

NEWS RELEASE

4 October 2006 for immediate use

NHS Employers says next year's NHS pay award should not exceed inflation target

NHS Employers has advised the pay review bodies that next year's pay award for doctors, dentists, nurses and other healthcare staff should not exceed the Government's inflation target.

In its evidence to the pay review bodies released today, NHS Employers said employers were conscious of the general financial position of the NHS and felt that an award in line with the inflation target is the most that could be afforded by employers. However, anything higher than that would be unaffordable.

Gill Bellord, Head of Pay and Negotiations at NHS Employers, said:

"The most employers expect to be able to afford is an uplift in line with the Government's inflation target and this is dependent on an increase in the 2007 tariff to take account of this. Any greater award would almost certainly lead to further reductions in posts, vacancy freezes and failure to meet healthcare and financial targets.

"Employers feel strongly that on grounds of fairness the pay award should be the same for all NHS staff groups.

"Many staff working in the NHS will receive an automatic incremental pay rise next year as they move up their pay scales. This amounts to an average rise of 3% for nurses, allied health professionals and other staff on Agenda for Change pay scales, 4% for consultants and up to 6% for junior doctors.

"Employers have told us that it is important, however, that the review body takes account of the impact on staff morale that an award below the inflation target could have."

NHS Employers has based its evidence on the views and experiences of NHS organisations in England gathered through an on-line questionnaire over the summer.

(ends)

Our submissions to the Nurses and Other Health Professions Review body and the Pay Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration is available on our website at <http://www.nhsemployers.org/pay-conditions/pay-conditions-276.cfm>

For press enquiries, please contact Gemma Jeffcoate on 0207 074 3308 or Emma Robinson on 0207 074 3307 in the NHS Employers' press office.

Notes for editors

- The Government's inflation target, the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) is currently 2.0%