

Chief Executive Officer
Richard Evans OBE



SoR
THE SOCIETY OF
RADIOGRAPHERS

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
By e-mail: stephen.barclay.mp@parliament.uk

2nd May 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Society of Radiographers position on NHS Pay Award 2023-24

I am writing on behalf of the Society of Radiographers (SoR) to make clear our position following the decision today to implement the 2023-24 NHS AfC Pay Award in England.

We accept that a majority of unions have very narrowly voted to accept the offer. However, there is clearly no broad consensus around the offer. Those who recommended the offer have expressed no great enthusiasm for it.

All note that the consolidated amount remains less than half the current rate of inflation and will see our members in England earning less from 1st April than fellow members in Scotland and Wales.

The SoR did not take industrial action in 2022-23 but our members' anger and frustration with their pay and reward has been evident and was reflected back in conversations across the Staff Side. We warned there was a strong possibility that, if the 2023-24 offer was again significantly below inflation, our members could take the step to ask us to ballot for industrial action. It is hugely disappointing to us that we were not consulted prior to the offer being put to us or we would have been in a position to amplify this risk at that time.

SoR members rejected the pay award on a record turnout of 66%. This is more than double the number who responded to last year's pay consultation. Of those that responded, 83% rejected the offer and 80% indicated support for industrial action. This is a response we cannot ignore. We don't believe that Government nor the NHS Employers can afford to ignore the strength of feeling across this key workforce group either and would ask that you arrange to meet with us and work to resolve this dispute as soon as possible.

Radiography is central to all of your government's major health strategies, in particular the post-pandemic recovery and the roll out of Community Diagnostic Centres. You cannot meet these aspirations without addressing the radiography workforce crisis. This requires recognition for our members and valuing the work they do.

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For almost two decades, the NHS had failed to recruit enough professionals to meet the rising demand for our members' services. Our members keep being told to do more with less. 95% of patients now encounter a radiographer on their treatment pathway. 1 in 10 radiographer positions are currently unfilled and demand is increasing by approximately 10% a year. The Richards Report, adopted by your government in November 2020, recognised this workforce crisis. However, we are still seeing record numbers leaving the NHS, some to join agencies, because of the excessive demands upon them, lack of access to flexible working and because they are simply not paid enough.

Our members have told us this has to stop. We are asking you and your officials to therefore engage with us now and seek to avoid further damaging industrial action. It is not too late for us to talk directly. We have ideas, as set out in our Pay Review Body evidence, that could help avoid the need for strike action. We also want constructive discussions about how we can avoid being in this position in 2024 and beyond.

However, if radiography's concerns continue to be marginalised or ignored, then industrial action by our members is likely.

We look forward to receipt of a hopefully positive response.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Evans
CEO