

STAND BY NHS STAFF



30 NOVEMBER



DON'T BELIEVE THE MYTHS - SUPPORT OUR NHS STAFF

NHS workers are facing a massive assault on the pensions that they have paid into throughout their working lives, spent caring for patients.

Pensions are an important part of NHS workers' terms and conditions of employment, but NHS staff are being told that that they have to:

- accept that hundreds and in some cases thousands of pounds will be stripped out of their take-home pay to swell Treasury funds
- work longer to receive their full pension, with the retirement age eventually hitting 68 years old and possibly going even higher
- accept that, even after paying more and working longer, they are likely to receive a lower pension.

At a time when almost everyone is feeling the pinch and struggling to make ends meet, that is hard to take. But much of the press are trying to persuade people to back the changes by spreading four big myths:

Myth 1: Public sector workers get 'gold-plated' pensions

Reality: The median occupational pension for a woman working in the NHS is £3,500 a year. Would £3,500 sound like a luxurious work pension for you in your old age?

Myth 2: It's not fair that public sector staff have decent pensions when lots of private sector staff don't

Reality: Everyone deserves a decent pension when they retire. However, the assault on public sector pensions will do nothing to improve private sector pensions. In fact, it will simply clear the way for employers in the private sector to drive down the pay and pensions of their staff even further.

Myth 3: Everyone needs to make sacrifices to pay off the national debt

Reality: The bankers caused the global financial crisis that sent the deficit rocketing. Yet banking bosses continue to rake in the bonuses while ordinary working people are told to pay the price. Paying off the deficit must be based on fairness, with those who can most afford it making the biggest contribution.

Myth 4: Pension costs are out of control

Reality: NHS staff pay into their pension scheme throughout their working lives. In fact, in 2010, £2bn more was paid into the scheme than retired NHS staff received in pension payments. The scheme more than covers its costs and actually generates a surplus for the Treasury to spend.

