Analysis of survey of members in NHS AfC bands 2 to 4





Word cloud credit: Wordle.net

Executive Summary

In September 2010, the Society and College of Radiographers surveyed NHS members in Agenda for Change (AfC) pay bands 2 to 4. Over 130 members responded to an online questionnaire covering what will be important to members over the next 2 years, proposed pay awards, planned changes to the NHS and training. This document presents the results of this survey and the following bullet points highlight the main findings:

- A pay increase is ranked second only to job security in terms of importance to the survey respondents over the next two years.
- Respondents were asked about the proposed payment of at least £250 per annum for two years for those earning less than £21,000 and the pay freeze for everybody else. Whilst some welcome the proposals, a large number of respondents feel the pay proposals are unfair and that £250 per annum is not sufficient. There is appreciation that those on lower bands should have a pay increase, but a feeling that NHS staff in general are not valued sufficiently. Whilst there is a need to rebalance the country's finances, everybody deserves a pay rise particularly in the face of cost of living increases. Some respondents regard the £21,000 pay freeze cut off point as too low.
- Respondents highlight the importance of prioritising patient care during any changes to the structure of the NHS. Whilst many welcome the need for change, they are concerned about the nature of the changes and job security. They can see the advantage in redirecting resources from management to clinical areas. However, there is anxiety that those directing the changes do not understand how the NHS works and that there have been too many changes in recent years.
- 63% of respondents have had less than 2 days training provided by their employer in the last 12 months.

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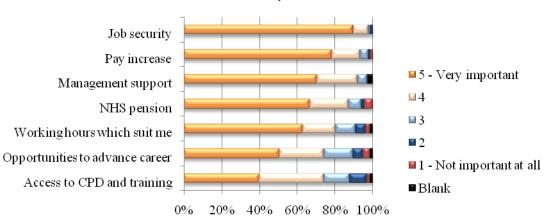
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1. Introduction

In September 2010, the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) surveyed NHS members in Agenda for Change (AfC) pay bands 2 to 4 with the aim of gauging their reaction to recent government announcements about NHS pay and changes and informing the SCoR evidence to the NHS Pay Review Body. An email containing a link to an online questionnaire was sent to all 447 members in these pay bands for whom an email address was known. 132 members (30%) completed the survey, answering a range of questions about what will be important to members over the next 2 years, proposed pay awards, planned changes to the NHS and training. Due to the low number of respondents, caution should be exercised if extrapolating these results to the entire population of NHS staff in bands 2-4 working in clinical imaging and radiotherapy.

2. What will be important to you over the next two years?

Survey respondents were shown a list of factors and asked to rate how important they will be to them over the next two years on a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important). Job security and pay increase came out as the most important factors with 98% of respondents rating job and 93% rating pay increase 4 or 5. Access to CPD and training and opportunities to advance their career were ranked as less important. However, 74% of respondents still rate these factors 4 or 5.



How important on a scale of 1 to 5 will the following be to you over the next two years?

Percentage of respondents

3. Views on proposed pay increase arrangements for NHS staff

Respondents were asked about the proposed payment of at least £250 per annum for two years for those earning less than £21,000 and the pay freeze for everybody else. The word cloud below gives a pictorial representation of the most common words used in the open-ended responses. The table below gives an analysis of the themes mentioned by four or more respondents.

Some respondents welcome the proposals. However, a large number of respondents feel the pay proposals are unfair and that £250 per annum is not sufficient. There is appreciation that those on lower bands should have a pay increase, but a feeling that NHS staff in general are not valued sufficiently. Whilst there is a need to rebalance the country's finances, everybody deserves a pay rise particularly when the cost of living increases every year. Some respondents regard the £21,000 pay freeze cut off point as too low.



Word cloud credit: Wordle.net

| Theme | Number of respondents | Example comment |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| It is unfair | 24 | <i>"I think the proposals are unfair and staff moral will be affected by this."</i> |
| £250 per annum not enough | 15 | "By the time the tax man has had his share of £250 and the National insurance doesn't equate to much a week with increasing car parking charges to go to work in the first place." |
| The pay increase for lower bands is a good idea | 15 | "I feel that the people that are on a low salary should have some reward" |
| Appreciate any pay increase | 13 | "The proposed £250 payment is a gesture for the lower paid in the NHS which at this financial climate is well needed." |
| NHS staff should be valued more | 12 | "We work hard in the NHS and we should all be valued more. What would the country be like if there was no NHS?" |
| Helps improve country's economy | 10 | <i>"The money squandered by the banks has to be found from somewhere."</i> |
| Everybody deserves a pay rise | 9 | <i>"For me I would welcome it as i am in that bracket but I feel it is unfair as we all work as hard as each other and all deserve a pay rise, regardless of our earnings. We deserve</i> |

| Theme | Number of respondents | Example comment |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| | | <i>it for the work we have to do."</i> |
| Pay freeze not acceptable | 8 | "A pay freeze I don't think is acceptable to the workforce |
| | | who are on the ground giving the patient care, as the staff work over and above the call of duty." |
| Cost of living | 7 | "I understand that everybody needs to make some sacrifices |
| | | to ensure that this country is back on top, but £250 is |
| | | nothing compared with the cost of living and especially if you have a family." |
| £21,000 cut off too low | 6 | "Those earning high salaries will not feel the pain but |
| | | £21,000 is not a lot and no increase at this level is harsh." |
| Good idea | 6 | "I think this proposed payment is a very good idea, it is |
| | | aimed at the people who need it the most." |
| Demoralising | 4 | "Working as an Assistant Practitioner in mammography, |
| | | having qualified in Sept 2009, it is disheartening to hear |
| Concerne non coste | 4 | these proposed changes." |
| Squeezes pay scale | 4 | "It will make me feel uncomfortable amongst Band 5 |
| | | radiographers as there will be less of a pay gap between band 4 and 5." |
| Job security more important | 4 | "Not really what I would like to see, but we have to be |
| | | thankful that our positions are relatively safe." |
| Top management should have | 4 | "I feel that the level for the pay freeze should be higher, |
| pay freeze/reduction | | aiming more at the management levels that are VERY |
| | | highly paid already." |

4. Views on proposed changes to NHS

Respondents were then asked to give their views in a free text box on the proposed changes to the NHS by the new UK coalition government. Again, the word cloud below gives a pictorial representation of the most common words used in the open-ended responses and the table then gives an analysis of the most common themes.

Respondents highlighted the importance of prioritising patient care during any changes. Whilst many welcome the need for change, they are concerned about the nature of the changes and job security. They can see the advantage in redirecting resources from management to clinical areas. However, there is anxiety that those directing the changes do not understand how the NHS works and that there have been too many changes recently.

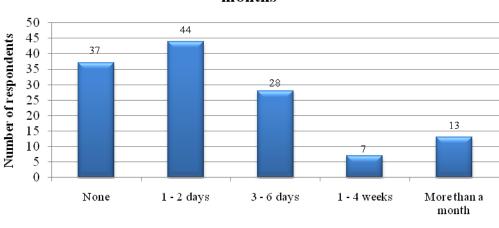


Word cloud credit: Wordle.net

| Theme | Number of respondents | Example comment |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Patient care must be priority | 17 | "Changes are needed to continue to improve on patient care. However, it has always been the staff on the lower end of scale who care and look after patients badly affected." |
| Changes required | 14 | <i>"I believe that it is a good idea for middle management to be re-organised and streamlined."</i> |
| Concern about changes | 14 | "I understand the changes and some may be for the better, however the wrong areas of work are hit the hardest." |
| Too many managers | 12 | "I feel that the NHS would be better off cutting management jobs and concentrating on the clinical side." |
| Worried about job security | 5 | <i>"It is a very unnerving and scary time from a job security point of view."</i> |
| Too many changes | 5 | "How much more are they cutting back? At the trust that I am in at the moment, we have already had 6 people leave within the last three months. There is also a freeze on jobs." |
| Those making changes do not understand NHS | 4 | "Whilst I appreciate that changes are needed at a time of recession I feel that it should be achieved by people who understand the intricate details of a radiography department" |

5. Training

The graph below illustrates that 63% of respondents have had less than 2 days training provided by their employer in the last 12 months.



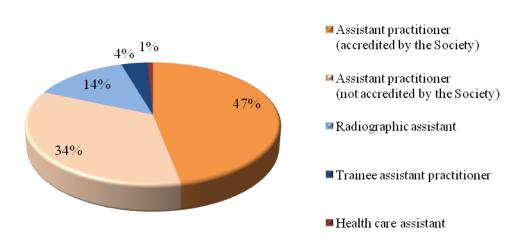
Amount of training provided by employer in the last 12 months

Amount of training

6. Profile of respondents

6.1 Job Titles

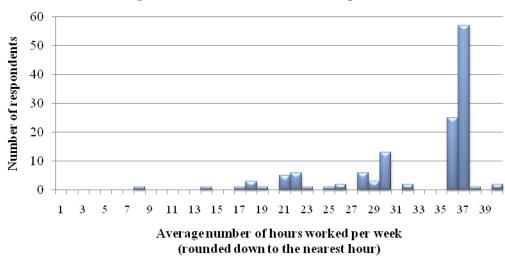
The graph below illustrates that most of the responses to the survey are from assistant practitioners. (Note that the assistant practitioners and the health care assistant are band 4 and the radiographic assistants and trainee assistant practitioners are a mixture of bands 2 and 3.)



Job titles of respondents to the survey

6.2 Hours

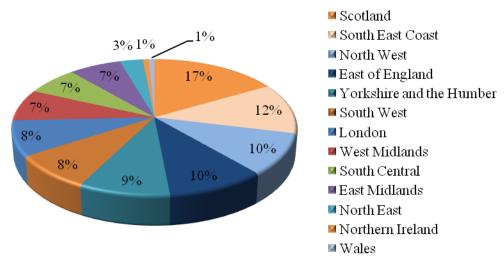
The graph below illustrates that, whilst 65% of respondents work full time, there are a large number of parttime workers in these pay grades.



Average number of hours worked per week

6.3 Country/region of respondents

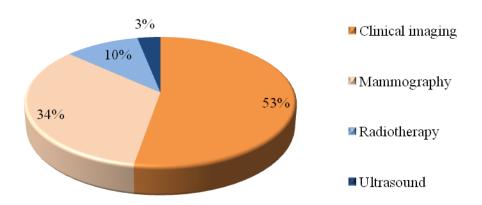
The graph below illustrates that responses were received from all around the UK. However, there was a disappointing low response-rate from Northern Ireland and Wales.



Country/region of respondents

6.4 Areas of work

The graph below illustrates that most respondents work in clinical imaging or mammography.



Main area of work

Appendix A – Survey questionnaire (pdf version only)

NHS Bands 1 to 4

General

This online questionnaire by the Society of Radiographers should be completed by members working in the NHS on pay bands 1,2,3 and 4.

It should only take five minutes to complete and your answers will be anonymous.

1. Job title

- Assistant practitioner (accredited by the Society)
- Assistant practitioner (not accredited by the Society)
- Radiographic assistant
- Trainee assistant practitioner

Other (please specify)

2. NHS pay band

- jn Band 1
- jn Band 2
- jm Band 3
- Band 4

3. How many hours do you work per week on average?

| * | 4. | Country/region | |
|---|----|----------------|--|
|---|----|----------------|--|

6

At work

5. What is your main area of work?

- Clinical imaging
- in Mammography
- Radiotherapy
- D Ultrasound

Other (please specify)

NHS Bands 1 to 4

6. How much training have you had provided by your employer over the past 12 months in order to improve your skills?

jn None

- j_____1 2 days
- 1 3 6 days
- 1 4 weeks
- More than a month

7. How important on a scale of 1 to 5 will the following be to you over the next two years?

| | 1 - Not important at all | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 - Very important |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----|-------------|----|--------------------|
| Job security | ja | ja | jn | ja | ja |
| NHS pension | jn | jn | jn | jn | jn |
| Access to CPD and training | ja | ja | jn | ja | pt |
| Opportunities to advance my career | jņ | jn | jn | jn | jn |
| Pay increase | ja | ja | ja | ja | pt |
| Working hours which suit me | jņ | jn | jn | jn | jn |
| Management support | ja | ja | j to | ja | ja |

And finally ...

8. What are your views on the proposed changes to the NHS by the new UK coalition government?

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9. What are your views on the payment of at least £250.00 per annum for two years for those earning less than £21,000 and the pay freeze for everybody else for these two years?

| | 5 |
|--|---|
| | 6 |