



Member briefing on NHS pay August 2020

This briefing is for our members in the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) who work in the NHS and are covered by Agenda for Change (AfC) terms and conditions.

Your RCN Trade Union Committee and Council want to ensure you are kept well informed of developments on NHS pay and fully involved in campaigning for a significant and early pay rise for nursing staff in the NHS.

We are working hard to represent you, and we know what you want. In May and June, our members [gave their views](#) on how to build a better future for nursing. Three quarters of respondents said an increase in pay would make them feel more valued.

What is the latest news?

As per our July update, we continue to [demand the government brings forward the NHS pay round](#). It is important for members to know **we are not yet involved in any formal process to determine pay**.

Working in partnership with health unions to call for a substantial pay rise

Usually, trade unions develop their position on pay after looking at the economic, labour market and political context, and taking into consideration the views of members. This is what your Trade Union Committee is working on.

Most years in the NHS, pay is determined through the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) process, which makes recommendations to the UK governments after taking evidence from trade unions, employers and governments. On occasion, such as in 2018, negotiations take place alongside the PRB process and union members are consulted by their individual trade union.

The RCN has a long history of working in partnership with other trade unions on terms and conditions of employment in the NHS. Where possible, before a PRB process or negotiations, health unions will seek to reach a joint position.

Unions then collectively and individually present their arguments to the UK governments, the NHS PRB and/or NHS Employers.

This year, we have started work with other unions to discuss what a fair pay rise would look like for union members. The RCN is working hard to ensure that colleagues from other unions understand our position will need to reflect the real value of nursing – one which was highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, but is ever-present and year-round. The RCN position in these conversations is determined by your Trade Union Committee and Council.

RCN negotiators take their mandate for conversations with other unions from your elected RCN members on the Trade Union Committee and Council. Your Trade Union Committee and Council have oversight of direction, strategy and the process.

Whether the UK government or any of the devolved administrations decide to use the NHS pay review process or agree to discussions on pay, we expect to work with other unions to present our arguments on why NHS staff deserve a substantial and early pay rise.

How long does it take for NHS pay to be decided?

Unfortunately, only governments in the UK have the power to set the timetable and the money they choose to spend. But the greater the pressure they feel from you as members, and our supportive public, then the better chance we have of a significant and early pay award.

We expect that governments in the UK will confirm which route they will use to set pay in the autumn – and we are ready for all of them. This means that by September we need to have concluded our early and internal discussions with members and be ready to submit evidence to the PRB or to participate in negotiations. We will also mount a public campaign and it is critical that our members are active.

How can I get involved?

We are preparing to launch a public and member-facing campaign in the autumn. This campaign will seek to build public pressure on the government to show support for our call for an early and significant pay rise.

We will ensure that you receive regular updates through our member magazines, through our email updates, on our website and on social media, from your regional branch and through our accredited reps in your workplaces.

Until the launch of the formal campaign, please:

- join the conversation about pay and come to an [upcoming online Q&A on pay](#) (or watch back previous sessions)
- check your contact preferences in [MyRCN](#) to make sure we can reach you.

If you would like to champion this campaign with your colleagues and friends, [sign up as an e-campaigner](#) to find out how you can get involved.

You can also find out more about becoming an [accredited RCN rep](#) or how to become active in [our forums and committees](#).

We will need every single member to get involved and to participate and take action through our campaign. Only together will we be able to achieve our aim.

Ten ways to talk about pay

Here are 10 things that our members should confidently say in person or on social media to keep other members, nursing staff or politicians up to date on our campaigning work.

1. Our RCN Trade Union Committee, Council and Executive Team are fighting hard for a meaningful and early pay rise for nursing staff in the NHS. It is unacceptable for the UK government to tell us to wait until 2021.
2. The RCN is its members – the more of us who speak up together and show the government how we feel, the more pressure they will be under.
3. Governments have now seen how strongly members feel about deserving a rise brought forward from April next year – they are under pressure to make it a significant one.
4. The UK government must open discussions with health unions immediately to get nursing and health care NHS staff the proper remuneration rise we deserve. Stalling is not an option.
5. Our elected members on the Trade Union Committee and Council have regular discussions about pay and are preparing a pay ask based on members' views.
6. The RCN is clear members' salaries must reflect the level of skill and responsibility in our jobs – we need to be shown more respect by governments.
7. Nursing staff have seen great support from the public. Politicians must now show us the same – actions not words.
8. RCN leaders in your country want to hear directly from members and will be running a series of virtual events throughout the month of August.
9. The RCN has been clear that any final pay offer or award will be taken back to members and fully consulted on.
10. Only a few short months ago, we were standing on picket lines over fair pay and safe staffing in Northern Ireland. It would be unthinkable to deny nursing staff a fair pay award again now.