**PROTESTING FOR PAY**

Amy Leversidge describes what the RCM has been doing to get maternity staff’s voices heard across England.

**RCM MEMBERS AND** other NHS workers across England have sent a clear message to the government – enough is enough: fair pay for the NHS.

The RCM joined other NHS trade unions at the Department of Health in London on 5 June to protest against the government’s pay offer and to present a giant cheque for £1.5bn, which is the estimated amount of unpaid overtime that staff in England carry out annually. Francis O’Grady, the general secretary of the TUC was also present at the protest.

Meanwhile, in Liverpool, the RCM and other NHS trade unions protested outside the NHS Confederation conference, and also presented the giant cheque to make the point that the NHS relies so much on goodwill. The health secretary Jeremy Hunt was speaking at the conference in the afternoon, as was shadow health secretary Andy Burnham. While Andy Burnham met with NHS staff, Jeremy Hunt refused.

In addition to the two main events in London and Liverpool, there were events up and down the country in local NHS organisations. The RCM produced stickers, badges, posters, flyers and postcards to MPs in order to get the message out there.

Our campaign logo, photos and infographics on Facebook have been ‘liked’ over 800 times.

There was also a lot of activity on social media. Our campaign logo, photos and infographics on Facebook have been ‘liked’ over 800 times and shared nearly 900 times.

It was a fantastic day – thank you to all RCM members who got involved up and down England.

We are facing an unprecedented attack on NHS pay. Not only has the government rejected the NHS Pay Review Body’s (PRB) recommendation, but they have backtracked on their previous promise of a 1% pay uplift for all staff.

Instead of a permanent 1% pay uplift, the government has given a 1% ‘non-consolidated’ uplift to just the staff at the top of their pay band.

They have also said that they will take the same approach for 2015-16 and staff who are at the top of their pay band will receive a 2% uplift, which will also be ‘non-consolidated’ and, again, staff who are not at the top of their band will mis out.

They have said that because the announcement is for two years they will not ask the NHS PRB to report in 2015.

The term ‘non-consolidated’ means that the increase is only a temporary payment and it will get taken away, like a bonus. The ‘non-consolidated’ award only applies to basic pay, so will not apply to high cost area supplements, unsocial hours payments, overtime or on-call payments. In addition, the 1% is not pensionable. This means that in 2016 the pay rates in England will return to the pay rates they were in 2013.

This is part of the government’s
attempt to fundamentally change the pay structure by ending incremental progression in the NHS, bringing in bonus style pay awards and removing the independent PRB.

At the time of going to press, the RCM has begun a consultation with members working in the NHS in England to ask if they are prepared to take industrial action. We are recommending to members that they vote ‘yes’ and are prepared to take such action, as we need every midwife and MSW to stand together with the RCM to fight this appalling treatment of NHS staff.

Amy Leversidge
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