

25th July 2025



Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP
Secretary of State for Health & Social Care

Sent by email

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to advise that following the conclusion of the recent ballot of GMB members working in the NHS and ambulance service in England, a majority of GMB members voted against the pay award for 2025/26.

We are therefore seeking an urgent meeting with you to open pay negotiations in efforts to secure a better pay offer for NHS workers and an opportunity to raise with you significant ongoing key issues that affect GMB members who work in the NHS and ambulance services.

Whilst we have already raised these issues with the Department and also with the PRB, GMB members continue to feel that their issues are being ignored. Below we have highlighted a few.

Restorative Pay

GMB is calling for pay to be restored to what it should have been if there had not been 14 years of austerity, forcing pay freezes, pay caps and below inflation pay awards on NHS workers. Whilst we appreciate that it may be difficult to restore pay in one financial year, we believe it is possible for you to commit to restoring pay and we want to work with you on a plan and timeline to achieve that.

Ambulance Retirement Age

Ambulance service workers are the only blue light profession to not have a lower normal retirement age. This is because they are classified as an essential service rather than an emergency service. Their role is hugely demanding both physically and mentally, like that of other blue light professionals. However, as they work longer to reach retirement, the demands of the job force large numbers of ambulance workers to leave the profession early due to mental and physical health issues. This is a priority issue for GMB members.

Unsocial hours (Annex 5 and Section 2)

This is another priority issue for ambulance service workers. The changes brought about in the 2018 pay deal, has created a two-tier workforce, where some colleagues are penalised financially for being off work ill. It has led to huge issues across trusts where it's impact has been damaging on morale, impacted on career progression and made ambulance service workers, including pregnant women, worse off financially. We must see the return to Annex 5 for all ambulance service workers.

Staffing Levels – Recruitment and Retention

Patient care is inextricably linked to the conditions in which GMB members work. Across all areas of the NHS, GMB members are telling us that staffing levels are too low to be able to carry out the care that patients need and deserve. Whilst we support the speed at which you have worked to hold a review into the NHS and deliver the 10 year plan, workers are still not feeling the benefits on the ground. We will welcome the opportunity to be involved in the creation of the workforce plan. Worker voices have to be at the heart of change.

Overtime Pay

NHS workers are the ones at the frontline helping to reduce waiting times, keeping our NHS running and delivering much needed patient care. Many do this outside of their contracted hours. All hours worked should be paid fairly and GMB, and all hours staff are required to work in substantive posts above contracted hours, must be paid in line with Agenda for Change overtime rates.

Car Parking for Staff

GMB has long campaigned for parking at NHS workplaces to be free of charge for NHS workers. Our position remains that this is a 'stealth tax' on NHS workers. Many NHS workers need to travel by car to either get to work or travel to the communities that they serve. Some NHS trusts have recognised this and do provide free parking. Of those trusts that charge staff to park, these are of varying amounts of money, making it a post code lottery for some. NHS trusts were able to suspend car parking charges throughout the covid pandemic and we are calling on you and trusts to bring back free parking permanently.

GMB are requesting a meeting with you to talk about pay and the other important issues as outlined above that are important to our members.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Harrison
GMB National Secretary