



January 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about recognising the efforts of key workers.

I share your admiration for the frontline workers who are making immense sacrifices to help those affected by the coronavirus outbreak. Ongoing restrictions continue to present new challenges and our key workers are supporting people across the country.

Obviously, 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, with all nurses receiving pay increases of at least 6.5%; the Government has also introduced a nurses' bursary which provides at least £5,000 of additional support to nursing students.

I understand that the NHS Pay Review Body, covering AfC staff, will return to making recommendations for next year's pay awards.

On the second point in this campaign I shouldn't need to point out that when people voted to leave the EU, they did so in the knowledge that the free movement system imposed by the EU would end. The Home Secretary has been clear that she had a particular responsibility to take back control and end free movement once and for all – and, indeed, I believe even the Government's main opposition in Parliament accept this.

The Government is committed to building a fairer single, global immigration system which considers people based on their skills, rather than nationality. The Coronavirus pandemic has proven beyond all doubt the need for an immigration system that will not just allow but actively welcome a range of health professionals to the United Kingdom and this will be the case. The new Health and Care Visa creates a new fast-track visa route for eligible health and care professionals.

The Government has also taken action to ensure the immigration system does not unduly infringe the ability of the NHS to respond to the Coronavirus outbreak. It is good news that thousands of



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health professionals and their family dependants will have their visas extended for a year, free of all fees and charges.

This comes after a previous announcement offering free visa extensions for health professionals whose visas were due to expire between the 31st March 2020 and the 1st October 2020. This further action taken by the Government will now extend that offer from the 1st October 2020 until the 31st March 2021.

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. The dedication and sense of duty shown by key workers across many sectors of the economy during the outbreak has been exemplary. I am grateful for all their hard work in ensuring that society can continue to function.

Thank you again for contacting me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY