

PE1808/A

Scottish Government submission of 31 August 2020

In consideration of this petition the following response is provided.

Scottish Ministers are very appreciative of the tremendous efforts of all NHS Agenda for Change staff and NHS Social Care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are an inspiration to us all and we are very grateful for their extraordinary hard work, dedication, skill and commitment as we continue to respond to this unprecedented situation.

The 2020 pay settlement which was recently announced for the NHS in England was a 2.8% uplift from 1 April 2020 for Doctors and Dentists, and Scotland is implementing an analogous 2.8% uplift for Doctors and Dentists. Agenda for Change staff in both England and Scotland are subject to separate 3 year pay deals which were agreed in 2018, covering the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021. In England, this has meant an increase in consolidated pay for most staff at the top of their band, of 6.5% over this period. Pay for equivalent staff members in Scotland has, in contrast, increased by 9% and staff not yet at the top of their band will have seen their pay increase by even more, in some cases by over 27%.

To take NHS nurses as an example, Scottish nurses are the best paid in the UK, with the salary of a Band 5 nurse at the top of their pay scale currently 3.38% higher than their English equivalent, and Band 5 staff still moving up the scale saw their pay increase by 15.7% on average (just less than £4,000).

The pay deal in Scotland also encompasses significant restructuring of Agenda for Change pay bands, leading to higher starting pay and shorter journeys to the top of bands. 2020-21 is the last year of this pay deal, and while pay for most staff at the top of their bands increased by 1.67% from 1 April 2020 in England, the increase in Scotland is 2.95% for the equivalent staff members, which is also in excess of the 2.8% uplift announced for Doctors and Dentists in 2020-21.

As people would rightly expect, in Scotland we discuss issues of pay, reward and recognition in partnership with both NHS employers and Staff Side Trades Unions. We have always tried to be as fair as possible with regard to NHS pay and our Agenda for Change staff were already the best paid in the UK before the three year deal. The more generous settlement agreed for Scotland has only served to increase that gap.

The Scottish Government is committed to working together with Staff Side organisations to agree an approach to a pay deal for 2021-22. We have regular meetings with NHS employers and Trades Unions and are working with both to agree a timetable in order to secure a new pay deal for 2021-22 and will bring forward proposals in due course.