



## **NHS Agenda for Change Pay 2024/25 – England GMB Consultative Ballot Frequently Asked Questions**

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## 1. What is the pay award for NHS Agenda for Change Staff?

Government have announced that they will honour the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) recommendations on pay for 2024/25 in full. These are:

- Uplifting all pay points for Agenda for Change (AfC) staff by 5.5% on a consolidated basis, taking effect from 1 April 2024.
- Adding intermediate pay points at AfC Bands 8a and above.
- Working with the NHS Staff Council to take forward the PRB's recommendations on AfC pay structures.

## 2. What does 5.5% mean to me?

(This doesn't include High Cost Area Supplements / Unsocial Hours Enhancements)

	2023/24 hourly rate (£)	2023/24 annual value (£)	5.5% Increase £ per hour	5.5% Increase £ annual Based on 37.5 hour week	Pay Award NEW RATES 2024/25 hourly rate (£)	Pay Award NEW RATES 2024/25 annual value (£) Based on 37.5 hour week
Band 1	£11.45	£22,383	£0.63	£1,232.00	£12.08	£23,615
Band 2	£11.45	£22,383	£0.63	£1,232.00	£12.08	£23,615
Band 3	£11.67	£22,816	£0.64	£1,255.00	£12.31	£24,071
	£12.45	£24,336	£0.68	£1,338.00	£13.13	£25,674

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Band 4	£12.86	£25,147	£0.71	£1,383.00	£13.57	£26,530
	£14.11	£27,596	£0.78	£1,518.00	£14.89	£29,114
Band 5	£14.53	£28,407	£0.80	£1,563.00	£15.33	£29,970
	£15.67	£30,639	£0.86	£1,685.00	£16.53	£32,324
	£17.69	£34,581	£0.97	£1,902.00	£18.66	£36,483
Band 6	£18.10	£35,392	£1.00	£1,946.00	£19.10	£37,338
	£19.10	£37,350	£1.05	£2,055.00	£20.15	£39,405
	£21.80	£42,618	£1.19	£2,344.00	£22.99	£44,962
Band 7	£22.37	£43,742	£1.23	£2,406.00	£23.60	£46,148
	£23.52	£45,996	£1.30	£2,530.00	£24.82	£48,526
	£25.60	£50,056	£1.41	£2,753.00	£27.01	£52,809
Band 8a	£26.06	£50,952	£1.43	£2,823.00	£27.49	£53,775
	£29.33	£57,349	£1.61	£3,155.00	£30.94	£60,504
Band 8b	£30.16	£58,972	£1.66	£3,243.00	£31.82	£62,215
	£35.04	£68,525	£1.93	£3,768.00	£36.97	£72,293
Band 8c	£36.01	£70,417	£1.98	£3,873.00	£37.99	£74,290
	£41.50	£81,138	£2.28	£4,463.00	£43.78	£85,601
Band 8d	£42.74	£83,571	£2.35	£4,597.00	£45.09	£88,168
	£49.29	£96,376	£2.71	£5,301.00	£52.00	£101,677
Band 9	£51.09	£99,891	£2.81	£5,494.00	£53.90	£105,385
	£58.79	£114,949	£3.23	£6,322.00	£62.02	£121,271

### 3. What does 5.5% mean to me in a High Cost Supplement Area?

(This does not include unsocial hours enhancements)

2023/24 hourly rate (£)	2023/24 annual value (£)	HCAS Inner NEW RATES 2024/25 hourly rate	HCAS Inner NEW RATES 2024/25 annual value	HCAS Outer NEW RATES 2024/25 hourly rate	HCAS Outer NEW RATES 2024/25 annual value	HCAS Fringe NEW RATES 2024/25 hourly rate	HCAS Fringe NEW RATES 2024/25 annual value





<b>B1</b>	£11.45	£22,383	£14.85	£29,029	£14.40	£28,166	£12.72	£24,873
<b>B2</b>	£11.45	£22,383	£14.85	£29,029	£14.40	£28,166	£12.72	£24,873
<b>B3</b>	£11.67	£22,816	£15.08	£29,485	£14.64	£28,622	£12.95	£25,329
	£12.45	£24,336	£15.90	£31,088	£15.46	£30,225	£13.79	£26,958
<b>B4</b>	£12.86	£25,147	£16.34	£31,944	£15.90	£31,081	£14.25	£27,857
	£14.11	£27,596	£17.87	£34,937	£17.22	£33,665	£15.63	£30,570
<b>B5</b>	£14.53	£28,407	£18.39	£35,964	£17.65	£34,521	£16.09	£31,469
	£15.67	£30,639	£19.84	£38,789	£19.01	£37,173	£17.36	£33,941
	£17.69	£34,581	£22.39	£43,780	£21.46	£41,956	£19.59	£38,308
<b>B6</b>	£18.10	£35,392	£22.91	£44,806	£21.96	£42,939	£20.05	£39,205
	£19.10	£37,350	£24.18	£47,286	£23.09	£45,140	£21.16	£41,376
	£21.80	£42,618	£27.17	£55,134	£25.93	£50,697	£24.08	£47,084
<b>B7</b>	£22.37	£43,742	£27.78	£54,320	£26.53	£51,883	£24.69	£48,270
	£23.52	£45,996	£29.00	£56,698	£27.75	£54,261	£25.90	£50,648
	£25.60	£50,056	£31.19	£60,981	£29.94	£58,544	£28.09	£54,931
<b>B8</b>	£26.06	£50,952	£31.67	£61,927	£30.42	£59,490	£28.58	£55,877
<b>A</b>	£29.33	£57,349	£35.12	£68,676	£33.88	£66,239	£32.03	£62,626
<b>B8</b>	£30.16	£58,972	£36.00	£70,387	£34.75	£67,950	£32.90	£64,337
	£35.04	£68,525	£41.15	£80,465	£39.90	£78,028	£38.06	£74,415
<b>B8</b>	£36.01	£70,417	£42.17	£82,462	£40.93	£80,025	£39.08	£76,412
	£41.50	£81,138	£47.96	£93,773	£46.71	£91,336	£44.86	£87,723
<b>B8</b>	£42.74	£83,571	£49.27	£96,340	£48.02	£93,903	£46.18	£90,290
	£49.29	£96,376	£56.18	£109,849	£54.93	£107,412	£53.08	£103,799
<b>B9</b>	£51.09	£99,891	£58.07	£113,557	£56.83	£111,120	£54.98	£107,507
	£58.79	£114,949	£66.20	£129,443	£64.95	£127,006	£63.11	£123,393

#### 4. What does 'Adding intermediate pay points at AfC Bands 8a and above' mean?

The PRB noted in their recommendation report:

"It is also clear that action needs to be taken to ensure there are sufficient incentives throughout the AfC pay structure to make sure the best talent in the service is motivated to apply for promotion. In particular, for a number of years, we have repeatedly heard evidence from parties that staff are disincentivised from taking promotion from Band 7 to Band 8a, where the pay uplift can be as little as





1.8%, and staff also lose their additional unsocial hours payments and the ability to earn overtime

Compounding this, staff at bands 8a and above then wait five years for progression, where staff at most other bands are eligible for pay progression after two years. We have heard that these restrictions mean that in order to retain staff, some people are moved to a higher band without taking on additional duties. Where promotion or re-banding is taking place on a more informal or unstructured basis, there is a risk of inconsistency and that promotions are not accessible to all in the same way. It is important that the NHS is able to retain and motivate all managers on whom the service is depending on to lead elective recovery and drive the productivity improvements set out in the LTWP. On this basis, we additionally recommend that an intermediate pay point is added at each of Bands 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d and 9 to which staff should progress after two years at the respective band.”

They therefore made a recommendation to add an intermediate pay point at each of bands 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d and 9 to which staff should progress after two years at the respective band. The Secretary of State has asked that this recommendation goes to the NHS Staff Council for ratification before it is implemented.

## **5. What does ‘Working with the NHS Staff Council to take forward the PRBs recommendations on AfC pay structures’ mean?**

GMB and other health unions have been calling on Government to give a mandate to the NHS Staff Council to refresh the AfC pay structure which was implemented in 2004.

The PRB noted in their recommendation report:

“We remain concerned about structural issues which may be impacting on morale and motivation of the AfC workforce and acting as disincentives for promotion. These concerns include matters such as compression of the pay structure over a number of years and the arrangements regarding unsocial hours payments at Bands 1 to 3.





From our discussions with parties, it appears that such structural pay matters are most appropriately addressed by the NHS Staff Council and that it would undertake such work following receipt of a mandate from DHSC.

We therefore recommend that the UK Government provides the NHS Staff Council with a funded mandate to resolve outstanding concerns within the AfC pay structure.

Maintaining the integrity of the AfC contract across England, Northern Ireland and Wales will require all three administrations to be engaged in such a process. For that reason, we also recommend to the Northern Ireland Executive and the Welsh Government that they support the issuance of a funded mandate to the NHS Staff Council and that they work with the Staff Council, their social partners and with the UK Government on this matter.”

## **6. How was the pay award determined?**

Pay for staff on Agenda for Change (AfC) contracts in the NHS is determined by the Government after considering recommendations made by the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB). Ultimately, the final decision on pay is with Government. This is not a pay negotiation. It is an imposed pay award.

The PRB was created in 1983 and was intended to be an independent body to advise Government on pay. The previous Government formally asked the PRB to consider evidence from interested parties and make a recommendation on what the pay award should be this financial year, commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April. Some recognised health unions, employers and Government, submitted evidence into the PRB process. Once all of the evidence had been received and analysed, the PRB formally wrote to Government with their recommendation.

The new Labour Government considered the recommendations and decided to honour the PRB recommendations in full.





### **7. When will I receive the pay award?**

It is expected that the pay award, including back pay to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, will be paid in October 2024.

### **8. The pay award was due on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, will it be backdated?**

Yes. Arrangements will be made for it to be paid and backdated to the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

### **9. I'm worried about how the back pay will affect my universal credits or other benefits. What can I do?**

NHS employers at a local level have the flexibility to pay additional payments in multiple instalments. Local employers and staff side partnerships should be working together to make sure that staff are aware that this option exists and what the cut off dates are for people to make this request.

Any member of staff considering making this request should access appropriate advice (for example through the Universal Credit helpline or Citizens Advice) to understand how receiving these payments in multiple instalments may impact their personal situation.

Any requests should be made as soon as possible, and before the cut-off date communicated by the employer.

The timeframe over which payments should be spread should be agreed between the employer and the member of staff. Staff should make sure they understand how much their monthly payment would be, and how it would appear on their payslip.





## 10. How does the pay award compare with GMBs pay claim?

After consulting GMB members on what should be included in the pay claim, the following was agreed and submitted to the previous Government on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 alongside a request for pay negotiations. The pay claim was sent to the new Secretary of State for Health & Social Care on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

The claim was for:

- **£1.50 per hour** consolidated increase for all staff on Agenda for Change contracts (or RPI, whichever is greater).
- **Restorative Pay.** A commitment to restore lost earnings and conditions and a plan on how this will be achieved.
- **Measures to ensure the NHS never falls below the Foundation Living Wage.**
- **Unsocial Hours Enhancements.** All changes made under the 2018 pay settlement are reversed, including the application of Annex 5 for all ambulance service workers.
- **Ambulance Retirement Age.** An urgent review into the retirement age of ambulance service workers with a view to lowering the retirement age to 60, in line with other emergency service workers.
- **Free NHS Car Parking.** Restore funding for NHS trusts to provide parking at no cost for NHS workers.
- Immediate action to rectify **Job Evaluation and Equal Pay** issues.
- **Safe Staffing** levels.
- **Parity of Pay** and payment of this year's pay award to outsourced and contracted out staff.

GMB welcomes this pay award as the first step towards addressing pay across the NHS but is not making any voter recommendation in this ballot as it falls short of GMBs pay claim. NHS staff below the top of Band 8a would have benefitted more financially with GMBs pay claim of £1.50 per hour.







Government advised in their evidence that they had only budgeted 2% for NHS pay this year. Current RPI inflation is at 2.9% meaning that this pay award is 2.6% above inflation. Therefore, the 5.5% pay award demonstrates a willingness to start to restore pay levels and it is the first above inflation pay award that has been received in many years.

The pay award puts the lowest paid on AfC 64 pence per hour above the National Minimum Wage and 8 pence per hour above the Foundation Living Wage. The AfC pay structure work to be undertaken by the NHS Staff Council will hopefully put in place measures to ensure pay does not fall below the Foundation Living Wage again.

The PRB recommendation report expresses the importance of continuing the NHS Staff Council work on job evaluation, in particular, refreshing the Nursing & Midwifery Profiles. It also expresses the need that resources and funds are put in place to carry out this work locally once the process of reviewing the profiles is complete. GMB will continue to support members through job reviews at a local level in other professions.

Whilst safe staffing levels were not specifically addressed in the PRB recommendation report, the recognition was clear that in order to recruit and retain staff in the NHS, pay needs to be improved.

The PRB recommendation report and pay award does not mention GMBs pay claim asks on unsocial hours enhancements, ambulance retirement age and car parking charges. GMB remains committed to campaigning on these issues nationally and locally.

This pay award is funded for those on AfC contracts only. GMB is currently considering how best we can pursue parity of pay for contracted out staff not on AfC. More details to follow.





## **11. Who will receive the pay award?**

The pay award is for all directly employed AfC staff.

GMB has raised our concerns about staff who are not on AfC contracts and how they are regularly excluded from AfC pay awards. GMB is calling on Government to provide additional funding to ensure that these workers can also benefit from the pay award. We want any pay award for AfC staff to be given to all staff providing NHS services – whether they are employed by private contractors or wholly owned subsidiaries. We must give parity of pay and terms to all workers in the NHS.

This pay award is for England only. We would expect that any additional funding for NHS pay would mean that Barnett Consequential would apply and the necessary additional funding provided for devolved nations. However, as the money for this pay award has been re-allocated from other departmental budgets, it is unlikely that additional money will be received by devolved nations. Governments in Wales and Scotland have committed to negotiating pay with recognised health unions.

## **12. What are GMB doing now?**

GMB will now run a consultative ballot on the imposed pay award for all GMB members across the NHS and ambulance service. Only GMB members will be eligible to vote.

## **13. What is a consultative ballot?**

A consultative pay ballot is for members to inform GMB whether you are happy with the pay award or not, and if not, whether you would be willing to take part in industrial action to pursue an improved pay award. A consultative ballot can be run electronically via survey links or QR codes. More details on this process will be issued by your GMB region shortly.

**A reject vote is your vote to state that you are not happy with pay award and are willing to take part in industrial action.**





If GMB members vote to say they are not happy with the pay award and are willing to take industrial action to pursue this further, GMB may move to a formal ballot for industrial action in your workplace. It is important to note that a large majority of GMB members would need to vote against the pay award and be willing to take part in industrial action for us to pursue an improved pay award.

GMB is looking for GMB members in workplaces to volunteer to be 'voter champions'. These are members who speak to their colleagues during a ballot period to encourage them to vote. If you would be interested in volunteering to support ballot efforts, please email your details to [NHS@gmb.org.uk](mailto:NHS@gmb.org.uk)

#### **14. What is an industrial action ballot?**

An industrial action ballot must be run by an independent scrutineer and **carried out by post**.

In Britain, the right strike is governed by complex and restrictive industrial action laws. In summary, to count as 'protected industrial action', a strike must:

- Relate to a work dispute with your own employer.
- Be supported by a valid secret postal ballot with independent scrutiny, in which at least half of the balloted workers have voted (in other words, 'not voting' counts as a vote against the strike).
- Be carried out with notice.

In addition, strikes involving workers who provide what the government calls an 'important public service' can only be lawful if at least 40% of the workers balloted over the action vote in favour of it.

#### **15. Why do we have to be balloted more than once for industrial action?**

Anti trade union legislation places severe restrictions on trade unions in dispute.





Consultative ballots are used to assess whether members are in favour of industrial action to further the campaign. If a majority vote in favour, unions are then able to move to formal postal ballots for industrial action. This is the ballot that is legally required before any industrial action can take place.

**It's essential that GMB members vote in all ballots.**

## **16. What is meant by industrial action?**

Trade unions always try to resolve disputes through negotiation. But when that doesn't work, industrial action may be needed as a last resort.

The industrial action you probably hear most about is going on strike. But there are other actions workers can take, such as picketing, go-slows, overtime bans and work to rule. Members who take part in industrial action forfeit their wages for the duration of the strikes.

Industrial action ballots may refer to different types of action. These are:

### Action Short of Strike Action

Action short of strike action (ASOS) is **not** 'a concerted stoppage of work', which is the definition of strike action. Any action that results in a member not having any substantial contractual work to do will probably be classified as strike action.

ASOS can involve the withdrawal of goodwill around voluntary or discretionary activity. Some examples of what this could include are:

- Voluntary overtime ban.
- Refusal to agree requests for short notice changes to start times.
- Refusal to agree to work on a day not originally published/scheduled.
- Work to rule (work to contracted hours and terms only).

The ASOS could be continuous or discontinuous. Discontinuous periods of ASOS would enable us to spread out the action over an extended period of time if necessary.





The ASOS could be across the board or undertaken by selected groups of members only.

Protest action, which does not count as industrial action, in which, for example, all members demonstrate during their lunchtime could also be used to good effect in any week of ASOS, or stand-alone action.

### Strike Action

Strike action is a concerted stoppage of work in which members completely withdraw their labour. The withdrawal of labour can be brief, or lengthy.

Strike action can be of varying duration, from one hour, or less, to indefinite action.

If strike action on any one day is less than the total contractual hours for the day for the members involved, there is an option to seek the agreement of the employer to deduct only that pay for the actual time of stoppage (for example one hour) rather than a whole day's pay. It is also open for the employer to deduct a whole day's pay for the shortest stoppage.

## **17. What are the Government's Minimum Service Levels during strike action?**

The previous Government furthered their attacks on workers rights to strike and introduced minimum service levels during strike action for ambulance service workers. This attempted to remove the right to strike for most workers.

The new Labour Government have committed to repealing this legislation and the process has already started.





**18. Am I allowed to take part in strike action, or action short of strike if I am a Nurse, Paramedic or other registered healthcare professional?**

Yes – you have the right to take part in lawful industrial action.

The Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) and The Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) both have advice regarding this on their websites.

HCPC – [Position statement: Taking part in industrial action | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/position-statement-taking-part-in-industrial-action)

NMC – [Our position on industrial action - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](https://www.nmc.org.uk/our-position-on-industrial-action)

The code of practice will remain in place during any such action and registrants have a duty to uphold their professional standards at all times.

**19. What protections are in place for patients if we go on strike?**

Some members may be exempted from participating in industrial action if they are 'derogated to work' because their role or service is safety critical. Members who remain on duty because they are derogated may be asked to wear badges to indicate they are supportive of the strike.

**20. Can I be sacked if I go on strike?**

No – you have the right to take industrial action and can't legally be forced to stay at, or go back to, work, unless a ballot was not properly organised.

If you take industrial action, you'll probably have broken (be 'in breach of') your employment contract and your employer is unlikely to pay you for the work that you didn't do when you took industrial action.





## **21. What can I do to get involved with GMBs pay campaign?**

If you're not a GMB member, join today at [www.gmb.org.uk/join](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join)

Ask your work colleagues to join GMB too.

Email [NHS@gmb.org.uk](mailto:NHS@gmb.org.uk) to do any of the below:

- Become a GMB Representative, pay campaign volunteer or voter champion in your workplace.
- Share your stories with GMB, by sending a video or emailing us (photo optional) and telling us what it's like working in the NHS today and why a pay increase is needed now.
- Arrange a workplace meeting with GMB and your colleagues to discuss the pay campaign.

