**Guide to briefing your local MP on NHS pay**

One of the things you may wish to do locally is to contact your local MP about pay. They need to hear from you about the impact the increased cost of living and working is having on health staff and their families and about the problems this is causing you at work in terms of staff shortages and patient safety.

**For joint staff-side leads:** discuss inviting your MP to a meeting at your workplace (be sure to get the right permissions from management) to discuss your concerns around pay, staff shortages and patient safety. You can find MP contact details at theyworkforyou.com or via your MPs website or local library. You can contact their office, email, write to them, or get in touch via Facebook or Twitter.

Alternatively, you could arrange for a delegation to attend your MP’s surgery. Check with their office or on their website to see if you need to make an appointment. Or get as many members as possible to write a letter to their MP.

Key points to remember if you are meeting your MP

* Tell them you live or work in their constituency
* Don’t go in a huge group as you will have a limited amount of time and you want to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to tell their story. Try to keep it to six members.
* Try and get a range of staff, don’t send six people who all do the same job, the NHS is a team of staff, reflect that in your delegation.
* Be polite – they have given up their time to listen to you.
* Tell your story. Let the MP know how staff shortages and increasing costs are affecting your ability and willingness to do the job and, equally importantly, how it is affecting your patients and their families.
* Tell them if you are thinking of leaving the NHS for better paid and less stressful work elsewhere.
* Be clear about what you’re asking them to do – call on government to give all NHS staff an above-inflation pay rise.
* If they agree, get a photo with them for use in our campaign and on your social media platforms.
* Tell union members locally about the meeting afterwards, what was discussed and how supportive the MP was. Also tell your union too as this will help with national campaigning.

**Write to your MP**

Many of the key points above will also apply to writing to your MP. Here are some additional things that will help. You may wish to pass on these tips to your members who want to write to their MP.

* Make sure you include your name, address and telephone number.
* Ask for a reply.
* Write in your own individual style – personal communications have much more impact than standard letters.
* Whether you are meeting your MP or writing to them, make sure any information you give them is factually correct.
* Tell your story – you are the expert on how things are affecting you and the service you provide. Your voice is powerful.

Below are some points you may wish to make in your letters, or at your meeting. You will also find standard letters that you can adapt and personalise at https://withnhsstaff.org/getserious-campaign-materials.

**What the joint unions are asking for through the Pay Review Body (PRB) process**

In our evidence we told the PRB that NHS unions see mounting evidence of a healthcare staffing crisis which, without urgent intervention, looks set to become a permanent feature across the NHS.

We passed on your key message – that the most urgent action required by government is to prevent more immediate workforce losses. The NHS trade unions are calling for an urgent retention package to be put in place, with a decent pay rise at its heart.

We want the pay increase set at a level which will retain existing staff within the NHS and which recognises and rewards the skills and value of health workers.

In order to do this, the increase must:

1. Deliver an inflation-busting increase so that NHS staff can cope with rising and rapidly fluctuating costs which may change significantly over the pay year.
2. Absorb the impact of increases to pension contributions (delayed from 1 April but still due before Christmas).
3. Benchmark the bottom of the structure against the real Living Wage.

As other elements of the retention package, we are asking for full use of the Agenda for Change agreement to retain existing staff, giving priority to measures that will:

1. Ensure banding outcomes reflect job content.
2. Reward additional hours fairly.
3. Prevent burnout by limiting excess hours.
4. Support progression and career development.
5. Encourage employers to use RRP to retain staff where shortages are a risk to staff wellbeing and quality of care.

It is our view that addressing these issues could – alongside a decent pay rise - reduce preventable resignations from the service over the next 12 months.

So in your communication with MPs, tell your story about how lack of action on these five measures are combining with low pay to drive people out of the service.

If you know of local employers in other sectors that are recruiting people who traditionally would have worked in the NHS or – better still – examples of staff leaving to work elsewhere, include that information.

And most of all, don’t forget to tell your own story on pay – what have you had to cut back on? Are you worrying about paying the extra thousands in bills you face this year? How does financial worry affect you at work?

**Let’s do this!**

Local lobbying and letter writing is an extremely effective way to influence MPs. Your visit or letter could make all the difference in influencing what issues your MP decides to focus on.

And don’t forget, if you are meeting with or writing to your MP, share it on social media so that we can show that members want support from their local MPs to get an inflation-busting pay rise and tackle the issue of staff shortage. And please share any responses you get both on social media and with your own union.