

Ballot among health workers on pay deal

UNISON, Scotland's largest health union, announced this week that it will hold a consultative ballot of its NHS members after talks with The Scottish Government on pay broke down.

Speaking after today's meeting of the union's health committee, UNISON's head of health Willie Duffy said: "UNISON members are disappointed and angry that the Scottish government has failed to deliver on pay for NHS workers this year – despite assurances from both the Scottish Health Secretary and the First Minister.

"They are happy to praise our NHS workers and offer warm words on pay but are unable to back that up by putting money into the pockets of our hard-working and devoted NHS staff.

"The last thing our members want to do at this time is disrupt NHS services, but more than a month on from our talks with Health Secretary Jeane Freeman we are no further forward. The Scottish government has failed to deliver on pay for our NHS workers and we feel we have been left with no other choice."

Tom Waterston, chair of UNISON Scotland's health committee, said: "Our dedicated NHS staff have suffered real-term pay cuts over the last decade with significant extra costs over this pandemic. This includes extra childcare costs because

they are working extra shifts; extra transport costs because of restricted public transport; extra costs because they have been isolating from family; or even extra laundry costs and buying personal PPE.

“Our politicians are quick to praise the hard work and dedication of our NHS workers who have gone above and beyond during this pandemic, but unfortunately clapping doesn't pay their bills.

“These are just ordinary people thrust into an extraordinary situation and they trusted the Scottish government to recognise them fairly. Disappointingly this hasn't happened and the time has run out for warm words. We urge Health Secretary Jeane Freeman to meet with us as a matter of urgency and get this resolved – we need to pay up now for health workers.”