



Unite is campaigning against the imposed three-year NHS pay deal which will mean pay rises being only 50% of the current rate of inflation. More information is available on the 'campaigns' page of the website www.amicustheunion.org

Dear Colleague

Thanks to all of you who took part in the Day of Protest on the 18 July 2008. That includes those of you who took part in the regional demonstrations and also those that took the time to fill in and send the postcards we distributed.

There are still a number of postcards left at regional offices and we will be producing further supplies for you to send to your local MPs, as the campaign builds up momentum.

We would like to explain in this 'open letter' to you why the campaign is continuing and what we are proposing to do to meet the demand from all members to address the issue of the unacceptable levels of NHS pay.

Our first objective follows-on from the Unite ballots, by both the Amicus and TGWU sections, which overwhelmingly rejected the three-year pay award. This 'award' has now been imposed on Unite by the government.

- At 7.99% over three years, you are looking at a pay award which is 50%, below the current rate of inflation (4.6% based on the Retail Price Index, July 2008). With already spiralling energy, housing, and food costs set to rise ever further, this makes the pay proposals unacceptable to our hard-working and dedicated health service members
- This policy of pay restraint has been in force for some time. And we have to make a stand to stop public sector workers bearing the brunt of a tight fiscal policy, when the private sector and its senior figures are making huge profits and 'earning' huge bonuses.

- If we do not make a stand now, we will be accepting that the on-going pay policy remains in force, not only for the duration of this government, but well beyond the next election. It could be many years before the real cuts in public sector pay are even acknowledged, let alone dealt with. We must act now to avoid the situation where we may never recover the pay that has been lost.

We know the pay award for 2008/09 has now started to go into pay packets, but this is in the face of non-acceptance by Unite. We are formally in dispute with the NHS Executives in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The fact that this so-called pay deal has been imposed must not be allowed to dilute our opposition to the unfair nature of the award.

Your NHS Health Sector National Industrial Committee (HSNIC), elected at this year's conference, has fully supported this stance in response to the overwhelming direction given by members in the pay ballot.

We intend, with your support, to maintain and expand the campaign - **CUT MY PAY – NO WAY!** and this letter has been sent to you to give a brief outline of the steps that will be taken in the coming months.

PETITION

- In the next few days we will be sending out to all of you a Unite petition protesting about the unacceptable policy regarding public sector pay and making one simple demand – **re-open negotiations on pay – NOW!**
- Please fill in the petition – get all our members, your colleagues, families and friends to sign it as well. We want to make it crystal clear that well-below-inflation pay rises and, in essence, long term pay cuts are *not* acceptable.
- The petition will also be put on the website www.amicustheunion.org for downloading and signing. We are also asking that in the next few weeks that individually and in groups you go to local MP's surgeries and make it clear that you are not accepting current government policy on public sector pay and in the health sector we are asking for **re-negotiations to open now.**

ACTIVIST MEETINGS

- During September, we are organising activists' meetings in each Unite region to explain our plans. We shall be consulting on the types of industrial action you would be willing take to defend your right to fair pay. We are doing this to be sure we fully meet your demands. In late September, there will be a ballot of the Unite health sector membership to make the decision on industrial action in support of the rejection of this derisory three-year pay deal.

- The **Regional Activist Meetings** will be done jointly with our colleagues in the local authorities, the Ministry of Defence and other government departments. All these groups have not accepted and are actively opposing public sector pay cuts. Dates for the Activist meetings will be with you very shortly and will be posted on the website www.amicustheunion.org.

You have asked your union to reject an unfair and unacceptable pay award, and you are asking us to campaign together to change the government's policy that treats its public sector workforce as the testing ground for its misguided fiscal policy.

We have also produced a timeline of events setting out the chronology of how we have arrived at this position. The 'timeline' document accompanies this letter.

Please attend the activist meetings, please think carefully and positively about the actions you might take to continue our opposition to the pay policy, please sign the petition and get the petition signed by as many people as possible and work with us to make it quite clear that we mean what we say:

CUT MY PAY – NO WAY!

We look forward to seeing you in September.

*David Fleming
National Officer for Health
Unite the Union*

*Karen Reay
National Officer for Health
Unite the Union*

12 August 2008