



15<sup>th</sup> June 2023

FAO: Kerry Gulliver  
Employers Side Chair  
National Ambulance Strategic Partnership Forum (NASPF)

Sent by Email.

Dear Kerry,

**Re: Concerns regarding Section 2 Agenda for Change for Ambulance Service Staff**

As you will be aware GMB has always been opposed to the implementation of Section 2 Agenda for Change Unsocial Hours Enhancements for ambulance service staff since it was introduced in 2018. We raised concerns at the time that this would be damaging for the morale of the workforce by creating a two-tier workforce and would also have a significant detrimental impact on career progression. GMB stands by that position still and we believe there is increasing evidence of those points being accurate.

In January 2021 GMB approached NASPF with a paper highlighting the numerous concerns and issues that GMB members were facing as a result of the unfair and inconsistent application of Section 2 across all ambulance service trusts in England. Unison, Unite and RCN joined us in raising those concerns and a working group was set up specifically to address these issues.

It is extremely disappointing that 2 ½ years later and no progress has been made whatsoever in progressing this work. We therefore felt we had no alternative but to withdraw our involvement from this working group and to engage with GMB members to understand what next steps they want to take.

You will also be aware that in the recent pay negotiations with the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care, GMB raised this issue as a top priority for our members and called on the Government to include it as a part of the negotiated agreement. Again, it was extremely disappointing that the Government chose to ignore all of the ambulance specific concerns raised in those negotiations and it's important you are aware of the extremely damaging impact that has had on ambulance service workers morale. They feel undervalued now more than ever before.

GMB has recently conducted a survey of members and the results evidence exactly what we have been saying since 2018:

- 38% of respondents to the survey who were on Section 2 had been forced onto the section since 2018.
- 58% of respondents on Section 2 would opt to transfer to Annex 5 if given the choice.
- 86% of respondents on Annex 5 stated that they would not change jobs or seek promotion so as not to lose Annex 5 terms. However, 96% of those would if they could keep their Annex 5 terms.

Some of our sister unions are also surveying their members and will share their results with you in due course.

GMBs position on this is clear. We never agreed to Section 2 for ambulance service workers and believe that all our concerns raised at the time have proven to be correct. We believe it to be a deterrent to career progression, detrimental to health and well-being as it encourages presenteeism, divides the workforce, discriminatory in its application to pregnant workers and NQPs. GMB would like to see Section 2 become an option as we appreciate some staff may want to be on those terms. However, we believe that anyone that has been forced on to Section 2 since 2018 should be given the opportunity to transfer to Annex 5 and we want a commitment that no more forced transfers will take place. Once those issues are resolved, we can start to try to address once again the inconsistent and unfair application of the section across the trusts.

If ambulance trust employers are serious about addressing the low morale of their staff and poor career progression options, resolving the issue of Section 2 must be a priority. GMB is asking that you schedule a meeting of NASPF, specifically to focus on resolving this issue with GMB and our sister unions.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Harrison  
GMB National Secretary



Steve Rice  
GMB National Ambulance Committee Chair

cc. Sharandeep Bandesha - Staff Side Chair of NASPF / Unison  
Colenzo Jarrett-Thorpe - Unite  
Barry Hutchinson - RCN