Of course, ambulance staff will be concerned about patient care and what the impact of any industrial action will be. Ambulance staff certainly don’t do their jobs for the money; they do it because they care. The fact that ambulance staff care about patients is why the Government needs to listen when NHS workers vote for action.

In fact, many members who have already voted YES are telling us they are doing so because they believe it is the only way that we can get the Government to change their approach to health and properly fund the ambulance service so it can have a quality workforce with enough staff who are rewarded fairly.

Many commentators are saying the ambulance service is at breaking point and the Government is simply not listening. We need to make them sit up and listen and getting a really high turnout will do just that. If members vote yes for action, UNISON’s national ambulance committee will meet to discuss how the plans for industrial action will be implemented in the service.

By now you will have received your ballot paper. We need you to complete both questions and return it as soon as possible.

Of course we would like you to vote yes in the ballot but the important point is to use your vote to signal to the Government that ambulance staff deserve better. If not now, then when?

Alan Lofthouse – UNISON National Officer for ambulance members

The ballot is open between 28 August and 18 September and if you have not got your ballot paper yet then call the Ballot hotline on 0800 0 857 857

I’m voting yes in the ballot because the latest pay award is an insult to ambulance staff. The pressures on the ambulance service mounts by the day but the government expects us to do more and more for less. I would love to start saving for a deposit to buy a house but at the moment this is just a dream as my pay never seems to catch-up with the cost of living. Vote yes in the ballot as a quality ambulance services needs fairly paid staff.

Gareth Ward – Paramedic
As Welfare officer for LAS branch I am finding that more members are approaching me asking for assistance as they find it increasingly difficult to manage on their pay. Utility bills have increased, and petrol and food is becoming more expensive. Staff are working extra hours to boost their pay but extra hours equals extra fuel, extra child care and an unhealthy work/life balance. There is only so much extra work you can do, and so much you can cut back on, so its no wonder that staff are feeling demoralised. Despite this, we still do our best for our patients and are proud of the job that we do. I will be voting YES and encouraging my members to do the same.

Christine Tanner – Resource Co-Ordinator

Bryn Webster, Chair of UNISON’s National Ambulance Occupational Group, gives his thoughts on the pay award

We’re worth more than the kick in the teeth Hunt has dished out. Four years of frozen pay – with no commitment to a catch-up anytime soon – is unfair.

This is why my colleagues and I working in emergency services support the campaign for Fair Pay for NHS staff. Vote Yes!

What we are asking for:

If we get a YES vote, we will be fighting:

- for immediate payment of the PRB-recommended 1% on all hourly rates and the Living Wage of £7.65 per hour minimum
- to break the planned pay freeze for 2015-16
- for a commitment to cost of living pay increases for the future

What you need to know

The ballot opened on 28 August 2014 and will close at 10am on 18 September 2014. Members will vote on strike action and action short of strike. A yes vote from members will mean starting our programme of action with a four hour strike followed by a short period of action short of strike (e.g. taking your proper breaks or working your contracted hours) in mid October.

Members have been sent a ballot paper with questions asking whether they are prepared to take strike action and/or action short of strike action. We are urging members to vote YES for both strike action and action short of strike. However, we are also urging all members, whatever your views, to use YOUR vote to ensure we have a high ballot turn out.

UNISON has produced a set of Frequently Answered Questions


How much have you lost? Find out now

If you’re not sure how you have been affected by the pay freeze in the last four years, and what is still to come, then visit our pay calculator, but be prepared for a shock!

http://paycalculator.unison.org.uk/