UNISON, the UK’s largest health union, has described the decision to stage the pay rise for nurses, midwives, paramedics and other health professionals as “a real let down.”

Members across the country have given the settlement an overwhelming and angry thumbs down, with many urging industrial action.

And many members who work in non-clinical services will be even more angry to find that the first meeting to discuss their pay increase is not scheduled until the end of April – well into the new pay year.

UNISON’s Health Service Group Executive has decided to leave a final decision on what form of action should be taken to force payment of the full review body award.

Our branch committee discussed the issue, and expressed deep concern over the staging of the 2.5% award proposed by the Pay Review Body.

“There was a feeling that if the full 2.5% had been paid in straightforward fashion that could have been acceptable, but the staging slashes the value of the increase this year to 1.9%, while inflation is running in excess of 4%,” says Branch Secretary Stuart Egan.

“We feel UNISON should be taking some form of action, and not just sit back and take it. “We are also angry at the way the increase this year to 1.9% is being used as an argument for a smaller basic increase. “A4C was supposed to be a straightforward fashion that everyone gets an increment – not just sit back and take it.”

Brighton later this month: the Executive is tabling a motion calling for action short of a strike to force payment of the full review body award.

UNISON’s Head of Health Karen Jennings promised a wide consultation on how the union should respond, and spoke of the “disappointment” of staff who “for the second year in a row are being asked to accept a pay increase well below inflation.

“This award amounts to nothing more than a pay cut. We are all paying more for our household bills and this increase will be eaten up by inflation and leave many nurses struggling.

“It is ironic that just today nurses have been told their professional registration fees are going up from £43 to £76 a year – a 76% increase and the health care professionals’ council is to follow suit. Where is the justice in that?”
Women in UNISON

Would you like to meet other members of Cardiff & Vale NHS Branch?
To know more about women’s issues and bring along your ideas.
To attend interesting events across Wales.
Women in Cardiff & Vale meet regularly and we would welcome your participation.
The next meeting is planned for May.
For further information please contact Anne O’Regan Women’s Officer .
E-mail: anneoregan@msn.com
Mobile: 0781 5561932

Disability group launched

Sharon Chapman
UNISON is in the process of setting up a group of its members interested in getting involved in disability issues.
All interested members will be asked to join us at an informal committee meeting held approximately every two months at different sites across the Trust.
The aim is to focus on problems that our members with disabilities face within their working day, and attempt to enlighten other staff members and managers on different ways of approaching these issues to reach a satisfactory resolution for all concerned.
Each call received will remain confidential, and will only be addressed with the agreement of the member concerned.
If you would like more information, become involved or just highlight an issue please contact Sharon on 079 1816 0605.

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Women’s Aid: union lends support to Vale project

Anne O’Regan

The Vale of Glamorgan Women’s Aid has been the leading specialist provider of domestic abuse services operating in the county since it was founded in 1992.
The organisation provides information, support, and temporary emergency accommodation to women and their children who are experiencing domestic abuse.
The VGWA refuge direct access refuge can accommodate only five women and their children, but is the only refuge of its kind in the county.
The refuge is constantly full and the demand for places continues on a daily basis.
Many women fleeing domestic abuse do so suddenly, their departure precipitated by a crisis, therefore it is important that the refuge provides swift access to a welcoming and homely environment.
The VGWA are currently investigating the possibility of a second stage refuge for the Vale of Glamorgan.
The second stage refuge would provide much needed spaces, and would enable the organisation to cope with the high demand for refuge accommodation.
The VGWA also facilitates the Freedom Programme for service users, and has an education and training programme which raises the awareness of domestic abuse issues across the Vale of Glamorgan in schools, St. Athan Station, VoG Magistrates, health workers, statutory agencies and voluntary groups.
The VGWA aims to promote self-help, enabling women to make their own decisions and gain confident independence from abusive situations.
We operate an open door policy and equality of opportunity for all potential service users.
Since 2001 6,553 women and children have accessed our services.

Imagine a personal ad that says...
“Male seeks strong, independent female.
Likes: putting you down, humiliating you, using threats, violence and intimidation to get his own way.
Dislikes: your friends, family, and children.”
No one would respond to this ad, but in reality one in four women in the UK experience a relationship like this at some point in their lifetime.
Domestic abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual or financial.
It’s an ongoing pattern of controlling behaviour that affects every aspect of a person’s life, undermining self esteem and isolating them from sources of support.
Cardiff Women’s Aid (CWA) supports women and children who have experienced domestic abuse.
Women can drop in or phone the CWA Information and Advice Centre on Monday and Wednesdays from 9am to 7pm or on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9am to 4:30pm.
The development of an out-of-hours Information Centre drop-in is a recent expansion of their service and has been supported by Cardiff and Vale NHS UNISON Branch who have provided funding for a new poster campaign.
At the CWA Information Centre women can access information and support regarding their experiences of domestic abuse, and find out about choices available to them.
CWA also has a 24-hour emergency on-call service, which can assist women experiencing domestic abuse to locate safe emergency temporary accommodation for them and their children.
CWA has a range of services such as: direct access refuge (a safe house for women with or without children who have experienced domestic abuse), outreach (support at home), counselling, and support groups.
If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, please contact CWA at 029 2046 0566 (24 hours a day) or visit us at 16 Mora Terrace, Cardiff.

Win a luxury break in Monte Carlo

Enter ULA’s fantastic free prize draw and you could enjoy a three night break for two to Monte Carlo, the Queen of the Riviera.
There is also another form of slavery: forced marriages.
I attended a conference in Newport on the racist phenomenon of ‘honour’ based violence.
The speakers referred to forced marriages being the main cause of honour based violence; one speaker said young Muslim and Asian women have more to fear from their families than from domestic abuse.
There is a group in Cardiff that offers support to young Muslim and Asian women who fear they could be victims of this new illegal practice in the UK.
The group is named Saheli, it is an all Wales association.
I hope as a branch we will continue to work with and support the group to publicise the good work they do.
When the Agenda for Change agreement was first sent out for discussion, one of the elements that caused the most controversy was the radical plan to reshape payments for unsocial hours which may face a ballot to assess the proposals, which are scheduled to go to a

The long and winding road to the full roll-out of Agenda for Change is now expected to last into 2008, with progress faltering on the assimilation of staff to the new pay bands.

“The introduction of the electronic staff record in the second quarter of this year was a key milestone to facilitate a fair and transparent regional reporting process to annually pay scales can find themselves getting out of their new pay band, while staff assigned to night work are losing out, because the increments are not protected.

UNISON has said that Whitley increments should be protected,” says Stuart, “but the Trust can’t decide this on its own. It needs a proper agreement to discuss the matter.

“We will continue to work for the introduction of a system which would ensure that the Whitley pay scales and the pay banding process are respected in the Trust.”

The new proposals

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Table 1: Current (ex-Whitley) Unsocial Hours Scheme: 

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The drive is on for an alternative in Wales to the privatization and market-style “reforms” which are being forced through in public services in England.

In March UNISON convened a seminar on Making the Connections which looked at ways of keeping public services firmly in the public sector, but improving the way they work.

This sounds good, but represents a challenge: Wales has been divided into three regions, each of which is expected to move towards sharing and centralizing services such as payroll.

The Trust Board has commissioned consultants from PriceWaterhouseCooper to conduct a series of reviews of six service areas, some concluding in the second half of last year brought the assurance that the Trust Board and get them to agree to release people who are needed to work on completing A4C.

“I argued that the Trust throws money at every other target,” says Stuart, “but the process is almost at the end of stage one and we are getting the first letter out to individuals on the outcomes of the banding process. 11,000 out of 12,500 staff have now had letters with some smaller departments following soon.

“The problem is that along with every Trust in Wales we received a letter from the Welsh Assembly telling us that the assimilation of matched posts had to be achieved by the end of March, with payment of areas completed within 3 months of receiving A4C pay. We were told that all job matching reviews had to be completed by June, and posts requiring Job Analysis Questionnaires to be completed by October.

“We responded that we couldn’t do this, and asked if they could help. So far we have had no reply.

“But this did enable me to raise the matter at the Trust Board and get them to agree to release people who are needed to work on completing A4C.

“It seemed as if ancillary staff on Band 1 will stand to gain or stand still than there are many different sectors of staff that in the previous Whitley provisions remaining in the new system will also mean that any improvements in flexibility and the funding).

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The gift that has gone on giving ... More lives saved by our shipments to Chad

In Chad, they have a saying: "A woman who is pregnant has one foot in the grave." If you are a woman in Chad, your lifetime chance of dying in pregnancy or childbirth is 1 in 11, compared to 1 in 5000 in Britain. One midwife in Chad a woman who has been trying to change this horrifying statistic is obstetrician Dr Grace Kodindo, who oversees more than 1,000 births a year at the General Hospital of N'Djamena, Chad's capital. But her hospital's maternity unit cannot offer its patients oxygen or resuscitation equipment. Supplies of surgical and infection prevention equipment are practically non-existent.

On Thursday 1st March, we walked through the hospital grounds and were met by one of the midwives who had been at the teaching session which we had held on birth complications. We were aware that this slim, petite, beautiful young woman, dressed in the bright pink uniform with which we had become familiar, was able to speak and understand a small amount of English.

She pleaded with us to continue coming to train them when Dr Grace Kodindo left to take up her new position at Columbia University in New York.

She looked at us and said, "Before you came (in Nov 2005) women were dying, dying, dying... And then it all stopped! Now they are alive!"

We assured her that we would continue to support them for as long as they want.
UNISON links up to offer solidarity around the world

Steve Belcher
UNISON International Officer
Cymru/Wales Region

As many of you may know our colleague Stan Rupa retired from his post in UNISON last autumn. Following his departure I was asked by the Regional Secretary to continue the work that Stan did with UNISON’s Regional committee. I think it would be useful however to first give a brief outline on UNISON’s International Department at Mabledon Place.

The work of the International Unit falls into the following areas:

Contact with unions abroad
UNISON has links with sister unions throughout the world, and runs UNISON branches in touch with their counterparts in Europe and further afield. Learning from other trade unions is a vital way of strengthening our own movement.

Solidarity work
Solidarity means speaking out when fellow trade unionists are under threat - in Colombia, Burma or Zimbabwe, for instance. Solidarity also means helping sister trade unions to build their organisations on their own terms.

Working with international organisations.
UNISON is affiliated to several international trade union organisations including Public Services International (PSI) Union Network International (UNI) and The European Public Service Union (EPSU). The International Unit co-ordinates UNISON’s work to promote the policies and interests of its members through these organisations and other international bodies.

Many unions in different parts of the world face similar challenges to our own: privatisation, equality, fighting racism. A key role of the International Unit is to keep UNISON informed about international developments on these kinds of issues so that we can better look after members’ interests.

The unit also handles requests from sister unions who want to learn from UK experience.

And the International Unit helps to develop and promote the union’s policies on key international issues.

UNISON International Development Fund
2006 saw the first year of UNISON’s International Development Fund (UIDF) this is a fund that allows us to give practical assistance to sister unions throughout the world. It is supported by UNISON’s affinity organisations i.e. Thompsons, Frizzells and ULA.

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International contacts in the region.
There is certainly an appetite amongst colleagues to get more involved and to raise UNISON’s profile in the region insofar as international issues are concerned.

An international contacts meeting was held in Mid Wales at the beginning of February. David McNaughton from Flint was elected to Chair the group whilst Pat Isherwood from Powys was elected as Secretary. At the meeting it was agreed that the region should affiliate to the following organisations:

- Justice for Colombia Campaign
- Cuban Solidarity Campaign
- Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign
- Venezuelan Information Centre
- Palestine Solidarity Campaign

It was also agreed at that meeting to arrange a fringe meeting for the October policy weekend. It is hoped that a speaker can be agreed from the Justice for Colombia Campaign.

The Cardiff & Vale UNISON Health Branch has a proud record when it comes to international issues, not least the amazing work that Angela Gorman has performed in Chad.

I recently met with key officials from the Branch Executive committee to give a report on UNISON’s activities. The branch has an International Officer in Salena Williams who I am in touch with. Salena can be reached on salena.williams@hotmail.com.

If any members has a query or question that they’d like to put to me please contact me on the email below.

Together we can maintain UNISON’s positive role in International trade union issues.

s.belcher@union.co.uk

Richard Jenkins-
Cook
Security/Portering
Department
Llandough Hospital

What is identity theft?
It is quite simply someone stealing your identity for fraudulent purposes. The most recent figures issued by the Home Office suggest that identity fraud costs the UK economy a staggering £1.7 billion per annum. How is this done?

Criminals can steal your identity and personal information by any of the following methods:

- Finding lost or stolen important documents such as passports or driving licences in your name.
- Going through your rubbish and finding letters and items sent to you. (People have already been arrested for this).
- Stealing mail addressed to you from your bank, credit card issuer or building society.
- Accessing your computer without your knowledge.

How can I prevent this?

- Check bank, building society and credit card statements as soon as they arrive and if they show transactions that you do not recognise, telephone the pertinent company and register your concern.
- Cancel all lost or stolen credit or bank cards immediately.
- Inform the authorities if your driving licence or passport is lost or stolen. If you think your mail is being stolen, contact your local police port. If you lose your driving licence or passport or driving licence, inform the Majesty’s Stationery Office.
- If you want further information, this can be obtained from major banks, from Her Majesty’s Stationery Office (HMMD) or if you have access to a computer, through the internet on the comprehensive website www.identitytheft.org.uk.

Currently identity theft is one of the fastest-growing crimes in the UK. Make sure you are aware of the facts and of the necessary measures to protect yourself.

Don’t be a victim of identity theft!

Some examples of the projects funded by UIDF are:

- Zambia - HIV/AIDS project
- Cambodia - Challenging exploitation in textile factories
- Guyana - Organising women and young workers in the union.
- Malawi - Anti privatisation of water campaigns.

Regional Work
Since taking over the remit for the Regional International Committee I have made contact with all Branch secretaries and local UNISON representatives to offer solidarity up to offer solidarity around the world.

Steve Belcher
UNISON International Officer
Cymru/Wales Region

Don’t be a victim of identity theft!

People of Iraq (above) and Palestine (below) need our support: UNISON also supports progressive change in Venezuela
Knowledge and Skills Framework: what members need to know

Kathy Unal

The intention of the KSF is to ensure a fully competent, modern and confident workforce providing first class health care to our patients, visitors and wider community.

To date the KSF Leads and sub group members (along with HRM, Managers, Management level work based staff) have been working in partnership to implement the KSF across our organisation.

98% of staff have a draft KSF outline which to date the approval panel have been consistent checking, along with signing off outlines ready for reviewers/reviewees to commence the Annual Performance Development Reviews.

We have trained over 4,000 reviewers, and reviewer sessions are also being cascaded out to staff within their workplaces which will enable them to gain an understanding of the KSF.

Have you seen your KSF OUTLINE and DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR DESIGNATED REVIEWER IS?

If NOT PLEASE ASK YOUR LINE MANAGER FOR THIS INFORMATION.

What is the KSF?

The KSF is about life long learning and development for ALL STAFF. It is designed to be a fair and objective framework on which to base a review. The KSF can support the Trust’s healthcare services by:

- Improving the quality of Patient Services
- Improving the Delivery of Services
- Evaluating your learning and development process

The KSF Development Review is for all staff, and it can:

- Identify the knowledge and skills required for a post.
- Enable staff to make the best of their talents/abilities
- Offer an opportunity for all staff to develop their potential, and provide career opportunities.

The purpose of the KSF is to:

- Develop the knowledge and skills of staff so that services continue to improve.
- Support effective learning and development of individuals and teams
- Support the development of individuals in their post so they work effectively
- Promote Equality

The KSF will enable individuals to:

- Be clear about the knowledge and skills they need to apply in order to meet the demands of their job
- Identify and access appropriate learning and development for their work

The KSF will help organisations to:

- Have a clear picture of the knowledge and skills that exist in their organisation by using a common framework and plan and how to address it
- Be better able to make the best use of staff to ensure quality healthcare services are being delivered effectively
- Improve recruitment and retention by using the information as a tool to attract recruitment needs.

The Annual Development Process:

All Staff will undergo an Annual Review and they will be informed of their review date in order to prepare for the meeting.

The development review takes annually but can be supplemented by follow-up meetings with your reviewer to access your progress.

"Me and MY Personal Development Review"

During your review meeting it may be decided that some type of learning or training is needed to help you develop skills in a particular area (dimensions) in order for you to progress towards your meeting the full requirements of the post outline.

What is a KSF outline?

A KSF outline is a document that contains information describing the knowledge and skills that apply to your current NPS post.

The post outline is based on the knowledge and skills that need to be applied in the post; it does not describe the individual post holder.

The outline is made up of dimensions, levels and indicators and examples of application.

The KSF post outlines are developed and agreed in partnership throughout the process.

All staff will have the 6 Core Dimensions attached to their KSF outline, with specific dimensions attached to the core up to a maximum of 6.
Free training courses – there for the asking

Through the Welsh Assembly Government, Talk Training is able to deliver funded training packages to employers throughout Wales. UNISON has been keen to ensure that Cardif & Vale Trust takes advantage of this offer, and arranges courses for staff as part of its training programme.

The Informer spoke with Talk Training Business Development Manager Steve Wensley, a former engineering industry manager who now works with a team of around 80 colleagues to deliver training services to around 200 clients in South Wales, including the NHS.

“We tailor our packages to meet the role of the employees, and deliver suitable qualifications for the role they play in the organisation,” says Steve.

“It’s a modern, practical way of delivering qualifications.”

Staff no longer have to trek down to an FE College course on a wet winter evening; they can get their training in the workplace.

“My role is to meet with eligible customers and ascertain their training needs. I then source suitable available funding. Normally my first client contact is with the manage- ment, but in Cardif it was UNISON that made the first move...”

In the Cardif & Vale Trust “we are taking full advantage of accessing this training dovetails with the Knowledge and Skills Framework, which is identifying training needs.”

Talk Training aims to minimise disruption – and there is no cost to the NHS. Courses run most efficiently with a minimum of five learners. The Assembly decision to plough resources into training flowed from shock figures showing that a massive 40% of the Welsh adult population is currently below Key Skills Level 1, with big gaps in literacy and numeracy.

Karen Unal

New LLL Reps

Gareth Taylor and Manta Lenahan (left) have just joined the team promoting education and training, as Life Long Learning reps. Both work at Llandough Hospital, Manta in the Lung Function department, while Gareth works in portering/security.

Manta is especially concerned to fill in the gaps in training that have arisen in some departments in the Trust. Gareth got involved through talking to a UNISON Life Long Learner, and decided to become one himself to help other members get into education.

UNISON has been at the forefront of the drive for training, especially for low paid staff who may have missed out on education early on.

“We have exceeded our targets for bringing members into education and training,” says branch education officer Kathy Unal.

“We reintroduce people to the experience of learning,” says Steve. “They can work at their own pace, and gain the confidence and skills that they require to carry out their job more competently.”

Kathy says some staff come back from courses with a new approach, questioning the quality of some of the services they deliver.

“Training will benefit all departments. We have to persuade some managers to free up staff for the time they need. If one ward can manage to release staff for 2 hours a week, why can’t others? “We are pointing out to financial directors that there is access to funding, and they will easily recoup the value of 2 hours a week for staff training in improved morale and more effective working.”
Don’t delay, join today!

Your chance to join Britain’s biggest health care union

UNISON provides free professional indemnity insurance of up to £1 million for a wide range of health service professionals, including nurses, ambulance staff, PTAs and PTBs.

FREE indemnity insurance

UNISON provides free professional indemnity insurance of up to £1 million for a wide range of health service professionals, including nurses, ambulance staff, PTAs and PTBs.

Ten good reasons to join UNISON

If you are not already a trade union member, then why not consider joining UNISON?! Here are TEN good reasons for doing so:

1. UNISON represents nearly 1.5 million employees across Britain, making us the biggest trade union in Britain. We only recruit people who work to provide services to the public.
2. UNISON’s trained representatives provide free support and advice on any problems you might have at work.
3. UNISON provides professional negotiators to sort out your pay and terms and conditions of employment both nationally and locally.
4. UNISON membership brings free legal representation for accidents at work while travelling to and from work, and free representation on other employment related issues.
5. We also offer legal advice for domestic and other problems at much reduced rates. UNISON’s trained health and safety representatives provide free services to make your workplace safe to be in.
6. UNISON pays benefits to members, including accident and death benefits.
7. UNISON looks after you. We provide convalescent facilities at our own family holiday centre in Devon, as well as our travel club, as well as breakaway holidays through our travel club.
8. UNISON offers great range of financial services. These include reduced mortgages, home, car and holiday insurance, legal rescue, personal loans, credit cards and financial planning advice.
9. UNISON provides a wide range of competitive financial services. These include reduced mortgages, home, car and holiday insurance, legal rescue, personal loans, credit cards and financial planning advice.
10. UNISON offers great range of support and services to all our members.

Don’t delay, join UNISON today!