

# Bonus payment for NHS and social care workers

## Pandemic workforce thanked for their service.

The First Minister announced a one-off payment for those working in the NHS and social care, saving lives and caring for those who need it, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

A pro rata payment of £500 will be made as soon as is practicable to all NHS and social care workers employed since 17 March 2020 – including staff who have had to shield, or who have since retired.

This investment of around £180 million will benefit over 300,000 staff, including nurses, porters, doctors, primary care staff, homecare workers, care home staff, hospice staff and residential child care staff.

Nicola Sturgeon said: “Back in the spring, at the height of the first wave of COVID, many of us publicly – and often loudly – showed our appreciation for the work our NHS and social care staff were doing.

“The applause was important, but it was never enough. Our appreciation must be shown in a more tangible way.

“We’re in the early stages of negotiating a new pay deal for NHS Agenda for Change staff for 2021/22. The UK Government’s public sector pay policy will not make that task easy, but we will do our level best to give NHS staff the pay increase they deserve. However, these negotiations will take time to conclude.” Those who have worked in our hospitals and care homes – at the sharpest end of the COVID trauma – deserve

recognition now.

“So I can announce today that, on behalf of us all, the Scottish Government will give every full time NHS and social care worker £500 as a one-off thank you payment for their extraordinary service in this toughest of years. Those who work part time will get a proportionate share.

“The money will be paid in this financial year and it will be separate from any negotiations about pay for the longer term. There are no strings attached.” Of course, a payment like this can never come close to expressing our full admiration for those who have cared for us so heroically. But to our health and care workers, it is a demonstration of what we collectively owe you – and a heartfelt thank you for the sacrifices you have made.”

UNISON Scotland regional secretary Mike Kirby said: “We welcome today’s announcement on a bonus payment for NHS and social care workers which is the result of many months of pressure from UNISON, Scotland’s largest union. It is no less than they deserve for taking care of us and the most vulnerable in our society during this unprecedented crisis.

“These are all just ordinary people who have been thrust into an extraordinary situation and it is high time the Scottish government recognises them for the vital work they do – not only during the pandemic – but each and every day.

“There is still a lot of work still to be done to work out the detail and, importantly, how we can get the money into the pockets of our hard-working and dedicated NHS and social care workers. UNISON will continue to work with the Scottish government to ensure this happens as soon as possible.”

Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard said: “A one off payment is no substitute at all for the significant increase in salary that all Scotland’s health and care workers deserve.

“This sum announced by Nicola Sturgeon will not make up for the years of pay restraint and austerity that staff in these sectors have had imposed on them by Tory and SNP ministers.

“Many care home workers are part time, so the fear is that they will end up with a derisory payment.

“There must also be a commitment to a generous year-on-year increase in pay for all key workers, who are Scotland’s Covid heroes.”

Scottish Greens co-leader Patrick Harvie MSP said: “I’ve no doubt the announcement of a £500 payment to NHS and social care staff will be warmly welcomed by the dedicated workers, who have gone above and beyond the call of duty throughout this pandemic. An ad hoc payment must not become an alternative to a proper uplift in the Scottish government’s pay policy though. It’s essential that negotiations with trade unions are prioritised, and that the Tory pay freeze is rejected, so that everyone working to deliver our public services receives the pay increase that they deserve. The Scottish Government must also move faster to rollout routine COVID testing throughout the health and care workforce as quickly as possible.