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Foreword

To all UNISON members working in health:

UNISON's annual Health Conference is a time for us to reflect on what has taken place in the preceding year and to look forward to what the future has in store.

We are meeting with a majority Conservative government installed at Westminster again, which is of great concern to all of us – as healthcare staff but also as champions of the NHS.

It will be down to UNISON's health activists to show leadership again. Thankfully we continue to be out in front.

The union's recruitment is second to none. Our regions have excelled themselves – aided by the union's embrace of new technology and different ways of reaching potential members.

Our campaigns go from strength to strength – whether on hospital car parking, One Team for Patient Care, student funding or fighting the health surcharge.

In the past year we have scored a series of victories in our campaign against the use of subsidiary companies in England. The list of those trusts who have backed down in the face of UNISON campaigning is impressively long – as is the number of private contractors who have been compelled by UNISON pressure to put their hand in their pocket to pay staff Agenda for Change pay rates. Our campaign against the excessive hike in fees by the Health and Care Professions Council also reaped dividends, with our ability to mobilise support in the Scottish Parliament as well as Westminster proving crucial to the outcome.

And of course, UNISON Northern Ireland industrial action not only produced a pay offer but also played a widely acknowledged role in bringing power sharing back to Stormont.

This year at Conference we will look at the different approaches being taken as each of the UK administrations struggles with the common challenges of over-worked staff and under-resourced budgets. This points the way to other future concerns for the health service. For example, UNISON has been a key player in shaping NHS England's proposals to change the legislation governing the NHS. The goal for us is to realign the English system with other parts of the UK by moving decisively away from the market, undoing the hated 'Lansley' reforms.

All of which adds up to a busy week in Brighton and a busy year in prospect for the UNISON Health Service Group. But we wouldn't want it any other way!

As you can see from this report, the work that has taken place this year has only been possible due to the collective efforts of our activists, branch stewards, committee and executive members, and staff.

When we pull together we are more than a match for anyone.

Thank you to everyone who makes up the winning UNISON team!

Roz Norman, Maura McKenna,
George Barron
Health Service Group Chairing team

Sara Gorton
National Secretary for Health

Challenging government policy on the NHS

NHS funding

UNISON has continued to press for increased funding for the NHS across all countries of the UK. This has included work with the TUC's "All Together for the NHS" group that has a particular focus on boosting NHS funding.

UNISON worked hard to ensure that NHS funding featured prominently in the 2019 general election, with opinion polling suggesting that the NHS ranked as high as Brexit in the minds of the electorate when they came to cast their vote.

The union continues to brief MPs and members of the House of Lords, as well as undertaking regular media work in this area.

In January 2020 the union produced detailed briefings for MPs on the government's NHS Funding Bill 2019-20.

The briefing highlighted the current under-funded state of the NHS; the workforce crisis; the need for extra investment in public health, capital spending and social care; and contained a particular focus on the need to prioritise apprenticeships.

NHS structure and legislation

UNISON continues to fight hard to resist NHS privatisation in all its forms and to work to bring outsourced services back into the NHS across the UK.

The union remains wedded to removing the use of market mechanisms in the NHS, particularly in England.

In line with Emergency Motion 1 from Health Conference 2019, UNISON continued to engage with the plans for legislative change following on from the publication of the NHS Long Term Plan.

The union submitted evidence to NHS England's engagement exercise and also to the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee, which ran its own inquiry into the plans.

In September 2019 NHS England published its recommendations to the government and Parliament for an NHS Bill to enact these plans.

A joint letter was produced, signed by those organisations (including UNISON) who had taken part in the process. It called on the government to take urgent action to boost collaboration and end the use of unnecessary procurement processes.

Key elements of the initial plans have been retained; for example, ditching the so-called "Section 75" regulations that effectively force commissioners to put services out to tender, removing the competition enforcement powers of NHS Improvement, and providing a vehicle for Integrated Care Providers to be public bodies.

In some areas, proposals have been strengthened as a result of UNISON pressure; for example, there is a recognition that the use of “best value” terminology is unhelpful in determining what should replace the existing procurement regime, and statutory guidance would now require new Integrated Care Systems to meet in public and hold annual general meetings.

The proposals featured in the Queen’s Speech after the December 2019 election and UNISON is keeping up the pressure to ensure that, as a minimum, any new legislation removes all the worst aspects of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

NHS land is a public asset

In line with Health Conference 2019 motion 66, UNISON published a research report in November 2019 outlining the extent of land sales in the English NHS

The report looked into the impact of austerity economics and other NHS initiatives, as well as investigating the extent of land sales in the NHS and what has been done with the proceeds of such sales.

The report closed with some suggested campaigning objectives for the union, along with a request for feedback on the contents of the report and for local examples.

Partnership working

Whilst the national policy picture remains challenging, UNISON continues to value and support partnership working between trade unions and employers at all levels. UNISON is committed to the principles of partnership working because it puts an onus on government, employers and trade unions to engage and consult on decisions that affect staff.

Partnership underpins and facilitates effective employer and trade union relations and has a track record of delivering real gains for staff and patients. There is a growing body of evidence-based research which demonstrates that effective staff engagement in NHS organisations improves the patient experience and measurable healthcare outcomes.

The national Social Partnership Forum (SPF, England) continues to provide a focus for national engagement and dialogue, to debate and influence the workforce implications of government health policy.

UNISON’s National Secretary for Health is staff side chair and the lead officer for the 15 NHS trade unions represented on the SPF. Over the year, the SPF held regular meetings of its Wider, Strategic and other sub-Groups, and worked in partnership to discuss a broad range of policy areas affecting the healthcare workforce. It also continued to develop closer working relationships with the regional partnership forums throughout England, to support and encourage effective engagement at all levels, to share intelligence and disseminate good practice on key workforce issues.

Work on policy development over the period was dominated by the consultation and implementation of the NHS People Plan, but through the SPF structures the staff side also provided input to discussions on violence against staff, winter planning, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and the NHS flu vaccination.

Standing up for patients and staff

NHS people plan

UNISON has spent many years calling for a properly designed and funded workforce strategy for the NHS in England. We have repeatedly made the case for a nationally coordinated approach to issues such as supply and workplace culture.

NHS England finally responded to these calls with the Interim NHS People Plan, released on 3 June 2019. It follows on from the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) which was published at the start of 2019.

The full NHS People Plan is planned for release in early 2020, expected shortly after the the UK government budget is set in March 2020.

The interim Plan set out the overall direction on workforce for the NHS in England under five broad themes:

- Making the NHS the best place to work.
- Improving leadership and culture
- Tackling the nursing challenge
- Delivering 21st century care
- A new operating model for workforce

UNISON has contributed to the work on these themes through the NHS Social Partnership Forum – in formal submissions; participation in workstreams; and focussed SPF workshops on specific topics. In addition, activists from UNISON and other unions have participated in workshops and events held across the country by NHS England and Improvement.

We expect many of the themes from our contributions to be reflected in the final People Plan, including commitments to make NHS organisations safer, healthier and more equal workplaces.

We are also working hard to make sure that working in partnership with NHS trade unions is stitched into the fabric of the People Plan, whether that is at local, England-wide or ‘system’ level.

To assist branches with the local influence, the health team produced materials about the ‘Core Offer to staff’ aimed at shaping local conversations about priority actions for implementation of the People Plan.

Once produced, the full People Plan will be kept regularly under review and updated on a regular annual basis.

Violence and aggression

UNISON continued its campaign to highlight the impact of violence and aggression against NHS staff throughout 2019. UNISON remains at the forefront of the debate on changes needed to reverse the trend of increasing assaults against NHS staff. Through the Social Partnership Forum for England UNISON brought forward proposals on how the NHS should tackle the issue. There is now a national group that is monitoring the implementation of violence reduction actions being taken by NHS England and Improvement.

To support the use of the Assaults against Emergency Workers Act (2018) UNISON contributed towards a Memorandum of Understanding that aims to help investigations into assaults against NHS staff acting in an emergency. In addition to supporting prosecutions, UNISON continues to promote good health and safety management and risk assessment to try and prevent assaults from taking place in the first place.

UNISON has been involved nationally and locally in the establishment of the Body Worn Camera pilot that is set to be rolled out in the English Ambulance Services over the coming years.

Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of NHS staff continues to be a priority for UNISON across the UK. UNISON influences and participates in health and wellbeing work in each devolved administration. UNISON has led or contributed to a range of health campaigns around issues such as violence and aggression, bullying, suicide and mental health.

In England, the Social Partnership Forum has continued its work on positive workforce cultures with the Call to Action on tackling bullying and harassment and violence reduction continuing to be priority.

UNISON also works on health and wellbeing issues through the formal bargaining structures and contributed to the work of the NHS Staff Council Health, Safety and Wellbeing Partnership Working Group (HSWPG). HSWPG, has produced guidance on the health impacts of shift work. It has successfully persuaded the Health & safety Executive (HSE) to carry out proactive enforcement activity on violence and manual handling in the health sector. At the time of writing a new bullying infographic is being finalised and a draft NHS Staff Council Menopause Policy is out for consultation.

NHS staff survey

UNISON continued to participate in developing and promoting the NHS staff survey for England, including holding a seat on the survey advisory group. We have been successful in pressing for better capture of information on particular factors including better measurement of staff morale.

Equalities

UNISON contributes to equalities work through policy and pay bargaining structures.

As part of the Staff Council, UNISON continues to play a key role in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sub-group (EDIG), making sure the terms and conditions handbook reflects legal progress and best practice in this area

In 2019 this work included incorporating the enhanced shared parental leave agreement into Agenda for Change terms and conditions.

UNISON is part of the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC) equality, diversity and inclusion group that will help inform the future direction of the NMC, looking across all NMC regulatory functions – Registration, Overseas, Education, Revalidation and Fitness to Practise – to identify whether there are disproportionate outcomes, by protected characteristic, in how nurses, midwives and nursing associates arrive at, move through and exit NMC processes.

Since the last annual report, the Health Group has arranged interactive sessions at SOG conferences designed to help develop and steer our campaigns on equality issues and help us assist branches to take action on equality issues in their workplaces.

UNISON continued to hold the NHS Social Partnership Forum seat on the NHS Equality and Diversity Council for England.

Race for equality

The Race for Equality Campaign was launched by the health team in October 2019. Through this campaign, UNISON wants to help staff recognise and challenge racism in the workplace. We aim to support staff – and help them support each other – as we work together to take on racism and deliver an NHS that respects and values all staff.

We want tackling racism to be a core organising and bargaining priority for health branches. There are a number of campaign materials on the dedicated webpage and these materials aim to support collective action to deliver real change in workplaces.

Staff from the health team have visited several regional health committee meetings to encourage involvement in the campaign and have also delivered a presentation at National Black Members Conference.

In addition, UNISON sponsored the 'workforce innovator' category in the inaugural BAME health and social care awards at an event held in UNISON Centre in October.

Never OK and #ustoo

In May 2019 the health service group launched a survey on unacceptable behaviour in the NHS. Part of the survey focussed on sexual harassment in the workplace. The report on the results of this part of the survey was called #NeverOK and fed into UNISON's national campaign against sexual harassment which is called #ustoo. Work with the National Women's officer on the #ustoo campaign is ongoing.

Research commissioned from the Labour Research Department by UNISON has informed new guidance on sexual harassment launched at Women's Conference on February 14th, coinciding with Heart Unions Week. This includes a 'bite-size' guide on sexual harassment and a short animated film.

We are also planning to profile UNISON's #ustoo campaign to mark International Women's Day on 8th March along with equal pay.

We will need to consider how best to take forward our asks on sexual harassment and domestic abuse in our bargaining agendas.

Protecting the rights of workers from outside the UK

There is a dedicated page on UNISON's website on the 'hostile environment and the NHS' and this continues to be a key campaigning area.

Post Brexit, UNISON continues to campaign for EU citizen rights and will continue to campaign against the hostile environment, including the health charge and will continue to highlight the impact that the hostile environment has on our members and the healthcare system.

Through our role as co-convenor of the Cavendish Coalition UNISON has influenced Home Office policy on future immigration policy. We have given evidence in Parliament about the negative impact of proposed thresholds on the sector and are engaged in discussions with social care colleagues about the impact of a points-based system on staff and providers.

Staffing levels campaign

Safe Staffing is a high-profile campaign issue for UNISON, and the health group has supported a range of work on this topic over the last year.

In terms of helping staff and teams on the frontline protect themselves and their patients we have revised our 'Be Safe' guidance to help members raise concerns when their areas are understaffed. This has been circulated around the union. Early in the winter a communication was circulated urging branches to ensure their respective employers put in place plans to maintain safe staffing throughout the season.

Safe staffing legislation is being implemented in Wales and has also now passed the Scottish parliament. The nursing and midwifery occupational group committee has been considering the impact of these bills and how best we can use them to improve staffing levels. Our public affairs agency connect is doing more in-depth research on the legislation and their provisions. We have continued lobbying parliamentarians about the need for action on safe staffing and briefed members of the House of Lords ahead of a debate in early January. UNISON's campaign was mentioned, and our specific calls made to the Government.

High level meetings have been held with other unions to discuss how we best collaborate on the issue of safe staffing. In early March a safe staffing forum has been organised with expert speakers to allow the nursing family to come together to hear the latest evidence and plan our further campaigns. We will continue building this throughout the year.

Clinical placements

In response to surveys of student members which indicated that many faced barriers to learning on their clinical placements UNISON health team produced a 'Best Practice Pledge' which holds provider organisations to high standards of support and supervision for their students.

Action plans for branches and promotional materials have been circulated to branches. East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust became the first trust to sign up to this pledge and the campaign is ongoing to urge many more organisations to commit.

Improving regulation

Future NMC strategy

Andrea Sutcliffe, the chief executive of the NMC, launched the NMC's consultation on their new 5-year strategy at our health conference last year.

UNISON has engaged extensively with this consultation through our national health team and our national nursing and midwifery committee. As well as submitting a detailed written contribution we have held bilateral meetings with directors at the NMC and have been included in extensive face to face stakeholder engagement.

Throughout we have made the case that our members wish the NMC to be fairer and more effective, to use its data intelligently to highlight areas of concern, to support a positive workplace culture and to help contribute to preventive actions to reduce the need for FTP cases.

We have also engaged extensively on their programme for registering overseas nurses, feeding back that the process needs to be fairer, more easily understandable and more supportive for overseas nurses. We are pleased that a number of our recommendations have led to improvements in the NMC's practice and are also included as significant action areas for them over the next 5 years.

HCPC Fees

UNISON continued its campaign against the HCPC's proposed 18 per cent increase of its registration renewal fee.

Our campaign work included full briefings for MPs on our concerns and more than 3000 UNISON members wrote to their MPs. As a result, a Westminster Hall Debate was held on the fees hike.

We sent further briefings to all MPs ahead of the debate and UNISON's concerns raised many times. At the end of the debate the government promised to raise concerns about transparency with the Professional Standards Authority and to ask the HCPC to look at part-time fees.

We undertook further parliamentary work, in the Scottish Parliament, and lobbied and provided briefings to all MSPs. A motion was tabled that mirrored the Early Day Motion that we had previously laid in Westminster and called the 18% fee hike "excessive and unreasonable" and "an increased tax on practising".

Our campaigning work led the Scottish cabinet secretary for health and sport to tell the HCPC that she could not support the legislation to impose the fee increase.

The HCPC therefore had to reconsider the level of fee increase and radically revise its proposals. Since then the HCPC has engaged well with UNISON and has stated that it will begin to improve its engagement with us and with registrants about future changes. The new HCPC chair attended a meeting of UNISON's Science, Therapy and Technical Committee to hear our concerns. At the time of writing, the fee increase level had not been decided though the HCPC had stated that it would be significantly lower than the originally proposed 18% per cent.

Assistant practitioners

We continue to lobby for regulation of assistant practitioners.

We have engaged with agencies – including regulators – to seek their views, conducted research, and gathered information from external agencies that supports the case for regulation, and created new recruitment literature specific to assistant practitioners.

UNISON will launch the next phase of our campaign for regulation in mid 2020.

Improving mental health services

The impact of cuts to mental health services on staff and patients was a focus of UNISON's press work at health conference last year. The survey was reported ahead of our publication of guidance for branches about broader mental health issues. Our work is designed to help branches initiate discussions with employers about prioritising the mental health of staff.

UNISON also produced an infographic from the survey findings. This resource material is available to download on the dedicated mental health campaign page and explores reasons for turnover within the mental health field.

The union's mental health matters campaign continues to call for support from Government and employers, on prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of staff, working in mental health settings.

Better hospital food

A Better hospital food campaign page is now live on the UNISON website with details of our key priorities and asks from Government.

UNISON continues to sit on NHS Improvement's hospital food strategy group on the retail, staff and visitor work stream. Here, the union is influencing the creation of mandatory food standards expected to launch later this year.

Hospital food was also the subject of the health group's UNIZONE campaign activity at National Delegate Conference, where hundreds of delegates across the union were asked to back our campaign for improved and consistent standards.

One Team campaign

The One Team Campaign continued to be a priority for the health group to highlight the importance of the whole health team, with a particular focus on operational services staff. One Team week took place from Monday 4th November – Friday 8th November. Branches and regions ordered promotional materials to give out during the week and posted about their activities on social media. We undertook an opinion poll to ask the public what they thought about the importance of operational services staff and about outsourcing. More than 2,000 people were questioned and the survey found the vast majority (78%) of people believed non-medical employees are just as important to the health service as staff who deliver treatment such as doctors, nurses and midwives; and more than three in five (63%) say it's unfair that the transfer of staff can affect the pay and conditions of workers, meaning they are in a worse position than those in equivalent roles still employed in the NHS.

UNISON promoted the aims of the One Team Campaign through our sponsorship of the Our Health Heroes awards – Operational Services Support Worker of the Year and Apprentice of the Year categories.

UNISON members Pauline Symington, a service assistant at Ulster Hospital, won the national operational services support worker of the year and Patrick Onyema, a trainee nursing associate at North East London NHS Foundation Trust, won the Apprentice of the Year award.

Hospital car parking

UNISON policy is that hospital car parking should be free for staff, patients and carers, while providing guidance about how existing charging systems can be improved for those staff who rely on their cars for work.

We continue to campaign to challenge the introduction of NHS car parking charges or increases in charges and there have been some significant local victories.

Following a manifesto commitment, the Department for Health and Social Care (England) has announced that specific groups of NHS patients, staff and carers will be able to access free car parking at hospitals. This includes disabled people, frequent out-patient attenders, parents of sick children staying overnight, and staff working night shifts. These changes are due to be introduced in April 2020.

UNISON has raised concern that no information has been provided on how these groups of patients, staff and carers will be given access to free parking or confirmed what -if any- funding will be made available to provide these additional free spaces. UNISON is participating in the stakeholder group that is developing the new system and will press for commitments that fees for staff outside the designated groups will not be increased. UNISON will continue to campaign to extend provision of free parking and make fees fairer where they remain. We will also be holding the government to account to ensure that profits made via car park charges are invested back into the NHS.

Improving your terms and conditions

Introduction to pay strategy

Work on pay this year has once again reflected the opportunities and challenges presented by operating within the UK-wide Agenda for Change framework while conducting bargaining at country level. Further challenge has resulted from having significant sections of the workforce still outsourced to private contractors and sitting outside AfC.

For directly employed NHS staff in Scotland, England and Cymru/Wales the focus since the last annual report has been on supporting regions and branches with smooth implementation of year 2 and preparation for year 3 of the pay deals. In addition, we have continued to lead staff side efforts on workstreams flowing out of the pay deal (as summarised below).

The fight for a pay deal for Northern Ireland was a high priority with full strategic and technical support provided by the service group to activists and staff in the Northern Ireland region.

For indirectly employed staff we have worked with the private contractors' unit and forum on a strategy to fight for Agenda for Change pay rises highlighting the unfairness and damage to service delivery of having these vital staff left behind.

Implementing the 2018-2021 NHS pay agreement

Pay progression

The new annex 23 for England and the new pay progression resources were agreed early in 2019. These were followed up by the production, led by UNISON, of a staff side union guide for reps on the new pay progression system.

Throughout the year we have continued to support and advise branches on implementation issues including reviewing draft policies and escalating problems through Staff Council routes as necessary.

Work is underway on member-facing materials ready for when the first pay-step reviews under the new system kick in from April 2021.

Closing Band One

The work to support staff to move from band 1 to band 2 continued through much of 2019. Regional roadshows were held to engage with health committee structures and the health group produced guidance for organisers and branches to support the rollout of the agreement. Work is continuing locally and nationally to support staff to move from band 1 into band 2.

Recent figures for England show that a significant proportion of Band One staff moved into Band 2 during 2019. More analysis is needed to look at headcount numbers and to focus on those organisations and job roles with a lower proportion of staff making the move. We delivered a programme of regional briefings for regional staff and activists covering bargaining and organising issues involved in implementing the transfer of band 1 staff to band 2 and the new pay progression policy.

Apprentice pay

After 18 months of negotiations the Staff Council concluded that it would not be possible to reach agreement on a provision for the handbook detailing pay arrangements for apprentices. The employers' concerns about the affordability of apprenticeships and problems with the apprenticeship levy proved an insurmountable barrier to reaching agreement.

We secured agreement of a joint statement on the outcome to include re-issuing the current Staff Council guidance on applying the current annex 21 of the handbook to apprentices. And we have produced a pack of materials to support branches to campaign for better treatment of apprentice pay and use Earnings Max organising approaches to get the right pay for apprentices locally.

Our policy work on apprenticeships continues to highlight the problems with the levy and the scandal of unspent levy monies being clawed back by the government – and we have linked this to naming and shaming employers using exploitative rates for apprentices.

Handbook provisions on leave

During the last year we reached agreement in the Staff Council on new provisions for the handbook on shared parental and child bereavement leave for adoption in all four countries.

At the time of writing guidance aimed at ensuring staff can access their full annual leave and TOIL entitlements was being finalised for adoption at the March NHS Staff Council meeting. The guidance is based on an earlier agreement in Scotland and is expected to be rolled out to all four countries.

A sub-group of the Staff Council looked at drawing up provisions for the handbook on what policies covering the buying and selling of annual leave should contain. The outcome was that it was not possible to agree a provision to go in the handbook but a joint statement was issued on some key principles for local partnerships, should they seek to develop this kind of policy.

Implementation in Scotland

UNISON Scotland continues to participate in the implementation of the Framework agreement through the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee. This has included reaching agreement on TOIL.

Further agreement has been reached on promoting attendance at work, implementing appraisals, organisational change, sickness absence to be paid as if at work, and new parent and child bereavement leave.

UNISON Scotland continues to lead on the Once for Scotland work programme through the Scottish workforce and staff governance committee, reviewing all cross-NHS workforce policies.

Implementation in Cymru/Wales

Pay deal work-streams largely mirrored those in England with a variation to the pay progression policy to allow exemption of first warnings from the disciplinary criterion. Agreement was reached to improve the original deal so that unsocial hours premia will be included in pay for periods of sickness exceeding six weeks. Joint work on absence reduction and health and well-being continues.

Health and social care pay in Northern Ireland

Introduction

UNISON Northern Ireland has led an inspiring and successful industrial and political campaign to restore pay parity to health and care workers in Northern Ireland.

Multiple days of strategic industrial action, combined with enormous amounts of public support and goodwill, contributed heavily to the reformation of the Northern Ireland Executive.

The offer

Following long and detailed negotiations led by UNISON between the Health Trade Unions, Northern Ireland Department of Health and HSC employers, in January 2020 the Minister for Health endorsed proposals to bring about pay parity with the NHS in England and to address safe staffing issues. These proposals cover two issues:

- Agenda for Change pay increases for 2019/20 & 2020/21 and a refresh of the AFC pay structure.

- Proposals for safe staffing.

If agreed following trade union consultations, the proposal on pay would ensure that health and social care staff in Northern Ireland have pay parity with colleagues in the NHS in England from 1 April 2019. All staff on Agenda for Change (AFC) would have the same pay rates as colleagues in England in 2019/20 and in 2020/21. Pay rates in 2019/20 would be backdated to 1st April 2019 and 2020/21 pay rates would have effect from 1 April 2020.

Member consultation

UNISON Northern Ireland launched the consultation of members working on Agenda for Change contracts. The UNISON Northern Ireland health committee recommended members vote to accept the offer endorsed by the Minister for Health, which would bring about pay parity with the NHS in England and address safe staffing issues.

Voting opened on 7 February and closed on 21 February. As this report went to print it was announced that UNISON members had overwhelmingly voted to accept the proposals, meaning that their action will restore pay parity in Northern Ireland for the first time in several years.

Implementation

Planning has begun to ensure the offer can be implemented quickly should members vote to accept it. UNISON Northern Ireland will be a key member of the Framework Delivery Group, a tripartite body of HSC employers, the department, and trade unions, which will work to ensure effective implementation of the proposals.

NHS pension

UNISON continues to defend the NHS Pension Scheme as a key benefit for all staff working in the NHS. This includes fully participating in the activities of the NHS pension boards and the NHS scheme advisory boards that cover the schemes in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The focus of work this year has been dealing with the outcome of a court ruling that found that the transitional protections introduced as part of the 2015 public sector pension scheme were discriminatory based on age. At the time of writing the NHS Pension Scheme Advisory Boards are in the process of advising their respective health departments on the remedy to correct this discrimination.

The health departments consulted on introducing scheme flexibilities that would allow high earning scheme members to manage their pensionable pay. UNISON responded to the consultation making the argument that this flexibility should apply to all scheme members. At the time of writing there has been no government response to the consultation.

A one-day course on the NHS Pension Scheme has been developed and is being rolled out across regions. Over the last year the UNISON Pensions Unit continued to support members with case work and delivered numerous workshops to branches.

Earnings Max

Earnings Max is the Health Service Group Executive's strategic organising project that aims to help branches to improve members' earnings through getting them the right pay, the right terms and conditions and enforcing their contractual rights under Agenda for Change. It has helped UNISON to rebuild expertise on Agenda for Change so we make sure we get the most from it at all levels of the union. The aim is also to build capacity and confidence through activists taking on local campaigns and sharing their successes to encourage wider participation within the union.

Members of UNISON's health group have continued to engage with regional health committees and support regions and branches to develop local campaigning, recruiting and organising plans around issues that matter to their members. In 2019, earnings max focused on the closing of band 1, apprenticeships and Job Evaluation re-banding campaigns.

JE/banding issues

UNISON continues to play an important role in the NHS Job Evaluation Group and its sub groups. This has included work on role profiles, training materials, raising concerns about access to training and poor practice.

UNISON led on a change to the job evaluation handbook which defines a staff side practitioner as someone who is 'nominated by and accountable to a local union branch and / or staff side'. As a result we have written to outsourced JE companies. We have outlined our concerns that they claim to provide staff side reps and have demanded that they withdraw this claim from their websites. We have produced a template letter for branches to use with their employer to request that job matching and evaluation is brought back in house.

We shared the results of the job evaluation survey with many branches, national and regional committees. The survey showed that whilst most branches believe their JE practice is in good shape there are real causes for concern with local capacity and poor practice. The health group have produced a JE recovery tool to assist branches in re-establishing best practice.

We have delivered job evaluation and matching training to organising staff to further develop their knowledge of the scheme and how it should be implemented locally.

A review of the emergency services profiles commenced in 2019. The review will aim to produce a suite of profiles that reflect the jobs undertaken in the ambulance services and is expected to conclude in 2021.

We have continued to provide support and advice to regions and branches on JE related issues, including re-banding campaigns, outsourcing of JE, concerns around down banding and individual cases.

National employers

NHS England and NHS Improvement

Unison continues to lead and chair staff side negotiations in NHSE through all its partnership forums and subgroups. The announcement to integrate with NHSI has revealed that they will be required to achieve a 20% saving on admin costs by 31st March 2020 within both organisations. This equates to a saving of £95.6 million.

The organisational change process has been supported throughout by Unison stewards in seven new regions across the country as well as the establishment of two new directorates.

Unison led a discussion around offering pay harmonisation for Monitor staff working within NHS Improvement ahead of the integration and those that accepted the offer have now commuted over to NHS terms and conditions. We have done some recruitment and organising on the back of this success.

Health Education England (HEE)

Unison chairs and leads the staff side on the National Partnership forum and subgroups. A TUPE transfer has taken place from outside the NHS to HEE. Pay talks have concluded successfully with the employer offering an uplift for staff that did not take up the offer to commute to AFC terms and conditions. Stewards have been recruiting new members on the back of this.

Commissioning Support Units

Unison leads the staff side talks at the National Partnership forum and its subgroups. CSU's are expecting the 20 per cent running cost reduction requirements for clinical commissioning groups to be passed on to them with a lower number of new contracts although this has been mitigated by the work they have picked up supporting NHSE and I with their integration in response to calls from us to work more collaboratively to mitigate job losses.

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT)

Significant organisational change is underway in a number of directorates. The Unison Blood Forum have worked very hard keeping all the strands together to minimise job losses, reduce incidence of privatisation and support members in the work place.

Public Health England

UNISON negotiated a pay uplift for all AFC legacy staff, implemented and backdated to April 2019. This is the first uplift for this group of staff since a static TUPE transfer in 2013. UNISON has also secured a commitment to annual pay negotiations, making collective bargaining functional within this employer.

Indirectly employed staff

Wholly owned subsidiaries

UNISON continues to oppose the creation of NHS wholly owned subsidiary companies in England. In the last year, our well-established campaign has helped lead the fight against staff being transferred out of the NHS. A revised briefing was published in August 2019 to support branches who the use of NHS Improvement's guidance for trust looking to set up subcos.

Three weeks of strike action in June 2019 in Bradford demonstrated the strength of feeling amongst members. Success was achieved in November 2019, when subco plans were dropped.

Strong campaigning led to good consultative ballot results in Frimley with a 99% yes vote on 72% turnout in October 2019. Ongoing talks with the Trust to identify alternative plans continue. Nationally, political pressure and lobbying continues in order to raise awareness about the damaging impact subcos have on the NHS, patients, and staff.

UNISON also won access to the NHS Pension Scheme for those staff already employed within Wholly Owned Subsidiary companies, with the first batch of staff due to join the NHS PS from 1 April 2020.

Private contractors providing services in the NHS

Last year saw increasing activity by branches to put pressure on NHS Trusts and private contractors to ensure that the second and third year of the Agenda For Change pay deal to be implemented on a comparable basis to the three year NHS pay agreement. Some NHS Trusts funded the increases to enable private contractors to implement the pay deal, but in other areas industrial action put pressure on private companies to come to the table to negotiate.

At the current time consideration is being given to how to escalate the campaign to secure the agreement for indirectly employed NHS staff on all remaining NHS contracts, including industrial action.

UNISON surveyed 226 NHS Trusts in England to establish the extent of private contractors delivering outsourced services in the NHS. At the time of writing only 149 NHS Trusts responded despite continuous chasing for information.

The 3 year agreement had been secured for some private contractor staff in some NHS Trusts, either as a result of ROE arrangements or where there is a contractual or dynamic link to

Agenda for Change in operation but the campaign for all private contractor staff to receive Agenda for Change rates and back pay continues.

Supporting members as decision makers

Recruitment

2019 saw the highest recruitment figures in health for several years – even higher than the total we hit in 2018.

UNISON health service joiners	2019
Eastern	5,420
East Midlands	4,021
Greater London	7,157
Northern	4,483
UNISON Northern Ireland	5,718
North West	10,984
Scotland	7,549
South East	5,706
South West	4,642
Cymru/Wales	3,730
West Midlands	6,518
Yorkshire and Humberside	6,145
All UNISON health	72,073

Health Service Group Executive (HSGE)

The role of the HSGE is to oversee the implementation of policy and to consider issues arising in relation to pay, terms and conditions, recruitment and organising, campaigning, and professional issues relevant to members.

The HSGE met four times during the period covered by this report including the annual general meeting in July at which the Chairing team were elected. HSGE working groups were also convened to support the work of the committee. In particular the Agenda for Change Working Group and Devolution Working Group met frequently in order to oversee work on NHS pay and provide reports and recommendations to the wider Executive.

The HSGE agreed a work programme for 2019/20, setting strategic themes for our activities, including identifying priority areas of work in line with conference decisions and UNISON's four overall objectives set by the National Executive Committee.

2019 also marked the end of the previous NEC electoral cycle, with new terms of office for NEC places on the Health Service Group Executive beginning at the end of June that year.

Regional and occupational representatives on the Health Service Group Executive will end their two-year term in June 2020. Elections are currently underway and successful candidates will take up their seats on the HSGE following National Delegate Conference 2020.

Occupational groups

Ambulance

The national ambulance occupational group met 3 times during the year covered in this report.

The National Ambulance Strategic Partnership Forum (NASPF) continues to meet 3 times a year. UNISON holds the chair of this group.

UNISON continues to build its campaign around the use of ambulances in bus lanes. Local authorities have been contacted about their current policies, and this information is being collated to inform the creation of resources, for branch local campaigns.

Operational services

The operational services occupational group met for three ordinary meetings during the year covered in this report.

Nursing and midwifery

The national nursing and midwifery occupational group has met three times during the year covered in this report.

Science, technical and therapy (STAT)

The science, technical and therapy (STAT) occupational group met three times during the period covered by this report.

Partner organisations

British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT)

UNISON continued to work closely with the British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT), providing industrial relations support to its members and fulfilling BAOT's trade union function. UNISON continued to raise relevant policy and industrial relations issues affecting occupational therapy staff across a range of stakeholder bodies. This includes representing BAOT as a trade union at the NHS Staff Council, through Social Partnership structures, and in the submission of evidence to the Pay Review Body (PRB).

The national BAOT Stewards Panel (made up of representative BAOT/UNISON stewards from across the UK), met three times during the year to discuss bargaining, organisational and campaigning issues relevant to BAOT members and to contribute to an ongoing work plan.

The annual BAOT stewards' training seminar organised by UNISON, took place in November. The event was successful and generated positive feedback from the stewards who attended. UNISON continued to work closely with BAOT to encourage members to volunteer to become trade union stewards, and to actively participate in their UNISON branch.

Managers in Partnership (MiP)

Managers in Partnership (MiP), UNISON's joint venture with the FDA, has 6,000 members working in health and care management throughout the UK (in the NHS, at band 8 and above).

In the last year MiP has prioritised a steward-based approach to organising and campaigning, supporting and training more MiP stewards and representatives locally, and re-launched its website and digital communications.

MiP continues to lead national work by the Social Partnership Forum on tackling workplace bullying and harassment.

College of Operating Department Practitioners (CODP)

The College of Operating Department Practitioners, whilst maintaining a distinct identity, is a full part of UNISON under the Science, Technical and Therapy (STAT) occupational group. UNISON has continued to demonstrate the vital role it plays as the professional body for operating department practitioners (ODPs), in particular being at the forefront of the national patient safety agenda.

The CODP Professional Council meets three times a year delivering a professional and organising work programme. The professional council and continues to promote their profession amongst members of the public and their healthcare colleagues. A national symposium at the UNISON Centre was held in 2019 attended by ODPs from around the country.

2020 is the 75th anniversary year of the College and a number of activities are planned. Building on the success of the second National ODP day in May 2019, plans are in place to make the #ODPday 2020 even bigger. In June 2020 a professional seminar and evening celebration is being planned to mark this very special occasion.

The last six years have seen a year on year increase in the number of student ODPs recruited. New recruitment and promotional materials, a revamp of the website and increases in social media profile have helped increase the professional profile of the College. UNISON will continue to highlight the vital role of ODPs and will continue its efforts to actively recruit and retain these members.

European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

EPSU is the recognised European social partner organisation for workers in the hospital and health care sector throughout Europe. In the wake of the UK EU referendum, it has never been more important to stand alongside our sister trade unions across Europe, as we fight to protect and extend the rights of all workers, wherever they decide to live.

UNISON, together with SIPTU (Ireland) played a major role in hosting, organising and coordinating a seminar for EPSU affiliates in February on the subject of organising the HCA workforce. This brought together over 40 delegates from 14 countries to talk through their perspectives and ideas on organising this section of our members. Out of the seminar it is hoped a network will emerge which will facilitate the continuing exchange of good practice in this area and allow for coordination of efforts on a European level to ensure dignity and better recognition for healthcare assistants.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Conference resolutions

Each year the Service Group Executive agrees a set of actions to prioritise and implement the resolutions from conference. This grid sets out progress against these actions. In the status column, **Achieved** indicates that all of the actions have been completed; **In progress** describes actions which have been started but not completed or where the actions called for are long term; **To Do** indicates that actions have not yet been started at the time of writing; **Overtaken** by events describes those actions which are no longer possible or relevant.

Most of the status updates are “in progress,” as most of the conference motions call for continuous activity.

Resolution	Status
Negotiating and bargaining: Agenda for Change, pay, terms and conditions	
NHS workers in Northern Ireland continue the fight to close the Pay gap	Achieved
Winning for low-paid staff – delivering the closure of Band 1: learning and career progression	In progress
Recruitment and retention crisis in the South East	In progress
Building our pay claim for 2021	In progress
Pay determination beyond 2022	In progress
Are we ready for collective bargaining?	In progress
Outsourcing of Agenda for Change Job Matching and Consistency Checking	In progress
Are you on the right band? Ambulance career pathways underpinned by Job Evaluation	In progress
Equal pay for work of equal value" for Paramedics in Northern Ireland	In progress
Ambulance Staff Retirement Age	In progress
NHS Pay for NHS Workers	In progress
Defend the NHS pension scheme	In progress
Health and wellbeing	
Health and Wellbeing of Staff – the Role of Occupational Health Departments	In progress
Mental Health	Complete
Mental Health Work Load and Staff Burn Out	In progress

Mental Health Awareness	In progress
Mental Health	Complete
Black members and the stigma of workplace mental health	In progress
Undiagnosed conditions going unnoticed in the NHS are causing problems for staff	In progress
End the Bullying Culture	In progress
Bullying a collective call to action	In progress
Supporting our workforce through the menopause	In progress
Mandatory Flu Vaccinations	In progress
Legalisation of abortion provision and zero tolerance of misogynistic demonstrations in and around health centres and hospitals	In progress
Better hospital food and good public health	In progress
Equalities issues	
Addressing the race equality gap for NHS staff	In progress
Drilling down of sexism culture within the NHS	In progress
The NHS England Workforce Disability Equality Standard	In progress
Health & Wellbeing of Staff in NHS	In progress
Health employers and Workplace Adjustment Passports	In progress
Defend the rights of transgender patients and members	In progress
Professional and occupational issues	
Line management	In progress
Assistant Practitioner regulation	In progress
Safe staffing and legislation	In progress
What is safe staffing in ambulance services?	In progress
Brexit and the Implications for Healthcare Staff	In progress
Healthcare student funding	In progress
Education and training for allied health professionals	In progress
Volunteering in the NHS	In progress
Menstruation, dignity and mental health care	In progress

Use of Bus Lanes by Ambulances	In progress
Care workers and the use of surveillance equipment	In progress
NHS charges	In progress
Digital Technology in the NHS	In progress
Recruitment and organising	
Young workers	In progress
Engaging Low Paid Women workers	In progress
Campaigning and promoting UNISON and Defending the NHS	
A Strategic Plan to defend the NHS	In progress
NHS in England - next steps (STP's/ ICS'S)	In progress
Integration of health and social care	In progress
Reorganisation without end: NHS commissioning and the arms length bodies	In progress
NHS cuts	In progress
NHS Wholly Owned Subsidiary Companies	In progress
Pay up now! For all NHS Workers	In progress
NHS land is a public asset	In progress
Health Care is not a business for profit	In progress
Calling time on the Lansley Act	In progress

Appendix 2 Publications and submissions

The Health Group produced a number of publications and submitted responses to consultations in the period covered by this report. A new system for circulating health circulars to branches was implemented in 2019.

Date	Type	Title
Regular	Newsletter	One Team Campaign
Regular	Newsletter	News for HEE staff
Regular	Newsletter	News for NHS England staff
Regular	Newsletter	News for NHSBT staff
Regular	Newsletter	News for PHE staff
Regular	Newsletter	STAT newsletter
Regular	Guidance	Nursing associate briefings
Regular	Bulletin	Regular bulletin for BAOT Stewards
Regular	Newsletter	Monthly News item for Royal College of Occupational
Regular	Article	Ambulance Today
Regular	Newsletter	CODP Newsletter
Regular	Newsletter	Nursing family newsletter
Annual	Newsletter	Health student newsletter
April	Submission	NHS England consultation on possible changes to NHS
April	Submission	House of Commons Health and Social Care Select Committee inquiry on the NHS Long Term Plan
June	Submission	Labour Party NPF consultation, "Rebuilding a Public NHS"
November	Publication	NHS land is a public asset – UNISON research report
December	Publication	Be Safe
February	Consultation	Look forward – how NHS pay rises should be set

Appendix 4 Membership of health group committees and UNISON staff

HSGE membership

Region	Name
Eastern	Joyce Aldridge
Eastern	Samantha Hemraj
Eastern	Paul Pearson
East Midlands	Liz Potter
East Midlands	Roz Norman
East Midlands	Lynn Booth
Greater London	Beatrice Boateng
Greater London	Mike Davey
Greater London	Janet Maiden
Northern	Tanya Pretswell
Northern	Maria Alberts
Northern	John Malcolm
Northern Ireland	Roberta Magee
Northern Ireland	Maura McKenna
Northern Ireland	Jill Weir
North West	Su Edwards
North West	Karen Reissmann
North West	Diane Cawood
Scotland	Wilma Brown
Scotland	Tam Waterson
Scotland	Julie Ballantyne
South East	Steve Bell
South East	Jane Lacey

South West	Trudie Martin
South West	Mark Wareham
Cymru/Wales	Libby Nolan
Cymru/Wales	Ian Thomas
West Midlands	Jenny Harvey
West Midlands	Edward Woolley
West Midlands	Janet Smith
Yorkshire & Humberside	Denise Carr
Yorkshire & Humberside	Adrian O'Malley
Yorkshire & Humberside	Katie Hodgson
Ambulance	Bryn Webster
Nursing & Midwifery	Christine Sullivan
Operational Services	George Barron
STAT	Gemma Jones
NEC	James Anthony
NEC	Gordon McKay
NEC	Claire Dixon
NEC	Pat Heron
BAOT (Co-opted)	Peter Hewin

Occupational group committee membership

Ambulance	
Region	Name
Eastern	Jessica Micallef
East Midlands	Chris Klus
Greater London	Eddie Brand
North West	Ali Long
Northern	Jeff Gorman
Northern Ireland	Joel Byers
Scotland	Jo Fowles
South East	Stevie Gilroy
South West	Peter Green
Cymru/Wales	Damon Turner
West Midlands	Peter Steventon
Yorkshire & Humberside	Bryn Webster

Nursing and midwifery	
Region	Name
East Midlands	Surinder Gidda
Eastern	Joyce Aldridge
Greater London	Mike Davey
North West	Christine Sullivan
Northern	Sylvia Cowan
Northern Ireland	Alan Philson
Scotland	Margo Cranmer
South East	Shane Nevett
South West	Trudie Martin
Cymru/Wales	Kerry Macdonald
West Midlands	Steve Jones
Yorkshire & Humberside	Anne Cherry

Operational services	
Region	Name
East Midlands	Denise Vasey
Eastern	Ian Thomas
Greater London	Jim Mansfield
North West	Jean Blevin
Northern	George Barron
Northern Ireland	John Murray
Scotland	Frances Carmichael
South East	Sean Sawyer
South West	Alison Evans
Cymru/Wales	Stefan Sinese
West Midlands	Andy Chaffer
Yorkshire & Humberside	Katie Hodgson

Science, technical and therapy	
Region	Name
East Midlands	Cheryl Mann
Eastern	Vacant
Greater London	Gemma Jones
North West	Michelle England
Northern	Lucy Knightley
Northern Ireland	Steven McNeill
Scotland	Reg Lloyd
South East	Steve Bell
South West	Lyn Ward
Cymru/Wales	Ruby Miller
West Midlands	Vacant
Yorkshire & Humberside	Andrew Chamberlain

UNISON health group staff

UNISON health group	
Name	Role
Bea Adi	Assistant national officer
Sharan Bandesha	Assistant national officer
June Chandler	National officer
Louise Chinnery	National officer
Nick Entwistle	Assistant national officer
Sara Gorton	National secretary
Hassan Govia	Team administrator
Val Johnston	Assistant national officer
Celestine Laporte	National officer
Richie Lewis	Assistant national officer
Alan Lofthouse	National officer
Hanna Najeme	Team administrator
Helga Pile	Senior national officer
Colm Porter	National officer
Stuart Tuckwood	National officer

UNISON NHS arms-length bodies fighting fund project team	
Name	Role
Jo Spear	National officer