

Written Answers from the Department of Health and Social Care – Number of additional non-medical staff hired since 2019

This question reveals a large build up in staff over the last three years. I will ask for more detail of who they are and what they are doing:

The Department of Health and Social Care has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (123838):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many additional non-medical staff have been recruited to the NHS since the end of 2019. (123838)

Tabled on: 16 January 2023

Answer:

Will Quince:

The following table shows the increase in number of full-time equivalent non-medical staff, by staff group, working in National Health Service trusts and commissioning bodies from the end of 2019 to the latest month that the data is available.

Staff group	December 2019	October 2022	Change
Non-medical professionally qualified clinical staff	479,815	527,280	47,465 (9.9%)
Support to clinical staff	341,992	385,084	43,092 (12.6%)
NHS infrastructure support staff	180,540	205,321	24,781 (13.7%)
Total non-medical staff	1,002,347	1,117,685	115,338 (11.5%)

The answer was submitted on 23 Jan 2023 at 17:57.

Help the self employed

The UK needs more self employed people. It needs more self employed people who can go on to employ others and to set up small businesses. More self employment brings more choice, more innovation., more local service . Out of a swelling host of self employed more larger businesses will emerge when

someone's idea and dedication to service takes off.

The covid lockdowns damaged a lot of small businesses and hit many self employed hard. An older generation of self employed took a look at early retirement and some went for it, frustrated by the bans on their activities and the limitations placed on their customers by covid rules. Meanwhile changes to the rules of IR 35 in 2017 and 2021 made it more difficult for some to set up as self employed or to maintain that status even though they were genuinely on their own and searching for a range of customers and clients.

The government as it ponders how to encourage more people back into work at a time of more jobs than applicants should regard promotion of self employment as part of the answer. It should revisit tax rules to make sure they do not penalise those who are independent and not enjoying employee benefits from a single "client" whilst in practise just working for one company. Some setting up in business may well start with just one client or customer, but are open for others and trying to win others. They do not enjoy employee rights with their first customer, but are desperate to diversity their customer base.

Tackling strikes

I would welcome an update from the government on their response to the public sector strikes.

At the beginning the line was there was no point in talks between Ministers and staff where they are covered by a Pay Review body. The government had met this year's recommendations in full and would now concentrate on next year's evidence to the Pay Review bodies, as should the Unions. In the case of the railways the Unions should negotiate with management, not with Ministers, whether in Railtrack or the private companies.

Then Ministers shifted to saying they would talk about pay and conditions more generally, though not for the current year, and would attend some of the rail talks.

More recently there have been briefings suggesting backdated pay might be included in next year's settlement, with speculation for health over a one off cost of living payment this year.

Ministers should start by recognising the different background and issues in the different activities. The railway is hopelessly short of fare paying passengers to meet its current high costs. Government needs to get the extraordinary high subsidy levels of the covid period down. The challenge should be to the industry to award higher pay based on improved working practises and on selling more tickets.

Health is different. There is a bursting order book and many thousands of unfilled vacancies. There are problems retaining existing staff including some higher paid doctors. There are also low paid staff who are squeezed by the sharp rises in food and energy prices.

The Health service needs its promised workforce plan to secure enough staff overall, to ensure appropriate grading and pay bands, and to meet reasonable employee expectations about living with high inflation. If the PM and Treasury are against additional money for NHS budgets then the cost of medical staff pay has to be met from other savings within the large health budget.

Davos does not rule the world

I do not get invited to Davos. Reading about what the guests say and do, I can hear all the same things in the Commons from Labour, The Lib Dems and SNP. There is nothing secret in the Davos remedies. Those who get reported at Davos tell us what most western governments and political parties are already saying. The business people who go want to win and keep government business.

Their main preoccupation is climate change. They regard this as the biggest task facing mankind, as they think man made CO₂ is the only driver of climate change and will transport us to too warm a world. They wish to transform what we eat, how we heat, how and if we travel, how business produces things by ending the use of fossil fuels. They still have not worked out what mixture to go for in green hydrogen, or renewable electricity with batteries, or restricted use of heating and travel. They are regularly criticised for failing to lead by example as they fly around in private jets, ride in chauffeured cars and stay in air conditioned hotels.

They dress this up as good for green jobs, without answering questions about how much this huge transition will cost, how much capital in present energy and industry will need to be written off and how many jobs will be lost as factories, mines, oil and gas wells and traditional processes are closed.

They also favour open borders and free movement of people. They speak of diversity and tolerance, though they are often intolerant of different opinions to their own. They like every type of diversity save diversity of thought.

The disappointment about Davos is twofold. They do not invite people who will challenge the governing consensus. They fail to engage with the important difficult questions like Who and what caused the inflation? How can we boost real incomes? Why did President Biden deliver Afghanistan to the Taliban? How do we stop Russia blowing up Ukrainian cities?

The world has too many globe trotting conferences to repeat the doctrines and

policies which have failed. It needs some new thinking.

The wind does not blow enough

In the cold snap we are experiencing demand for electricity has risen as you would expect. There has been some wind, but we have needed to use coal fired power, all our gas availability and the wood burning biomass stations. Typically the fossil fuel fired generators have been supplying well over half, with renewables back down to around a quarter.

This cold snap has reminded us it is not just on windless days we have a problem. Because renewable power often is well below theoretical capacity, and because we are generally short of power when demand is high, we need all the fossil fuel power we can get.

Those who plan a rapid transition to net zero need to recognise that this is the starting position. Were the public to adopt electric heating and electric vehicles in the way the net zero plans require we would need a huge increase in generating capacity to meet all the extra demand. At the moment the bulk of our transport energy requirements are met from diesel, aviation spirit and petrol and the bulk of our home heating and industrial process is provided by gas.

Before we can expect wholesale public conversion to electric vehicles and heating we need reassurance that the large increase in renewable power generation and the accompanying big increase in the grid capacity and street cable networks has been put in to meet all the extra demand that will create.