

23 April 2008

PRESS RELEASE

UNITE SAYS 'NO' TO MULTI-YEAR NHS PAY DEAL

Unite, the third largest union in the NHS, has rejected the proposed three-year NHS pay deal and wants further pay talks with the government and NHS employers.

Unite (Amicus section) Health Sector National Committee (HSNC), which met yesterday (Tuesday, 22 April), unanimously rejected the three-year deal, worth 7.999%.

The HSNC wants further negotiations, taking into account the very real inflationary trends in the economy, such as increased mortgage payments and spiralling utility costs.

Unite also wishes to defend and strengthen the independence of the Pay Review Body (PRB) to arbitrate pay on an annual basis. The PRB recommended a 2.75% pay award for this year, 2008/9.

The three-year pay deal is being heavily promoted by the government and NHS Chief Executive, David Nicholson, who has warned that this year's award could be staged, if unions don't accept the three-year pay package.

Unite Head of Health, Kevin Coyne said today: 'We can't be tied to a three-year deal, given the future uncertainties in the economy and the inflationary pressures that our hard-working members are experiencing on a daily basis.'

Unite (TGWU section), which represents 12,000 ancillary and ambulance members, has already recommended that its members reject the three-year deal.

The rejection of the multi-year settlement from both sections of Unite, follows the warning from David Nicholson who said that ministers could impose a staged pay-award this year, if the NHS unions don't fall in behind the three-year pay deal.

He said: 'The Government reserves the right to review its response to the NHS PRB (Pay Review Body) recommendations and decide whether to accept, stage or abate them in the context of a one year settlement.'

Kevin Coyne has already stated that last year's 2.5% staged award in England - while NHS colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland received the full amount from 1 April - created 'an atmosphere of seething and simmering resentment that must not be repeated'.

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