

SHEFFIELD

# HEALTHWORKER

All unions • All bands • One fight

## Vote to **REJECT** the **3% pay insult**

After months of dithering and delay, the so-called independent Pay Review Body has finally tabled its offer. At 3%, the offer is risible, as we all knew it would be.

The government were only too happy to accept the PRB recommendation and sneak the pay announcement out just before parliamentary recess. They even had to u-turn at the last minute from proposing that half the pay award would be a one-off payment rather than a permanent salary bump. There is now talk that the rise won't even be fully-funded by the government, which would force cuts to services in other areas.

The government have only reluctantly agreed to more than their preferred 1% offer due to public pressure and outrage among staff. When a petition of over 800,000 signatures calling for a proper pay rise was read out in Parliament Tory MPs raced for the exits.

The offer falls far short of the pay claims our unions submitted - 15% from GMB and Unite, 12.5% from the RCN, £2000 from Unison - and now we need to make sure our unions make good on their promises to put up a proper fight for these claims.

The unions will be consulting their memberships on the offer. It is vitally important that these consultations return a strong majority to **REJECT** the offer on

a high turnout. This gives us a stronger mandate to demand more and prepares us for potential industrial action ballots if necessary. **Talk to your colleagues and remind them to vote.**

### WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

If union members reject the offer, unions should move into a national dispute with employers. This may lead to industrial action ballots. Due to the anti-trade union laws brought in by Tory governments over the years, this process can be long-winded. Unions are not allowed to run industrial action ballots online and must meet a turnout threshold of 50%. **Make sure your contact details are up to date with your union.**

The unions that declare a dispute should work together on the ground to ensure we meet these thresholds. This means organising a strong and visible campaign to get out the vote: joint meetings of workers in each Trust, walkabouts on sites reminding people to vote in any ballots, and workplace balloting where this is possible.

The local *NHS Workers Say No* group in Sheffield will help members of all unions to organise for ballots where necessary. We cannot afford to lose these ballots if the campaign for a restorative pay rise is to succeed. Contact us to help out at: [sheffieldhealthworkers@gmail.com](mailto:sheffieldhealthworkers@gmail.com)

## PPE: why have FFP3 masks never been mandated?

*A Sheffield ward nurse writes...*

PPE has been a highly contentious issue during the pandemic. Several Trusts including Coventry, Homerton, Plymouth, and Southampton have changed their guidance to include the wearing of FFP3 masks for all contact within 2 metres of positive or suspected Covid patients, not just for aerosol-generating procedures.

Earlier in the year 20 health unions and campaign groups urged the government and Public Health England to update its guidance in light of the science available and to maximise safety for staff and patients.

STH are still following the guidance from PHE. We are hoping that they will follow like likes of Coventry and use the guidance as a minimum level of PPE provision rather than an absolute maximum in the near future.

## NHS workloads: unsustainable?

*A YAS worker writes...*

The workload for all of us on the front line is reaching unmanageable levels. Staffing levels on wards are unsafe, waiting times are at a 14 year high, from the middle of July the ambulance service in Yorkshire has been operating at 'extreme pressure' level. Workers in the NHS are breaking with this stress, piled on top of a horrendous year. The health of patients is being put at risk.

This is partly happening because of the build up of work post- lockdown but it's much more than that. Years of deliberate under funding, the political choice to embed the private sector, fragmenting services, failure to provide decent social care – all of that has put us here and led to the NHS with 100,000 staff vacancies. **That is why fighting for a decent pay rise and exposing the government hypocrisy is not just about money in the pockets of workers but about saving the NHS.**



*Sheffield health workers staged a banner drop protest on the day of the pay announcement. We have plenty more actions planned, so stay in touch!*

## What is *Sheffield Healthworker*? How can I get involved?

*Sheffield Healthworker* is a new bulletin for all health and care workers - doctors, nurses, AHPs, paramedics, porters, admin staff. The bulletin will carry information related to national and local issues affecting workers in the NHS and wider health and care sector.

### Who are you?

We are a network of health workers in Sheffield associated with the 'NHS Workers Say No to Public Sector Pay Inequality' campaign. We are members of different health unions including GMB, Unison, Unite and RCN employed across different Trusts locally.

We want to build a rank-and-file network of health workers locally to fight for a 15% pay rise and strengthen our unions.

Contact us for some copies of *Sheffield Healthworker* to give out to colleagues in your workplace.

Got a workplace issue we should know about? Get in touch and write for us!

Email: [sheffieldhealthworkers@gmail.com](mailto:sheffieldhealthworkers@gmail.com)

Facebook: **Sheffield-NHS Workers Say NO!**