

FAQs – NHS Pay Award 2022/23 (England)

1. What is the pay award for NHS workers in England for 2022/23?

- The NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) recommendation is for a pay rise effective from 1 April 2022, for all Agenda for Change staff at the full time equivalent salary, of £1,400.
- This pay rise will be increased to 4 percent for staff at the top of band 6 and all those on band 7.
- This 4 percent uplift will not be applied to bands 8 and 9.
- This increase will include the National Living wage adjustment made on 1 April 2022, which applied to Bands 1 and 2. This means the £1,400 increase will be applied on top of the National Living Wage adjustment made in April earlier this year.

2. How is NHS Pay in England determined?

NHS pay in England is imposed not negotiated. Health unions do not negotiate with the government on NHS pay in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Instead, the UK government uses the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) process to make decisions on NHS staff pay awards. Unite submits evidence to the PRB report, the PRB then writes a report for the UK Government, who then decide whether to implement the recommendations for England.

Governments in Wales and Northern Ireland make the same decision for NHS workers in their Countries, while the Scottish Government negotiates NHS pay with trade unions.

3. What is Unite in Health's view of the pay award?

Unite along with other recognised Trade Unions submitted evidence to the PRB asking for an inflation busting pay rise for NHS workers which would address the staffing crisis in the NHS. With real inflation (RPI) running at over 11 percent, the government's imposed £1,400 pay award for NHS staff, which works out at just 4 percent for many, amounts to a 'massive national pay cut'. It will also lead to more NHS cuts, as there's no extra money from the Treasury to fund it.

We believe enough is enough and NHS workers shouldn't accept another year of a below inflation pay rise. As our General Secretary, **Sharon Graham** has said **"This is a kick in the teeth to NHS workers from the Government"**.

4. Will the pay increase impact on universal credit?

There is a possibility that the pay rise may have an impact on universal credit and we would advise you seek expert advice on this if this concerns you. Unite is not able to provide expert advice on universal credit.

5. What is happening to my pension?

Pension contributions will change for some NHS workers in October. Some people will pay more, some less and some stay the same. Please refer to the link below for more information: www.nhsemployers.org/publications/nhs-pension-scheme-member-contributions

6. What will happen next and how can we show this pay award is not good enough for NHS workers in England?

At this stage, your union, Unite is consulting you on whether you and your colleagues would be prepared to take strike action or action short of a strike over the government's pitiful pay award of £1,400, which works out at just 4% for many.

7. What are the time scales for the consultative ballot?

The consultative ballot will run between Monday 8th August and Friday 30th September 2022. Unite is recommending you vote yes to taking industrial action so that we can make the government listen and negotiate a better deal.

8. How will the ballot be conducted?

It will be an online ballot and every member will be sent a unique code to allow them to vote. The ballot will ask you three questions and will also give you an opportunity to update the details Unite holds on you. As well as being emailed, some members will be sent a letter in the post with a QR code that will allow members to access their ballot paper who have no email address registered with Unite. In addition to this, text messages will be sent out with the link to the ballot once voting starts to those who have not voted. We hope that this will ensure that all members will be able to access the ballot.

9. I do not have access to the internet; can I vote?

You will be able to vote. In the first instance speak to a Unite rep who should be able to assist you access to the internet, or do ask a family member or close friend with access to the internet to assist you. Failing this contact your local Unite Regional office and a member of Unite staff should be able to assist.

10. What is a consultative ballot?

A consultative ballot is conducted to find out your views. If the collective view is to oppose the settlement and take Industrial action we are required by law to hold another ballot which has to be conducted by post and is conducted by a neutral third party. Only after the second legal postal ballot can any action be taken.

11. Will my employer find out how I vote?

Certainly not. The UK Government and the NHS employers will be informed of the result of the ballot but no personal information or voting preference will be disclosed.



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FAQs

12. What happens if members vote yes for industrial over the pay award?

Since this is a consultative ballot, if a majority of members vote yes for action, a legal industrial action ballot will follow. Industrial action ballots are required by law to be carried out by post. We will need as many members as possible to vote for industrial action in order to surpass the high hurdles to take industrial action as established by recent Government anti trade union laws.

13. What happens if we vote no to taking action in the consultative ballot?

If a majority vote no to taking industrial action, this is akin to accepting the pay award and Unite would not be able to proceed to a legal industrial action ballot.

14. What does industrial action involve, does this just mean 'going on strike'?

Industrial action can mean anything that will affect service delivery up to, and including, strike action. This could mean no unpaid overtime worked, taking statutory breaks, reporting unsafe staffing levels, an overtime ban, work to your current job description or a targeted approach for full strike action.

15. Do I get paid if I'm on strike?

No, you will not be entitled to pay whilst you are on strike. However, Unite has a strike fund to support members taking of strike and each member can claim up to £70 per day for taking strike action.

16. Can I be disciplined for going on strike?

Absolutely not, this is a worker's right as long as the strike action is conducted lawfully. Please let your local Unite workplace representative know if you believe you will be treated less favourably at work for taking industrial action, since this is unlawful.

17. Can I be struck off my professional register for taking strike action?

Not at all. The different registration bodies and regulators will all produce their statements regarding Industrial action. These bodies all recognise and acknowledge the right to strike and registrants' democratic right to express their legal right to take industrial action. Registrant and regulatory bodies will also remind us that standards and codes should also be followed as much as possible.

18. Do I need to tell my manager that I intend to go on strike?

There is no requirement or obligation to inform your manager of your intention to take industrial action.

19. I'm worried about public perception of NHS workers who choose to strike

The public are behind you! From the recent poll conducted by the joint health union's campaign "With NHS Staff" 55 percent of respondents support a pay rise of at least 9 percent and 58 percent of respondents believe NHS staff would be justified in taking Industrial action if they received a below inflation pay rise.

It's important to note that Unite will provide a 'life and limb' and emergency cover to ensure no patients are put at risk. There is no point in any industrial action if it does not cause some level of disruption and inconvenience, but rest assured emergency

procedures will not be impacted. You will be aware of the level of discontent throughout the whole of the UK currently where all workers are standing up for themselves in securing decent pay.

This applies to all sectors of the economy so why should the NHS be any different? Clapping on doorsteps doesn't pay the bills! We have faced years of mediocre pay rises which have resulted in a pay cut in real terms year on year. Workers are now saying 'enough is enough' and now is the time to demand more, especially during an unprecedented cost of living crisis.

20. If we go on strike, what will be expected of me?

If you are asked to take industrial action we would expect the members to collectively adhere to the action, that being action short of strike or strike. If strike action is called we would expect our members not to attend work if your service is part of the action. You will also be asked to attend peaceful demonstrations and picket lines to show solidarity and support for the action.

21. Anything else we should know?

Due to current trade union legislation (except in Northern Ireland) the UK Government have attempted to make it difficult for members to take action by applying specific thresholds to be met before action could take place. Unite will take stock following the consultative ballot and look to target specific areas to take effective industrial action rather than all of the NHS. Unite will support members 100% on the decisions you make. Anything that Unite does will be driven by our members' decisions in workplaces across the country.

22. So what can I do now and what happens next?

Get VOTE ready: The Unite in Health consultative ballot takes place between Monday 8th August and Friday 30th September 2022. Check you can VOTE by making sure your Unite membership details are up-to-date. Go to MyUnite

Talk to your colleagues about why their vote matters. Put up a campaign poster in your workplace.

- Organise workplace stalls, 'tea break' chats and branch meetings. Talk to your Unite official to order a supply of materials.
- Talk to your Unite reps for more ideas on how to get the vote out in your workplace!
- Keep checking your email and reading your texts from us!

If you do not receive a ballot paper either by text, email or post or know of members who haven't, please make sure your current contact details are up to date by contacting your local Unite District or Regional office, details provided by clicking the following link www.unitetheunion.org/what-we-do/unite-in-your-region. We strongly urge you to vote for action in the consultative ballot and show to the Government "Enough is enough".

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