For the first time in history, the RCM has made the decision to ballot its members for industrial action over the pay dispute. The RCM is recommending that you vote ‘yes’ to both strike action and action short of a strike. RCM employment relations advisor Amy Leversidge has some reasons why you should vote ‘yes’.

15 good reasons why you should vote ‘yes’ in the pay ballot
It is time to say ‘enough’s enough’

This is a fundamental attack on your pay and we have to make a stand and say ‘enough’s enough’.

We are working with the other NHS trade unions to campaign together for fair pay. We believe that if midwives and MSWs stand together and vote ‘yes’, we have the best chance of getting a fair deal for NHS staff.

2

Treating NHS staff unfairly hurts NHS users

There is clear clinical evidence that shows NHS staff who are demoralised cannot deliver the quality of care that NHS users, including mothers and babies, deserve. NHS staff have to be valued and fairly rewarded for the work they do. Investing in staff is an investment in better care.

3

The NHS Pay Review Body’s (PRB) recommendations have been rejected

The NHS PRB is an expert independent body that makes recommendations concerning your pay uplifts. This is the first time your pay award does not follow the PRB’s recommendations. There is also a very real threat to the current pay structures in the NHS, and incremental progression in particular. The fact that increments are paid for increased skills, knowledge and experience is being ignored.

4

The value of NHS pay is falling

This is the fourth year of pay restraint in the NHS, which has had a devastating effect on the value of your pay. Our figures show that a midwife at the top of Band 6 would have had a salary over £4000 higher if they had received increases in line with inflation.

5

Increments are awarded for increased skills, knowledge and experience

It is clear that there are plans to remove incremental progression in the NHS pay structure and move to a system of performance-related pay. In the Spending Review speech George Osborne said:

‘The biggest reform we make on pay is to automatic progression pay. This is the practice whereby many employees not only get a pay rise every year, but also automatically move up a pay grade every single year - regardless of performance. Progression pay can at best be described as antiquated, at worst, it’s deeply unfair to other parts of the public sector who don’t get it and to the private sector who have to pay for it… we are working to remove automatic pay rises simply for time served in our schools, NHS, prisons and police.’

Incremental progression is awarded for increased skills, knowledge and experience, not just for time served. There are nine incremental points between the starting salary for a midwife and the top of Band 6 - if George Osborne were to achieve his aim, we could see the middle of the pay band becoming the top of the pay band. This means that those who are not yet at the top will never get there and those currently at the top will lose out.

6

This award hits newly qualified midwives hardest

Newly qualified midwives have joined the NHS at a time when we have a shortage of nearly 5000 midwives in England. The decision to only pay staff at the top of the pay band a non-consolidated 1% uplift and refuse to pay the 1% to staff who are not yet at the top of their pay band hits those staff hardest. We believe this will irrevocably damage the ethos, morale and motivation of those new staff. We also believe that this will deter students from becoming midwives.

7

The cost of going to work is increasing

Even though you have faced four years of pay restraint in the NHS and being denied a permanent 1% uplift, the cost of going to work just keeps increasing. The costs of child care have risen by 29% since 2009, your NMC registration fees have increased by 31% with a further 20% and your pension contributions have increased from 6.1% to 9.3%.

8

The award is divisive and unfair

This is the first time that an annual uplift has only been paid to those who are not yet at the top will lose out. This means that those who are not yet at the top will never get there and those currently at the top will lose out.

9

There are now different rates of pay across the UK

In July, the government in Wales announced that they would also be implementing the uplift recommended by the PRB and would instead be implementing a flat £1500 to all staff, which works out to be roughly 0.5% for a Band 6 midwife. This will be a non-consolidated uplift, so it will be a one-off payment. Employers are putting these proposals into effect. We are therefore also in dispute in Wales and will be making preparations to consult with members there, but on a later timescale than in England.

10

The 1% non-consolidated increase is only a one-off payment (similar to a bonus), so it won’t apply to your pension, your unsocial hours, your overtime payments or your high-cost area supplements.

11

It won’t count towards your pension

From 2015, the NHS Pension Scheme will change to a career average scheme, any change to a career average scheme, any

...
We have a good chance of getting a better deal
We are campaigning for:
► Payment of the 1% uplift for all staff, as recommended by the NHS PBR
► An above inflation pay rise for 2015-16
► A commitment to future pay rises that will restore the value of NHS pay.
We are working with other NHS trade unions to campaign together for fair pay.
We believe that midwives and MSWs stand together and vote ‘yes’, we have the best chance of getting a fair deal for NHS staff.

We’ve never asked you to vote for industrial action before and we would not ask if we did not believe it was absolutely necessary. We are asking now because this is the time to say ‘enough’s enough’. This is a fundamental attack on your pay and we have to make a stand. We believe that if midwives and MSWs stand together and vote ‘yes’, we can send a strong message that midwives and MSWs deserve to be valued and deserve fair pay.

We’ve provided just 15 good reasons why you should vote ‘yes’. Why don’t you tell us your reasons for voting ‘yes’?

1. Putting in extra hours and not agreeing to pay them overtime and it is especially unfair to then deny them a paltry 1% pay rise.

2. Fair pay is important to you by emailing: paycampaign@rcm.org.uk or telling us your personal stories and why you reason for voting ‘yes’?

3. The Government want pay uplift for the next two years to be non-consolidated which means the uplift is only temporary and will be taken away so in 2016 pay will return to 2013 rates.

4. We believe that midwives and MSWs stand together and vote ‘yes’, we have the best chance of getting a fair deal for NHS staff.

5. The Pay Review Body’s recommendation for the next two years in England. This can be summarised as no pay increase for all those moving up their band, a ‘now you see it, now you don’t increase for those at the top of a band and a fundamental threat to our pay system in the year before an election. We know this is only the start of a campaign by employers to devalue your pay. It is starting in England and that is where we have to take a stand. But it has implications for all midwives and MSWs, so we need to support our English colleagues.

6. Your Board met in July to receive and discuss a very detailed briefing on pay in the NHS. We noted the acceptance of the Pay Review Body’s recommendation and its implementation in Scotland. Also, the position in Wales and Northern Ireland, where no decision had then been announced (subsequently in Wales it has and we are in dispute there but not currently planning to ballot pending further talks). Finally, we examined the imposed pay arrangements for the next two years in England. This can be summarised as no pay increase for all those moving up their band, a ‘now you see it, now you don’t increase for those at the top of a band and a fundamental threat to our pay system in the year before an election. We know this is only the start of a campaign by employers to devalue your pay. It is starting in England and that is where we have to take a stand. But it has implications for all midwives and MSWs, so we need to support our English colleagues.

7. Our strength will lie in gaining public support. Our dispute is not with mothers and their families but rather with those that chose to undervalue midwives and MSWs. We will do nothing that would compromise safety but your Board is convinced that enough is enough and that accepting this imposed pay settlement – against the recommendation of the Pay Review Body’s recommendation and its implementation in Scotland. Also, the position in Wales and Northern Ireland, where no decision had then been announced (subsequently in Wales it has and we are in dispute there but not currently planning to ballot pending further talks). Finally, we examined the imposed pay arrangements for the next two years in England. This can be summarised as no pay increase for all those moving up their band, a ‘now you see it, now you don’t increase for those at the top of a band and a fundamental threat to our pay system in the year before an election. We know this is only the start of a campaign by employers to devalue your pay. It is starting in England and that is where we have to take a stand. But it has implications for all midwives and MSWs, so we need to support our English colleagues.

8. We are working with other NHS trade unions to campaign together for fair pay.

9. Your Board are also urging you to vote ‘yes’ to the two questions on your ballot paper. In other words, ‘yes’ to strike action and ‘yes’ to action short of a strike.

10. We are campaigning for:
► Payment of the 1% uplift for all staff, as recommended by the NHS PBR
► An above inflation pay rise for 2015-16
► A commitment to future pay rises that will restore the value of NHS pay.
We are working with other NHS trade unions to campaign together for fair pay.
We believe that midwives and MSWs stand together and vote ‘yes’, we have the best chance of getting a fair deal for NHS staff.

11. The RCM Board is made up of midwives from across the United Kingdom. I, myself, am from Northern Ireland. The Board is the elected governing body of the RCM and it is responsible for any decisions on potential ballots and industrial action.

12. Your Board met in July to receive and discuss a very detailed briefing on pay in the NHS. We noted the acceptance of the Pay Review Body’s recommendation and its implementation in Scotland. Also, the position in Wales and Northern Ireland, where no decision had then been announced (subsequently in Wales it has and we are in dispute there but not currently planning to ballot pending further talks). Finally, we examined the imposed pay arrangements for the next two years in England. This can be summarised as no pay increase for all those moving up their band, a ‘now you see it, now you don’t increase for those at the top of a band and a fundamental threat to our pay system in the year before an election. We know this is only the start of a campaign by employers to devalue your pay. It is starting in England and that is where we have to take a stand. But it has implications for all midwives and MSWs, so we need to support our English colleagues.

13. So, on behalf of the Board, I urge you to vote to support your union and professional body, the RCM and to vote ‘yes’. Our strength will lie in gaining public support. Our dispute is not with mothers and their families but rather with those that chose to undervalue midwives and MSWs. We will do nothing that would compromise safety but your Board is convinced that enough is enough and that accepting this imposed pay settlement – against the recommendation of the Pay Review Body – will result in poorer maternity services and under-valued professionals. If we want fair pay and valued midwives and MSWs, then the choice is yours. Your Board urges you to vote and to vote ‘yes’.

14. We have a good chance of getting a better deal
We are campaigning for:
► Payment of the 1% uplift for all staff, as recommended by the NHS PBR
► An above inflation pay rise for 2015-16
► A commitment to future pay rises that will restore the value of NHS pay.
We are working with other NHS trade unions to campaign together for fair pay.
We believe that midwives and MSWs stand together and vote ‘yes’, we have the best chance of getting a fair deal for NHS staff.

15. We’ve never asked you to vote for industrial action before and we would not ask if we did not believe it was absolutely necessary. We are asking now because this is the time to say ‘enough’s enough’. This is a fundamental attack on your pay and we have to make a stand. We believe that if midwives and MSWs stand together and vote ‘yes’, we can send a strong message that midwives and MSWs deserve to be valued and deserve fair pay.

We’ve provided just 15 good reasons why you should vote ‘yes’. Why don’t you tell us your reasons for voting ‘yes’?

When you have voted, tweet us: @MidwivesRCM and tell us why you voted with the hashtags #whyivoteds and #whatspay or tell us your personal stories and why fair pay is important to you by emailing: paycampaign@rcm.org.uk

Rebecca Gillen
Chair of the RCM Board