

Pay deal reached for Agenda for Change employees

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It has been announced that the government will implement the pay deal for Agenda for Change employees. At a meeting between the government and the NHS Staff Council on Tuesday the majority of the Staff Council voted to accept the pay offer, which had been reached with the government in March following months of strike action.

It is expected that staff will receive the increase which includes a 5 per cent uplift for 2023/2024 and two one-off non-consolidated lump sums of 2 per cent for 2022 – 2023 and a separate “NHS backlog bonus” in their June pay. As the new salary rates for 2023/2024 will take effect from 1 April 2023 there will be an element of backpay in respect of the 2023/2024 rise. It is now also expected that the NHS Pay Review Body pay-setting process will not go ahead for this year.

Although this will be welcome news for NHS employers, as the pay award was rejected by four Unions this does not necessarily mean that there will be no further action. Currently only Unite has a valid strike mandate and further action is scheduled to take place on 9 May at Southeast Coast Ambulance Service NHS FT and South-Central Ambulance Service NHS FT.

However, the RCN have confirmed that later this month they will hold a further ballot of 280,000 members in England over further strike action to be held between June and December 2023. Unlike the previous ballot, this ballot will be an aggregated ballot and if successful would provide a mandate for strike action across the whole NHS in England. The previous mandate was on a local level and therefore only approximately 50 per cent of NHS trusts were impacted. Given the strict balloting requirements (which require at least a 50 per cent of those entitled to vote in the ballot must have turned out to vote and at least 40 per cent of member entitled to vote must vote in favour of the action) it remains to be seen whether a further mandate will be secured especially as 46 per cent of RCN members voted to accept the deal. If a further mandate is secured the impact of the action could be felt more severely given it would affect all English trusts and would be likely to involve no derogations as was seen during the action earlier this week.

In other news, the health secretary also met the BMA on Tuesday to discuss the current junior doctor’s pay dispute. A spokesperson for the government described the discussion as “constructive” and both parties are due to meet again in the coming week.

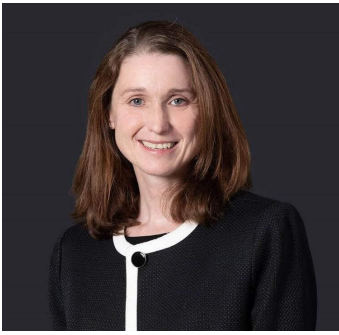
Therefore, aside from the upcoming action by Unite, there may be some respite for employers with no other current strike dates announced at present. However, it remains to be seen whether further action could be on the horizon.

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