

Ms Amanda Pritchard  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Health Service England  
22 London Road  
London  
SE1 6JW

25 November 2021

Dear Amanda,

I am writing to you regarding pay rates for agency workers in the NHS and seeking information and clarification on the delayed publication of the updated price cards. This delay will have a significant impact on NHS agency workers.

The pay increase for NHS staff was announced four months ago. But we understand, through recent engagement with the temporary staffing team at NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I), that you are currently going through 'a rigorous process' to review and sign off the pay rates for the agency workforce and updated price cards are not expected until well after the new year. We appreciate that the last 18 months have been unprecedented for all concerned but we would like to understand the rationale behind the delay, the timing for publication, the scope of the pay rate review and how we can inform this review on behalf of the agency sector.

Our concern is that an ongoing delay to updating the rate card is creating disparity between substantive staff and agency workers. We understand NHS employees have recently started seeing the increment reflected in their salaries. However, agency workers, who show equal dedication and commitment to their patients, have not. The further delay with no clear timeframe creates uncertainty. Furthermore, this is not in line with the Agency Workers Regulations 2010 which is designed to protect qualified agency workers and ensure that they receive the same basic working and employment conditions as substantive staff in the NHS which includes equal pay. The NHS-wide increase should be applied to agency workers without delay.

Secondly, we would like to understand what the process and review mean, and whether you are involving key external stakeholders such as trade bodies and agencies themselves. As you will know from our previous engagement with yourself and NHSE/I, the REC is keen to ensure that the industry's voice is heard and there is no disconnect between decision makers and the experiences that suppliers and NHS trusts are facing on the ground. We share your goal of a patient-centric NHS that is value for money. Suppliers can provide critical insight and our membership of 450 health and care agencies is a great starting point for a community approach to deeper and better workforce planning in the NHS. In a roundtable we co-hosted with NHS Employers earlier this year, the frontline experience of our members and their agency staff over

the pandemic was felt to be really informative as we all begin to think through lessons learnt and building our way out of the pandemic.

I look forward to receiving your response on this urgent matter at your very earliest convenience. We would be keen to discuss this in more detail with you or your senior team leading the review - Natalie ([Natalie.wright@rec.uk.com](mailto:Natalie.wright@rec.uk.com)) in my office will be happy to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely,



---

**Kate Shoemith**  
Deputy Chief Executive