



NHS Scotland

Agenda for Change

Pay Claim – 2025/26

This Joint Trade Union claim is submitted on behalf of all staff covered by the agenda for change (AfC) pay arrangements within NHS Scotland having been agreed by all trade unions and professional organisations represented on STAC for the period from 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2026.

Background

The staff side pay claim is set against a backdrop of:

- A cost-of-living crisis, which remains unchecked, fuelled by unpredictable energy costs, food bills and spiralling rent/mortgage costs. With little or no public confidence that household bills will decline in any meaningful way during 2025/26.
- Below inflationary uplifts for key workers in previous years which have devalued the wages of NHS staff,
- An NHS which has still not recovered from the impact of the COVID19 pandemic which amplified historic failings in bed modelling, patients flows and workforce planning.
- Increasing waiting lists, and an expectation that staff will work harder with less resources to achieve success; set within the context of a report by the Governments own auditors which indicates that there is no plan for the future of the NHS,
- An expectation that the NHS in Scotland can reform without first levelling up or additional investment to support 'double running',
- Significant staff shortages across key professions and NHS roles; which directly impacts on morale, staff resilience and patient care,
- Increased member pension contributions, with no immediate added benefit, for the majority of NHS (AfC) staff,
- Scottish Government reaching agreements with Jnr and Snr Doctors which are presented as being significantly better than other members of the NHS workforce in Scotland; adding to the existing anger and disillusionment amongst the majority of the NHS workforce,

The claim is set within a context of decreasing public satisfaction in the Scotland's NHS, as reported in the 2023 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey. The SSAS identified that public satisfaction has fallen from 52% in 2019 to 23% in 2023, this is evident from the increasing number of complaints and reported violent incidents across the NHSiS and it is our members who are bearing the brunt of successive policy failures.

Finally, we would highlight that all sides previously discussed and recognised the need to modernise elements of the pay agreement, specifically with reference to incremental stages; relative incremental values and pay on promotion. We see the agreed modernisation paper that was produced in 2023/24 as ‘unfinished business’ that is essential if we are to reset the baseline on a fair pay system for NHS workers.

Staff Side Claim

2023/2024

As part of the agreed 2023/24 pay claim the Scottish Government committed to modernisation of 3 key priority areas:

Staff side would therefore take this opportunity to state our view that the review of band 5 nursing (and other) roles, protected learning time and reduction of the working week must proceed to implementation without delay with no direct or indirect impact on the 2025/26 pay quantum.

2025/2026

In respect of our 2025/26 claim NHS unions representing staff within the Agenda for Change agreement have agreed that the 2025/26 pay offer must secure:

- 1) A significant and above inflation cost of living increase on all pay rates and allowances of NHS staff covered by this agreement that is reflective of the true cost of living across Scotland and losses incurred in previous years,
- 2) See the implementation of the ‘pay modernisation’ proposal (unfinished business) from 23/24 pay round, as referenced above, in addition to any agreed cost of living increase,
- 3) Seek the further modernisation of AFC to ensure that any reform of NHS Scotland is underpinned by an agreed reform of the pay and terms/condition package.

Matt McLaughlin
STAC Staff side Secretary
22 Jan 2025