



October 2020

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about NHS pay.

The passion, commitment, and specialist knowledge of our NHS staff is part of what makes our NHS so special. I recognise that staff morale is vital to maintaining staff commitment to services.

I fully support the mission to make the NHS the safest, highest quality healthcare system in the world. There are over 14,000 more doctors and over 13,000 more nurses on our wards in the past decade.

How the NHS values and retains its staff is critical. A deal was agreed in 2018 ensuring a 6.5% pay rise for over one million NHS workers on Agenda for Change contracts over three years.

Ministers set aside £800 million to support the deal for 2018/19, and the Government's long-term funding settlement for the NHS, which will provide increased funding of £33.9 billion per year by 2023/24, is funding the pay rise over the remaining two years. Those on the lowest salaries in the NHS are seeing of the largest proportionate pay rises: the lowest NHS starting salary has increased year on year from £15,404 to £18,005 in 2020/2021. Many nurses and healthcare assistants are enjoying pay increases of at least 2.5%.

NHS staff are playing an integral part of the national effort to combat coronavirus - and we owe them a great deal of gratitude for all that they do. The Government is committed to supporting all staff now and in the future. Its unwavering support for frontline staff predates this unprecedented challenge. In addition to the 6.5% pay rise over the three years, the starting salary for newly qualified nurses has also increased by more than 12% and the Government has introduced a nurses' bursary which provides at least £5,000 of additional support to nursing students.

The fight against coronavirus is a national effort, and my colleagues and I are committed to giving NHS staff the additional support they need throughout it.

I fully support the Government's announcement of a pay rise of 2.8%, backdated to April 2020, in line with the recommendations of the independent pay review body for dentists and doctors. This pay rise is an important acknowledgment of the commitment and hard work of staff throughout this difficult time.

Staff on the Agenda for Change (AfC) deal are already scheduled to receive pay rises, with the starting salary for a newly qualified nurse increased by more than 12% by the end of the AfC time period,



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with all nurses receiving pay increases of at least 6.5% and paramedics receiving up to 11%. The Government's unwavering support predates this unprecedented challenge. I understand that the NHS Pay Review Body, covering AfC staff, will return to making recommendations for next year's pay awards.

The NHS has once again been rated the best healthcare system in the world, something that is only possible thanks to the dedication and hard work of all NHS staff, supported by a strong economy.

Concerning pay awards in recent years, you may be aware that the NHS is one of few public sector workforces that receive annual incremental pay progression. Around half of staff on Agenda for Change contracts receive incremental pay of around 3% on average. For example, a typical qualified nurse can expect seven years of pay progression averaging around 3.8% a year, in addition to annual pay awards. This means pay rises in addition to the previous 1% headline award have been received.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**