



Joint Ambulance Trade Union Statement

19 September 2016

Paramedic banding update

For the last 18 months, UNISON, GMB and Unite, 3 of the trade unions representing the majority of ambulance workers, have been engaged in discussions with employers looking at problems with recruitment and retention of ambulance staff – importantly the banding of paramedics.

In June 2016, we wrote to you with the results from our indicative ballots of ambulance members. Each union reported a similar result which was that you were tired of waiting for the government to deliver the promises they made in 2015/16, and were not prepared to wait indefinitely.

We also recognised that a protracted dispute and the disruption that strike action would bring, was something that all parties wanted to avoid. So, in June we agreed to pause the move to a full industrial action ballot while we held constructive discussions with employers and the government.

A review of the national Job Evaluation profiles for Ambulance Services, by the National Job Evaluation Group (JEG), recognised that the current band 5 and 6 national profiles needed updating. At the NHS Staff Council Executive meeting on 14 September, it was agreed to publish a new band 6 paramedic profile along with technical guidance from JEG to help local matching panels evaluate their current paramedic roles.

We expect the technical guidance and profile to be published on the NHS Employers' website within the next few weeks. We should make it clear that each organisation will need to evaluate their paramedic role(s) and we cannot guarantee a specified outcome from this evaluation. We will keep working with NHS Employers to support the production of the technical guidance and publish the band 6 profile as soon as possible.

We will also continue our discussions around the policy implications of a move to band 6 and will seek to agree a consistent national position on application. We will also keep using influence and lobbying to ensure the outcomes of matching panels will be funded by the appropriate bodies.

As part of this agreement, the employers and trade unions have agreed to a future piece of work to look at how we can support Newly Qualified Paramedics entering the service. This means looking at how they would be deployed, the level of autonomy and supervision they would have and how a preceptorship programme would better support them into employment. If appropriate, as part of this review we will look at a new role profile for a Newly Qualified Paramedic entry level at band 5.

The announcement last week from the NHS Staff Council is significant and a win for collective bargaining, partnership working and Trade Union members. However, we recognise that there is still a lot to do and each ambulance service will need to undertake local job matching processes. We will approach this work with urgency and in a spirit of partnership. However, the evaluation of paramedics needs to take place and people to receive the correct pay for the role they do, in order for us to resolve our dispute.

These developments have only been possible thanks to the level of support you have given us, by completing our requests for information and by voting in our indicative ballots.

Our collective voice is strong. Working together we make a difference.

GMB

UNISON

Unite

