

Public Services Section BULLETIN



16 December 2011

NHS AND CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS – URGENT UPDATE

Since the strike on 30th November there have been and continue to be intensive negotiations. These have been about the unions seeking to improve the 'offer' made by government on 2nd November as we try to protect our member's pensions.

These negotiations are very difficult, not helped by the confirmation of contribution increases which start from April 2012.

But the most difficult aspect is that government wants the unions to indicate 'heads of agreement' on key pension scheme items by Tuesday 20th December. Government says that this agreement must include things like the level of pension accrual; the future level of contributions; protections for existing members; and the retirement age. There is no way we can reasonably finalise these by Tuesday and obviously no time to consult anyone about them.

Government is also saying that each union must indicate its willingness to recommend what the government wants in order to stay in the negotiations, or potentially face the imposition of a worse deal. GMB intends to stay in the negotiations in order to best represent our members and avoid imposition but we cannot bind our members to agree something they have not seen. That would be undemocratic and unfair, especially where the government's demands involve a detriment.

Therefore if government insists on commitments from GMB to stay in the talks we will give them only on the basis that we reserve our members position pending further negotiations in the new year.

We will issue further updates as we can.

Brian Strutton

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National Secretary - Public Services Section

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