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Nurses Poised to Overwhelmingly Reject Pay Offer as Strike Threat Grows

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Nurses in England are widely expected to reject the government's proposed 3.6% pay increase, setting the stage for potential strike action later this year. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has been holding an internal vote on the pay offer, which sources suggest will show strong opposition from its members.

The Royal College of Nursing RCN previously labeled the pay award as “grotesque,” noting that nurses were offered a lower increase compared to other public sector professionals such as doctors, teachers, prison officers, and military personnel. This 3.6% rise, accepted by the government in May based on recommendations from the independent pay review

body, has been viewed by many frontline staff as inadequate recognition of their contributions.

While the current vote is only consultative, the result is expected to clear the 50% turnout threshold required to authorize industrial action. A formal strike ballot could be held in the fall if the government fails to return to the negotiating table during the summer.

A spokesperson for the RCN stated, *“The results will be announced to our members later this week. As the largest part of the NHS (National Health Service) workforce, nursing staff do not feel valued and the government must urgently begin to turn that around.”* The union has also indicated openness to discussions not just on the headline pay figure but also broader structural reforms in compensation.

Separately, the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union GMB has also reported dissatisfaction among its members. Representing thousands of health workers, including ambulance personnel, the GMB said that 67% of its members voted against the same 3.6% pay offer for the 2025/26 period. GMB National Secretary Rachel Harrison confirmed they have reached out to Health Secretary Wes Streeting for urgent talks, stating, *“We await his reply with interest.”*

Adding to the pressure, thousands of resident doctors formerly referred to as junior doctors began a five-day strike on Friday. This followed the breakdown of pay negotiations between the government and the British Medical Association (BMA).

Health Secretary Wes Streeting acknowledged the ongoing disruption but maintained it was being managed to minimize the impact on services.

As the RCN prepares to announce its vote outcome, pressure is mounting on ministers to act. Failure to do so could see another wave of strikes across the healthcare sector, further straining an already burdened system.