



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01808

Name of petitioner

Gerald Seenan

Petition title

Remuneration of vital public service employees

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to substantially increase the remuneration of vital public service employees, especially NHS and community care staff.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have written to Nicola Sturgeon, MSP.

Petition background information

The COVID-19 crisis has raised awareness across the globe of our dependence on those who provide vital public services to support us as individuals and communities. The most important vital services are those that provide care directly for the sick and the vulnerable, ensuring they are properly treated medically, have sufficient food, and have a comfortable place to live in.

In recognition of the value of vital public service workers to the entire population this petition recommends that as a first step in establishing the priority we attach to these services, those involved in vital public services are given a substantial increase in remuneration.

Since the coronavirus epidemic started, we have all witnessed the commitment and dedication of vital public services employees engaged in providing medical or community care for those in need across Scotland. Many of us have family members, friends and neighbours who are involved directly in these services and have seen first-hand the risks they have willingly taken to provide medical and other types of support to the sick and vulnerable.

As of 28th April 2020 over 100 NHS employees across the UK have died from coronavirus, a clear indication of the risks they have taken in providing our community with support.

All the medics and community support personnel involved are of such immense value

to our wellbeing as a society that they deserve to be permanently given a far greater status in our priorities as a nation. As a result the framework within which their remuneration is determined should reflect, to a far greater extent, their value to us.

I recognise an increase in wages for care workers has already been announced but believe the proposed increase is far below what those in vital public services as a whole are worth to Scotland.

This proposed increase in remuneration represents a political choice that can be made in favour of the jobs we depend upon most for our wellbeing and the dedicated people who carry them out, often under immense pressure.

The inevitable cost to the public purse cannot be measured in normal economic terms, for the simple reason that, as we have all seen, we depend entirely on the vital public services for our lives and our wellbeing. Nothing comes close to that with respect to the rewards that ought to be attached to those services. It is therefore incumbent on us, through politicians, to permanently establish a special case within the public purse for this purpose.

The proposed substantial increase in remuneration will benefit Scotland as a whole through:

- recognising and focusing on the vital public services that we depend upon;
- creating a sense of value within the vital public services community and fostering a boost to their self-esteem; and
- continuing to attract the dedicated staff required to sustain vital public services.

Remuneration alone does not foster commitment and loyalty, especially for those who have chosen to enter the caring professions. However, such an increase is a practical signal that demonstrates the value we wish to put on vital public service employees and our commitment to have them properly rewarded.

Each of us could need vital public services, especially the NHS and community support. These services can only be provided by trained and experienced staff; however it appears we only recognise this at times of crisis.

No other form of employment puts lives so at risk whilst providing critical services to those in need. Yet the disparity that exists in remuneration resulting from "market forces" shows the value to society of different jobs has become entirely distorted.

Some examples have received attention in recent years, such as the disparity between boardroom remuneration and that of ordinary employees, the distorted value put on popularity and celebrity in the salaries of sections of the media, and in entertainment and sports such as football. Whilst we may wish to see people well rewarded for such work, none of them are as important to our wellbeing, or involve the risks inherent in the job, as those employed in vital public services.

Only government can lead the way in tackling this distortion, and there has never been a better time to start than now, while people's minds are turned towards the caring professions, and recognise their true value to society as a whole.

When the coronavirus threat has eventually subsided, those employed in vital public services will continue to dedicate themselves to helping the sick and the vulnerable, often putting themselves, and potentially their families, at risk in doing so.

Now is surely the time to show our appreciation for the work they do, by ensuring their remuneration is increased at the earliest opportunity to truly reflect the value we put on their vital work.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01808>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

25 / 06 / 2020

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Do you agree that the remuneration of our vital public services, such as the NHS and community care services, should be permanently increased?

Do you agree increasing the remuneration of those providing vital public services will help create a sense of value and attract the dedicated staff required to sustain vital services?