Joint union submission to the NHS Pay Review Body 2019 -20¹

Introduction

7 K L V \ H D U ¶ V M R L Q WfolkowsLtRe@conclustion by the Reparate pay deals in Scotland, Wales and England. No formal agreement has been reached in Northern Ireland. The submission, in substance, aims to support the implementation of these pay deals and the need for progress in Northern Ireland to ensure that NHS staff there receive a meaningful pay rise for this year and subsequent years.

The Staff Council intends to provide the PRB with a joint progress report on current workstreams arising from the pay agreements.

Staff side acknowledges that the Pay Review Body will not be making a recommendation for a pay uplift for 2019- DQG WKDW WKLV \HDU¶V UHSRU concentrate primarily on establishing monitoring arrangements. Staff side also acknowledges that the Scottish Government has not set a remit for this year so this submission does not cover Scotland.

This \ H D hattunion submission takes a very different approach to that taken in previous rounds by underlining the steps needed to monitor and evaluate progress within the pay deals. However, the current situation in the NHS Agenda for Change workforce should not be overlooked.

The following headline data on key indicators illustrate just some of the challenges facing the NHS workforce:

- x Average annual earnings among the Agenda for Change workforce are estimated to have increased by between 2.1% and 9.3% between 2011 and 2018. Meanwhile, RPI inflation has increased by 24%. Looking at the NHS Staff Survey for England as an indication of satisfaction with pay levels we can see that less than a third (31.2%) of all staff expressed satisfaction with their pay in the 2017 survey compared to over a third (36.8%) in 2016.
- x Among NHS providers in England, there were around 103,000 vacancies reported in July-September 2018 (compared to around 1.1 million whole-time equivalent staff) and the number is forecast to increase further during 2019. Due to high levels of vacancies, sickness absence and staff turnover, spending on bank and agency has increased by 11% in a year. The nursing vacancy rate in Northern Ireland is around 10%, with no data available for other staff groups and no data available for Wales.

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¹ British Association of Occupational Therapists, British Dietetic Association, British and Irish Orthoptic Society, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, College of Podiatry, Federation of Clinical Scientists, GMB, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Nursing, Society of Radiographers, Unison, Unite.

The scale of the problem across the UK cannot be ignored, with the NHS workforce facing rising workloads and pressures, tougher working environments and staffing shortages. It is therefore necessary to be realistic about expectations for the impact pay agreements can make in such a generally challenging environment, and in particular with the uncertainty surrounding EU Exit terms.

Progress over pay levels in the NHS must be matched by real attention and investment in workforce planning; the recruitment of new starters; and the training, development and career progression of existing staff.

A step in the right direction

Northern Ireland

It is not possible to enter a submission at this time in respect of Northern Ireland as tripartite discussions continue over 2018/19 pay. Given the political stalemate, the Department of Health are having difficulty in considering anything other than single year pay award

National recruitment and retention premia

The Secretary of State has asked the NHS PRB to consider issues that have been raised regarding the difficulties of recruiting and retaining IT staff and to consider the case for a national recruitment and retention premium (RRP).

The joint NHS trade unions would welcome clarity from the NHS PRB on what specific issues have been raised about this group of staff, and by which organisations, so we can more fully participate in this evidence round.