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PRESS RELEASE

INFLATION HIKE FUELS NHS PAY ANGER, SAYS UNITE

The latest hike in inflation will further fuel the anger that NHS staff feel about the ‘derisory’ three-year pay deal, Unite, the country’s largest union, said today (Tuesday, 16 September).

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) jumped to 4.7% in August - the highest level since records began in 1997. The Retail Price Index (RPI) fell slightly to 4.8%, despite surging food and energy costs – this was because the RPI takes into account a wider range of indices, including the downward pressure on house prices. The 2.75% being paid to NHS members this year is, therefore, a pay cut.

Members of Unite are currently being canvassed on a menu for industrial action options to reverse the government’s hard line stance on below-inflation pay awards for NHS staff.

Meetings coming up include: **Glasgow** (19 September); **Belfast** (24 Sept) and also in **Swansea** (26 Sept) under the banner of the *Cut NHS Pay - No Way!* campaign.

Unite’s National Officer for Health, Dave Fleming said: ‘We have now held activist meetings throughout England and are moving on to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.’

‘In all the meetings we have held so far, the mood is one of ‘Enough is enough’ and the feedback from the members is all about how we can take industrial action. It is ‘when’ - not ‘if’ – on the timing for such action. Members will be offered a menu of options in a ballot next month on exactly what action they may wish to take.’

‘The latest steep rise in inflation is another hammer-blow for NHS staff and their families in their struggle to pay the ever-increasing household bills.’

The meetings are giving Unite activists the opportunity to say what type of industrial action they would be prepared to take in protest at the 'derisory' three-year 7.99% below-inflation pay deal imposed by the ministers earlier this year.

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NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS:

For further information, please ring:

Karen Reay, National Officer, Health, Unite
David Fleming, National Officer, Health, Unite
Shaun Noble, Communications Officer

☎ 07798 531 004
☎ 07798 531013
☎ 020 7420 8951 (direct line)
☎ 07768 693 940 (mobile)

Unite has already launched a national petition asking its health sector members, as well as the general public, to sign the petition which it hopes to present to Downing Street later in the year. The petition can be downloaded from www.unitetheunion.com/health



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

Unite/CPHVA press releases can be seen on the CPHVA website:
www.unitetheunion.com/cphva

Unite is the largest union in the UK. It has seven professional sections: the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association, the Mental Health Nurses Association, the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists, the Society of Sexual Health Advisers, the Medical Practitioners' Union, College of Healthcare Chaplains, and the Hospital Physicists Association.

Unite was formed by an amalgamation of Amicus and the Transport and General Workers' Union in May 2007.

