



June 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about NHS pay.

I believe that 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.

Following constructive negotiations between NHS employers and trade unions, a new deal will see a 6.5% pay rise over three years for one million NHS nurses, midwives and other Agenda for Change workers. Those on the lowest salaries in the NHS will see some of the largest proportionate pay rises: the lowest NHS starting salary will increase year on year from £15,404 to £18,005 in 2020/2021. Many nurses and healthcare assistants will enjoy pay increases of at least 25%. 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 in real terms by 2023/24, will fund the pay rise over the remaining two years.

I am proud 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, although I appreciate that this may not reflect your own circumstances.

Nurses 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. I know the Government is committed to supporting all nurses 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 introduced a nurses bursary which provides up to £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 nurses the additional support they need throughout it. I have also spoken regularly in the Commons of awarding NHS workers who served throughout COVID-19, a service/military medal of honour as well. This I also believe will create a suitable tribute to the sacrifices they have made.

Thank you once again for taking the time and effort to contact me. I wish you and your family all stay safe and well in these challenging times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Sunderland', is displayed on a light yellow rectangular background.

James Sunderland MP
Member of Parliament for the Bracknell Constituency
Bracknell, Crowthorne, Finchampstead, Sandhurst and Wokingham Without