



UNISON update on ambulance unsocial hours negotiations

A meeting of UNISON ambulance branch representatives took place on 28 January 2014 to discuss the progress of the national negotiations on unsocial hours and sickness pay arrangements for ambulance staff, and arrangements for consulting members on any proposed changes.

Following the agreement between ambulance trade unions and employers to hold discussions on what unsocial hours arrangements should apply during sickness absence, including the potential application of Section 2 and options to change Annex E, the ambulance trade unions, UNISON, along with GMB and Unite, have engaged in negotiations based on the understanding that the current arrangements for paying unsocial hours are unsustainable in the long term.

The negotiations are now drawing to a conclusion and we hope shortly to be able to consult members on proposed changes to unsocial hours payments. To date, the negotiations have examined the appropriateness of moving to the unsocial hours payment provisions outlined in Section 2 of the Agenda for Change handbook as well as looking at making amendments to current Annex E arrangements.

Throughout the negotiations the joint ambulance trade unions have been keen to ensure that any changes to unsocial hours pay do not focus solely on deductions during sickness absence. We have been discussing various options with the employers including an amended version of Annex E and a possible Section 2 type arrangement for the payment of unsocial hours. Our aim is to ensure that as well as dealing with the issue of deducting unsocial hours payments during sickness absence, any new proposals will also ensure that enhanced payments for certain unsocial hours shifts are fair and reflect the amount of unsocial hours worked by our members in the ambulance service. UNISON is also working to ensure they take account of our concerns around unsocial hours payments for relief rotas, changing shift patterns and staff who are on long term or work related sickness absence.

UNISON will, of course, be consulting members on any proposed changes and as part of this, UNISON will produce material that will document the impact the proposed changes will have on different job groups and grades in the ambulance service. The negotiations are continuing and we will keep branches informed of developments.