



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From Helen Whately MP  
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The Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
By email to: [george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk)

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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 April to Matt Hancock on behalf of your constituent, [George Howarth](#) about pay for NHS staff.

The NHS does a fantastic job providing absolutely world-class care. In the face of the enormous pressures of COVID-19, our NHS staff have been extraordinarily dedicated, resourceful and compassionate, going the extra mile to look after patients in the most challenging of circumstances. We are incredibly grateful for their amazing efforts and I would like to thank everyone who works in the NHS.

By giving an uplift to NHS pay when uplifts in the wider public sector have been paused, the Government is acknowledging the extraordinary work of NHS staff, who have gone above and beyond throughout the pandemic. However, in doing so we must also acknowledge the huge strain that the pandemic has put on public finances.

It is important to stress that the affordability consideration set out in our written evidence does not prejudge the role of the pay review bodies (PRBs), which are independent advisory bodies made up of industry experts. Their recommendations are based on a comprehensive assessment of evidence from a range of stakeholders, including trades unions. They consider a wide range of factors, including the cost of living, recruitment and retention, affordability and value for money for the taxpayer, and wider public and private sector earnings.

We have asked the NHS PRB to report later this spring, and the Government will take the time to carefully consider its recommendations before responding.

The range of benefits available to nurses and other NHS staff exceeds that available in many other sectors, and the value of the total reward package has been increasing in recent years. The total reward offer is not just about pay; it includes access to the NHS Pension Scheme, which is one of the best available, a generous annual leave allowance and many additional benefits, such as support for learning and development.

I hope this reply is helpful.

**HELEN WHATELY**