

UNISON ramps up the campaign on pay for NHS workers

UNISON is pressing ahead with its challenge on pay in the health service after the government refused even to implement the 1% pay award recommended by the independent pay review body.

UNISON head of health Christina McAnea, who chairs the staff side of the NHS staff council, is writing to NHS Employers to formally object to the pay award and notify them that we are in dispute over the 2014-15 pay round.

Health branches are also being advised to make a similar formal objection to individual employers and the union has produced a model letter for branches to use.

This is just part of a continuing campaign for fair pay for NHS staff, including an industrial action ballot later in the summer, which was agreed at the union's health conference in April.

On the ground, this included a number of campaigning activities in the run-up to the 66th birthday of the NHS on 5 July.

The joint-union All Together for the NHS campaign lobbied MPs at Westminster on 1 July. And branches joined local staff sides and patient groups to lobby MPs in their constituencies on 4 July.

The lobbies stressed that the public deserves:

- a quality NHS, with staff who are well-motivated and properly rewarded for the vital work that they do;
- a health service that has enough staff to make sure that patients are safe;
- an NHS workforce that is properly trained and equipped to deliver quality healthcare in the 21st century.

The government is seriously underfunding the NHS just as demand is rising, says UNISON.

Recent figures from the



Christina McAnea and members protesting outside the NHS Confederation conference on NHS pay protest day

King's Fund show that spending on the NHS will fall from 8% of GDP in 2009 to 6% by 2020 – an unprecedented reduction in resources.

And NHS workers are being asked to bear the brunt. "Five years of pay restraint has hit our members hard, leaving morale at rock bottom," says Ms McAnea.

And it is important that branches continue building the campaign among members – including preparations for an industrial action ballot – if it is to be successful.

One key activity is getting

members – and non-members – to sign the online petition started by the union, calling for a fair pay settlement across all four countries.

The petition can be found at epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/64222.

And keep talking to members about why the pay award is unfair and what we can do to get fair pay for NHS workers.

You can find facts, arguments and useful resources at the dedicated NHS pay pages on the UNISON website. Just go to unison.org.uk/nhs-pay.

NHS pay across the UK

The NHS Pay Review Body recommended a 1% pay rise across the board. In England: the Department of Health announced a 1% unconsolidated pay award for those NHS staff on the top of their bands – but not for staff who are due to receive a pay increment this year.

In Scotland, the government announced a consolidated 1% increase to all with more money at the bottom to take the lowest paid above the living wage level.

In Wales, the government announced that it will make available a sum of money equivalent to that paid in England, but distributed differently following negotiations with the trade unions.

In Northern Ireland, the award is expected to mirror the English award, as this has been the case in previous years.