

**Health Minister Reaffirms Commitment to On Time Pay Settlement for Health Staff**  
Commenting Health Minister, Mike Nesbitt said:

In its latest report, the NHS Pay Review Body has made a core recommendation for a 3.3% consolidated uplift effective from 1 April 2026 for all Agenda for Change pay points.

Recommendations from the Doctors and Dentists Pay Review Body that will cover Medical and Dental staff (including those working in primary care) are not expected until early April 2026.

We have continued to work with England and Wales on a tri-nation basis towards both a headline pay uplift and structural Agenda for Change reform. England and Wales have today confirmed that they will proceed with the NHSPRB recommendation of 3.3%.

I can confirm that I remain fully committed to ensuring that pay will be the first priority for the Department and it is my desire to proceed with a headline pay award of 3.3% for AfC staff in 2026/27 and to progress towards HSC becoming a Real Living Wage (RLW) employer. I also intend to honour my commitment to funding for independent sector adult social care staff who provide direct care through commissioned services, in order to deliver the RLW for these staff.

Whilst it remains my firm ambition that pay increases will be received by all staff as early as possible in the incoming financial year, I am fully aware that I can only deliver against those commitments when clear about my budgetary position. However, even in the absence of agreement, I have asked my officials to progress the necessary preparatory work at pace.

I must also be clear that the draft budget proposals currently being consulted on will mean another extremely challenging year, with very considerable savings required across HSC to meet the deficit.

The imperative is to ensure that we can agree a three-year budget which would provide much needed certainty and greater freedom to plan ahead and progress with the necessary changes as to how health and social care will be delivered in the future.

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