

Vote on NHS pay

Frequently Asked Questions



● What is the NHS 2 year pay offer?

2025/26: uplift all leads and allowances by 4.25%
2026/27: uplift all leads and allowances by 3.75%

The offer includes an 'inflation guarantee.' This means that in each year of this deal you will be paid at least 1 percentage point above the CPI inflation rate (based on a calendar year average).

● Timetable for NHS Pay consultation

Tuesday 15 April: open pay consultation
Tuesday 14 May: close ballot
Friday 16 May: STAC SS meeting to confirm final staff side position

● What about reduced working week (RWW) for 2025?

UNISON and our sister unions have pressed the government on its decision to roll back on stage 2 of the RWW for 2026. Government have said they will not implement phase 2 (30mins from 1 April 25) but will implement a full hour in April 2026. This is confirmed in para 9 of the offer.

We continue to campaign on the RWW, but we still need to consult you on this pay offer.

● Does the decision to hold off with the reduced working week mean that we are paying for our pay rise in 2026?

No. The 3.75% award in 2026/27 is in addition to any uplift to the hourly rate that happens because of the reduction in the working week to 36 hours.

● If the inflation guarantee is triggered when and how will it be paid?

The inflation guarantee will be triggered at the end of the calendar year – UNISON has secured a guarantee that it will be implemented automatically and paid as a 'back pay' payment on all hours worked, leads, and allowances.

Any payment will be paid as a one-off consolidated increase in the March pay run.

● If the inflation guarantee is triggered, will it apply to unsocial hours and other allowances?

Yes. If triggered, it is an addition to the pay uplift and would be treated as such for backpay purposes and applied to all hours and relevant allowances.

● How can we be sure that the inflation guarantee is enforceable – especially after the reduced working week issue?

The terms of the inflation guarantee are written directly into the formal offer. It would be a dangerous move by any government to back pedal on the expressed terms in a pay agreement, especially in an election year.

UNISON's negotiators have secured as tight an offer as possible including a guarantee that the monthly CPI figures be noted and recorded at a national level to ensure that no one forgets this commitment.

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● How will the inflation guarantee work?

The inflation guarantee will take the monthly CPI figures as published by the Office of National Statistics for the calendar year 2025 and 2026. We will then add the monthly CPI and divide it by 12(months) to get an average CPI.

So, if for example from January 2025 to December 2025 average CPI inflation is 5.2%, an adjustment would be made with a 1.95% pay uplift to all pay points as the pay award is 0.95 percentage points lower than average CPI inflation, therefore below the one percentage point threshold.

The UNISON negotiators have secured as tight an offer as possible including a guarantee that the monthly CPI figures be noted and recorded at a national level to ensure that no one forgets this commitment.

● How can we be sure that the 2026/27 pay increase will be implemented in April 2026?

Scottish government instructs the NHS in Scotland on matters of pay using a PCS Circular. If this offer is accepted, they will write the PCS for 2026/27 as part of the 25/26 pay process. This means that the employers and local payroll departments will have sufficient time to ensure that the 2026/27 pay uplift is in place for 1 April 2026 (including any adjustment that triggering the inflation guarantee may require).

● If this offer is agreed, when will it be paid?

The NHS unions are due to meet in the middle of May. If the joint unions agree to the offer (by a majority) then we will inform government, and we

would expect the 2025/26 uplift to be applied in the next available pay run. Normally backpay is paid the month after the pay run is made.

● Who are the UNISON Scottish, Health Committee?

UNISON Scotland's health committee is an elected body of UNISON shop stewards who work in the NHS just like you. They come from every health board and represent every grade of agenda for change worker.

Their role is to set and oversee the unions policy and approach on all NHS in Scotland matters.

● Why are UNISON recommending this offer?

The Scottish Health Committee gave careful consideration to this offer, balancing the views of members on pay issues such as the need to secure an above inflation pay rise and to secure pay awards in a timely manner. The committee felt that on balance the commitment to an inflation guarantee was a significant win for UNISON NHS staff.

● Why should I vote, it's a done deal?

Whilst the Scottish health committee are recommending acceptance of this pay offer, it is far from a 'done deal'.

Every UNISON member who has an email registered for use in the electronic ballot has a say. If you do not vote your voice will not be heard.

Contact your local health branch for further information
Ballot closes Wednesday 14 May.