



**WEDNESDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2008**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**UNITE CALLS FOR 'SUBSTANTIAL' PAY RISE IN ITS OWN EVIDENCE TO THE PAY REVIEW BODY**

An immediate re-opening of talks on a substantial pay increase for NHS staff has been called for by Unite, the largest union in the country, in its own evidence to the Pay Review Body (PRB).

Unite, which this week started balloting its members on taking industrial action, including strike action, has always respected the independence of the PRB from ministerial interference.

Unite National Officer for Health, Karen Reay said: 'It is entirely logical that Unite should be submitting its own PRB evidence, while at the same time canvassing its members for industrial action over the derisory three-year pay deal imposed by the government, contrary to the PRB's recommendation for this year.'

In its evidence, Unite said that there is a 'lack of economic rationale' behind the government's argument that public sector pay causes inflation.

'The economic crisis and recession should not be seen as a reason to decrease investment in the NHS and avoid tackling the problems in staffing levels that Staff Side believe are quickly approaching. Previous low levels of pay for NHS staff and a lack of investment led to a decay in the service.'

Unite is also seeking that NHS employers bear the full cost of registration fees for health care professionals – a legal requirement – and not half the annual fee of £38, currently available in England only.

In a bid to combat the 'long hours' culture in the NHS, Unite is calling for discussions to be opened to reduce the 37.5 hour week to 35 hours.

Unite also raised particular concerns relating to the recruitment of pharmacists in the NHS; the increasing pressures on health visitors, where 38% of the workforce is aged between 50 and 64; and the high levels of stress being experienced by speech and language therapists and their assistants.

Earlier this week, Unite also signed up to the joint staff side evidence presented to the PRB with the other unions which also called for a substantial pay rise.

- Unite is currently holding a ballot of its members in the NHS on taking industrial action which closes on 12 November.

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#### NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS:

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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](http://www.amicustheunion.org)

Unite/CPHVA press releases can be seen on the CPHVA website:  
[www.unitetheunion.com/cphva](http://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.*