

Senior medics rake in £15k a head as NHS bonuses soar

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Bonuses were paid to thousands of leading NHS consultants last year, averaging more than £15,000 per head, it has been revealed.

Research by the Scottish Conservatives has shown £43 million was awarded in 2016/17 in the form of distinction awards and discretionary points.

They go to consultants and other senior medics deemed to have performed above expectation, and the figure has increased by nearly £6 million in the space of a year.

The statistics – obtained through Freedom of Information – show £43,038,750 was paid to 2858 recipients in the last 12 months.

The rise occurred despite SNP pledges to cut down on the bonus culture within Scotland's NHS at a time of financial restraint.

In 2010, when she was health secretary, Nicola Sturgeon pledged to bring the issue under control.

But these increasing figures show more than £100,000 in taxpayers' cash is being spent on these awards every day.

NHS Greater and Glasgow and Clyde paid out the most, handing senior medics more than £10 million last year.

Other big spenders included Lothian (£6 million), Tayside (£3.6 million), Grampian (£3.5 million) and Lanarkshire (£3.1 million).

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"There's nothing wrong with hardworking medical professionals being incentivised and rewarded for their work.

"And of course there's an acceptance that the NHS has to pay competitively if it wants the best staff.

"But senior medics like consultants are already very well remunerated, and many – including NHS workers further down the chain – will question the sheer scale of these payments.

“The NHS is extremely hard up for cash, and these are payments worth tens of millions of pounds.

“It’s another example of the SNP government saying it’s going to do something, then forgetting about it more or less immediately.

“Scotland’s NHS deserves a government at Holyrood which pays more attention.”

Notes to editors:

To see the full figures visit:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Bonuses-FOI.xlsx>

Nicola Sturgeon pledged to crack down on the NHS bonus culture in 2010, and has been repeatedly criticised for failing to do so:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/msps-criticise-rise-in-nhs-consultant-bonuses-1-3739947>