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Tiarna Townsend Support Services



In my role I'm required to keep the hospital clean to a high level of hygiene. It's a band 1 role but I feel I do a lot more and have a lot more roles within the trust than the one I am employed to do. As well as cleaning I also provide food services and I frequently take on other roles that aren't my job because of short staffing. I am being increasingly underpaid for the role I am doing.

Low pay affects me as I am young and I have bills to pay. I need to work extra hours to pay my car just to get to work, I live at home and pay keep as I can't afford to save for a mortgage and I had to take on another job outside the trust because my wages weren't paying enough to live. I decided to take a second job outside of the trust because the pay was higher. I work in the community sector and I have considered going full time in that role because they pay me a lot more fairly and I get paid for the work that I am doing.

It's so frustrating knowing people in Scotland, England and Wales get paid more than I do for the same role. We're not being treated fairly. We're not pushing to get paid any higher than them we just want the same pay for the same role. I'm 20, I could easily make a decision to leave Northern Ireland, move to Scotland and get paid far more for the same role and not have to do any additional duties that are above my band. The health service here can't afford to have young people moving away as we are already understaffed.

I have considered leaving the health service because of low pay, it became very frustrating when bills were coming in and I could just about cover them. I thought, is it really worth it? Some of the people I have worked with have left the health service and are now earning more money than me in roles with a lot less responsibility. It makes me second think my job, am I being appreciated? People think because I am support services I don't do much but I have to ensure the hospital is clean to stop infections spreading and keep it safe for patients, I am looking out for hazards in wards while I clean to report them and I provide food services where temperature sheets have to be recorded and I have to be careful of allergies. There are a lot of different tasks to complete within my role and I believe it should be higher than a Band 1.

I'm voting yes for strike action because I feel it's time that it's pushed for workers in Northern Ireland to be paid the same as England, Scotland and Wales and treated fairly. I think it will make a change where people will want to come to work in the health service and feel like they are valued at work.