NHS.

### What does the pay rise mean for me?

What the 3% pay rise in England means in cash terms:

Lowest point    £540\*

Top Band 2      £580

Top Band 3      £634

Top Band 4      £725

Top Band 5      £918

Top Band 6      £1,137

Top Band 7      £1,335

Top Band 8a    £1,550

Top Band 8b    £1,860

Top Band 8c    £2,210

Top Band 8d    £2,633

Top Band 9      £3,148

You can see that the government’s decision to award 3% only delivers that for staff on the very highest bands. Those who earn the most are getting over £3,000 out of this award. Everyone else gets much less – five times less for those in the lowest band. With a 3% rise, those in the lowest band are left below the real Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation.

### When will the pay increase be paid in England?

We are awaiting confirmation of when the 3% will be paid. We think it is likely to be in September salaries but the backpay may come in a subsequent pay packet.

### When will the pay increase be backdated to?

The pay rise in England will be backdated to 1 April 2021.

### I’m an apprentice – what will happen to my pay?

If you are paid on an Agenda for Change (AfC) pay point or using a percentage of an AfC point this will be uprated by the 3%. If your employer uses another method of determining your pay you will need to check that they are planning to increase it by 3% and talk to your UNISON branch if you have concerns.

### I'm not a member of UNISON. If I join can I have a vote?

Yes! UNISON is proud to represent more people who work in the health service than any other union in the UK. If you’re in England and you join by Friday 3 September 2021 you can have your say in this consultation too. Join online now at join.unison.org.uk or call 0800 171 2194.

### Will the pay rise result in me moving to a higher pension contribution tier?

The vast majority of UNISON members will not see a change in their pension contribution rate. However, the implementation of pay awards for staff is one of a number of reasons why you may move into higher pension tier. [More information on re-assessing tiered contribution rates can be found here](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/re-assessing-tiered-contribution-rates). UNISON continues to campaign for pension tier boundaries to increase in line with NHS pay awards.

### I am retiring this year. Will I still receive the pay increase?

You should contact your payroll department to discuss receiving your backdated pay. Remember, your employer may need reminding to pay you what you are owed!

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