02/12/2015

FOI000001001091

Dear Mr Adab,

Thank you for your request of 4th November 2015 under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Your exact request was:

“In which case I would like to narrow my request to correspondence in direct response to the DDRB’s initial pay review of March 2014.”

I can confirm that the Department holds information relevant to your request, which is the written ministerial statement laid in parliament on Thursday 13th March 2014 as follows:

**The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Jeremy Hunt):** I am responding on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the 28th report of the NHS Pay Review Body (NHSPRB) and to the 42nd report of the Review Body on Doctors’ and Dentists’ Remuneration (DDRB). The reports have been laid before Parliament today (Cm 8831 and Cm 8832). Copies of the reports are available to hon. Members from the Vote Office and to noble Lords from the Printed Paper Office.

**NHS Pay Review Body**

We thank the NHS Pay Review Body for its 28th report and note its recommendations and observations.

We are clear that in the wake of the public inquiry into Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, our first priority must be to ensure that the NHS can afford to employ the right number of frontline staff needed to ensure the safe, effective and compassionate care that patients have a right to expect.

The NHSPRB’s recommendations for a 1% consolidated rise for all staff, on top of automatic increments, are unaffordable and would risk the quality of patient care. Without a pay rise, incremental pay increases already commit nearly £1 billion every year for all NHS employees and add 2% each year to the NHS pay bill for Agenda for Change staff. The PRB proposals suggest a pay rise that would risk reductions in front-line staff that could lead to unsafe
patient care. It is not possible to maintain appropriate numbers of front-line staff, give a general pay rise of 1% and pay for incremental progression.

The Government are therefore adopting an approach by which all staff will receive at least an additional 1% of their basic pay next year. All staff who are not eligible to receive incremental pay will be given a 1% non-consolidated payment in 2014-15. Other staff will receive an increase of at least 1% through incremental progression.

It is our intention that in 2015-16 the same approach will apply and staff who are not eligible to receive incremental pay will receive a non-consolidated payment of 2% of pay, while other staff receive incremental progression. As this will be a two-year pay award, the NHSPRB will not be asked to make recommendations on a pay award for Agenda for Change staff in the 2015 pay round.

NHS staff are dedicated and hard working and the Government would prefer all NHS staff to receive a consolidated 1% increase. This would be affordable if incremental progression was frozen for one year in 2015-16. If the NHS trade unions were prepared to agree to this then the Government would be prepared to reconsider the position and make a consolidated award as other public sector work forces are receiving.

The Government agree with NHSPRB’s observation that a thorough review is required of the Agenda for Change pay structure, including the operation of incremental scales, so that it might better support the challenges facing the NHS in terms of both patient care and affordability.

We note its offer to look into this, given an appropriate remit and evidence and we will consider whether to ask them to look at contract reform issues in next year’s report.

Review Body on Doctors’ and Dentists’ Remuneration

We thank the Review Body on Doctors’ and Dentists’ Remuneration for its 42nd report, note its recommendations and observations, and:

in respect of general medical practitioners (GMPs), we accept its recommendation for an increase of 1% to general medical practitioners’ income after allowing for movement in their expenses, equating to an uplift of 0.28% to the overall value of general medical services contract payments for 2014-15; and

in respect of general dental practitioners (GDPs), we accept its recommendation for an increase of 1% to general dental practitioners’ income after allowing for movement in their expenses, but abate the increase in the general dental service contract for GDP staff costs from the recommended 2.5% to 1%. This results in an overall uplift of 1.6% to be applied to gross earnings for independent dental contractors for 2014-15.
In respect of employed doctors and dentists, we are clear that in the wake of the public inquiry into Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, our first priority must be to ensure that the NHS can afford to employ the right number of front-line staff needed to ensure the safe, effective and compassionate care that patients have a right to expect.

The DDRB’s recommendations for a 1% consolidated rise for all staff, on top of automatic increments, are unaffordable and would risk the quality of patient care. Without a pay rise, incremental pay increases already commit nearly £1 billion every year for all NHS employees and add 2% each year to the NHS pay bill for employed doctors and dentists. The DDRB proposals suggest a pay rise that would risk reductions in front-line staff that could lead to unsafe patient care. It is not possible to maintain appropriate numbers of front-line staff, give a general pay rise of 1% and pay for incremental progression.

The Government are therefore adopting an approach by which all staff will receive at least an additional 1% of their basic pay next year. All staff who are not eligible to receive incremental pay will be given a 1% non-consolidated payment in 2014-15. Other staff will receive an increase of at least 1% through incremental progression.

It is our intention that in 2015-16 the same approach will apply and staff who are not eligible to receive incremental pay will receive a non-consolidated payment of 2% of pay, while other staff receive incremental progression. As this will be a two-year pay award, the

DDRB will not be asked to make recommendations on a pay award for employed doctors and dentists in the 2015 pay round.

NHS staff are dedicated and hard working and the Government would prefer all NHS staff to receive a consolidated 1% increase. This would be affordable if incremental progression was frozen for one year in 2015-16. If the NHS trade unions were prepared to agree to this then the Government would be prepared to reconsider the position and make a consolidated award as other public sector work forces are receiving.

We note that the DDRB would welcome a proactive and systematic approach to considering contractual issues at an appropriate stage of the consultant and doctors in training negotiations and we will consider whether to make this part of their remit for the 2015 pay round.

If you have any queries about this email, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:
Head of the Freedom of Information Team
Department of Health
Room G18
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Email: freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Department. The ICO can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Alison Tingle

Freedom of Information Officer
Department of Health

freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk