

Time to talk about pay

NHS
PAY
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UNISON
the public service union

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Issue 04

- **Health Service Group Executive update on Agenda for Change talks**
- **UNISON confirms there are no negotiations on unsocial hours**

Agenda for Change refresh – UNISON health executive busts the myths

UNISON's Health Service Group Executive met on Tuesday 25 October and confirmed that UNISON stands ready to fight any attack on unsocial hours.

The Executive dismissed recent media reports speculating that negotiations had begun on Agenda for Change, and that unsocial hours were being discussed.

UNISON has very clear policy not to negotiate on unsocial hours, and to respond to any attack on them with industrial action. We have been crystal clear on this point with employers and they have been left in no doubt about our stance.

Discussions on the pay framework have taken place through the NHS Staff Council as covered in previous "Time to Talk About Pay" bulletins. Both trade unions and employers think the existing pay scales could be improved. There is broad agreement that there would be benefit in reducing the number of pay points in each band and reducing the overlaps between pay bands.

UNISON has a clear set of goals. We want to make your pay better and get you to the top of your pay band faster. We want to do this by:

- restructuring bands 1-3, removing poverty pay from the NHS;
- raising starting salaries; and
- shortening pay bands to get to the 'full rate' for the job quicker

However, UNISON is absolutely clear that making gains on pay cannot come at the expense of unsocial hours.

How UNISON sets pay policy

UNISON policy on pay is set by UNISON's health conference. In April 2016, UNISON members from branches and regions across the UK discussed, debated and voted on UNISON's approach to pay, terms and conditions in the NHS. The decisions those conference delegates took set our policy on pay. The Health Service Group Executive, made up of representatives elected by UNISON members across all regions, makes decisions on pay policy between health conferences.

How NHS pay, terms and conditions are agreed

UNISON participates in the NHS Staff Council, along with other trade unions and the employers. The Agenda for Change agreement is owned by the full NHS Staff Council and terms and conditions can only be changed through agreement. If we are able to make progress on the pay discussions, UNISON's Health Service Group Executive will ensure all UNISON members are consulted in good time.

Want to talk more about pay?

Talk to your local UNISON branch and find out more about how you can get involved in the union.