



Work in the NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

JANUARY 2012/01

GMB NHS COMMITTEE'S DECIDE NEXT STEPS ON GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL ON PENSION REFORMS

GMB will ballot NHS members so they can decide whether they accept or reject the pension proposal.

Just before Christmas last year the Government tabled their final proposal on pension reform. Regions have been issued with the proposal together with a detailed GMB commentary. The proposal is titled 'Heads of Agreement' but despite the title, **nothing has been agreed**. The proposal is a culmination of a series of negotiations and discussions that have taken place over nine months.

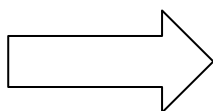
During the discussions and negotiations the GMB has met with the Secretary of State Andrew Lansley on a number of occasions and at every opportunity pushed for negotiations rather than an imposition of pension changes.

The final proposal effectively outlines the position that has been arrived at following these intensive negotiations and through the Day of Action on November 30th. The outcome of these discussions is far from satisfactory. The Government's repeated position throughout has been that they fully intend to push through the planned increases to contributions and to align retirement ages to State Pension Age.

There have been some small movements on the new pension's scheme design and on contributions which are outlined in the GMB commentary.

As a result of the Government's position and the tabling of their proposal urgent meetings were called this week of the GMB NHS Ambulance Committee, GMB NHS National Advisory Committee and the GMB Community District and Nursing Committee.

GMB quotes that followed the meetings can be seen on the right...



Following the meetings the following comments were issued by senior NHS reps in a press release:

Mick Coppin, Chair of the NHS Committee covering ancillary and support staff, said: **"Our members mandated us to challenge the Government's continuous attack on NHS staff terms & conditions. Our members told us that working longer and paying more to get less pension was the final straw. They overwhelmingly voted to take industrial action to bring the government back to the negotiating table. Today we have unanimously agreed to continue to challenge government on this issue through further continued negotiations and have advised the CEC to ballot our members with the final offer, and we will be driven by their decisions"**.

Steve Rice, the chair of the GMB Ambulance Committee said: **"The GMB National Ambulance Committee agreed that although they felt the proposals didn't go far enough the committee recognised that being a member led union, it would be for the membership to decide. And therefore the committee has asked the national negotiators to continue with talks to enable the CEC to put final position to the membership by way of ballot."**

Martin Jackson CDNA Committee member said **"We are delighted that the advisory bodies today have advised the CEC to ballot our members regarding NHS pensions' proposal. However it is disappointing that our members will still be expected to work longer, pay more, and receive less"**.

A full copy of the GMB NHS press release can be found on the GMB website or through your local GMB office.

Join online at www.gmb.org.uk/join



Next Steps

The GMB NHS Committee reps have agreed that the proposal needs to be considered by the full NHS membership and therefore no agreement on the proposal can be reached until a membership led ballot takes place.

What does this mean?

1. The NHS committees did not feel that they could accept or reject the proposal on behalf of the GMB NHS membership. Therefore a membership ballot is the credible way forward.
2. The ballot will start as soon as the final details of the proposal are concluded. The expectation is this will be end of January/February.
3. If GMB NHS members reject the offer then there needs to be a sustained Industrial Action campaign to improve the proposal.

THE GMB IS YOUR UNION AND THEREFORE IT IS ONLY GMB MEMBERS WHO CAN MAKE THE DECISION ON WHETHER THEY ACCEPT OR REJECT THE PROPOSAL.

IF YOU OR YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE NOT GMB MEMBERS JOIN TODAY SO YOU CAN HAVE YOUR SAY.

The Government's pension proposal is made up of three key areas:

1. The new NHS Pension Scheme design.
2. Protection for NHS staff closest to their retirement age.
3. Other areas.

See below a brief outline of the areas:

1. THE NEW NHS PENSION SCHEME DESIGN INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Career average pension with earnings revalued in line with CPI plus 1.5% per annum;
- Accrual rate of 1/54th (the imposition accrual rate is 1/65th)
- Normal pension age for the scheme members matching their state pension age.
- Average member contributions of 9.8%, with tiered contributions. Member contributions in 2012 to increase between 0% - 2.4%; there will be no increase in 2012 for staff with full time pensionable pay less than £26,557.

2. TRANSITIONAL PROTECTION

- All members' pension built up before April 2015 (regardless of age) will be protected and can be paid in full from current normal pension ages.
- For those in final salary schemes, this pension would be calculated on the basis of their salary on retirement, not at April 2015.
- Members who are within 10 years of their current Normal Pension Age at 1 April 2012 will be allowed to remain in their current pension arrangements until their current Normal Pension Age (NPA).
- Members who are just outside the 10 year protection but are within 13.5 years of their NPA will receive some limited protection allowing them to remain in their current pension scheme beyond 1 April 2015, but they would switch to the new arrangements at a later date, before their current normal pension age. This protection will taper off meaning that members would leave their current arrangements at a time depending on their date of birth, between 1 April 2015 and 1 April 2022.
- Those closest to their current Normal Pension Age will benefit from the longest protection.

3. OTHER KEY AREAS

Progress has only been made in a few key areas which include, retaining protection for outsourced workers and commitments to look into the impact of working longer in the NHS particularly for Emergency Service workers.

A full GMB commentary on the proposal is available on the GMB website or through your local GMB office.

Join online at www.gmb.org.uk/join

