

18th December 2024



Mr Stephen Boyle
Interim Chair
NHS Pay Review Body
1st Floor
10 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0NB

Sent by Email: NHSPRB@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Dear Mr Boyle,

Thank you for your letter dated 13th December 2024 giving GMB the opportunity to submit further evidence following the publication of the Department of Health & Social Care evidence.

As you will be aware, GMB has not engaged with the NHS Pay Review Body process in recent years. This was in response to GMB members working across all Agenda for Change pay bands in the NHS and ambulance service losing faith in the process being able to deliver fair pay.

This year, GMB members made the decision to re-engage for the next pay round.

GMB members in the NHS welcomed that the pay award for 2024/25 was above inflation and outside of the government's 'affordability' number and the recognition of funding being needed to start the work on structural changes to Agenda for Change.

We also welcomed the Government starting the pay round for 2025/26 earlier than what has been the norm in previous years recognising that this will be a commitment to ensuring that the pay round is back running on time for April 2026.

It is because of these developments that we have submitted written evidence into the 2025/26 pay round.

14 years of pay freezes and below inflation pay awards have really damaged the value of NHS pay and destroyed the morale of the workforce. It is imperative that pay is taken seriously as a way of ensuring we retain the existing workforce and make the NHS an attractive employment option for those looking for new work.

GMB is disappointed in the Government's written evidence which states a 2.8% affordability number, a part of which should be taken away from headline pay, and used to pay for part three of the 2024/25 pay award.

GMB is calling for a percentage increase pay award above RPI to be applied to all Agenda for Change pay bands and a plan for band 2 to be paid at least £15 per hour and addressing the differentials within subsequent bands. GMB is also seeking a commitment to restore lost earnings and conditions and a plan on how this will be achieved. 2.8% before any deductions will not meet any of this.

Our members voted to accept the pay award for 2024/25 based on the government commitment to honour the PRB recommendation in full. This included the funded mandate for Agenda for Change structural changes. They did not vote to pay for that commitment out of their pay award the following year. It calls into question how seriously the essential structural changes are being taken if additional money is not being made available.

Finally, the lowest paid in the NHS are set to fall below the National Living Wage again in April 2025. An uplift will need to be applied by NHS employers to prevent them from breaching minimum wage laws. We do not yet know how much this uplift will be, but we do know that employers will be expected to claim it back once the pay award for 2025/26 is known and applied.

We have explained in detail in our written evidence why this is unacceptable and the damage it causes. The additional concern now however is that the 2.8% will also have to include the National Living Wage uplift and will mean there is even less left over for a pay award for NHS workers.

GMB is therefore calling on you to prove to NHS workers that the PRB process can deliver for workers by acting truly independently of Government and making a recommendation on pay for 2025/26 that truly recognises and rewards them.

We look forward to giving oral evidence on 21st January 2025.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Harrison

National Secretary