

[News story: NHS-funded nursing care rate for 2017 to 2018](#)

The reduction follows a [review of agency costs by Mazars LLP in 2017](#)

Registered nursing care for eligible nursing home residents is funded by the NHS, with the standard weekly rate per patient currently set at £156.25. This was a 40% increase on the 2015 to 2016 rate following an earlier review of the overall rate by Mazars in 2016.

In announcing the 40% increase last year, the government committed to further review the contribution of agency staff costs to the rate. In line with Mazars' latest evidence on agency costs, the government will now reduce the agency cost component of the rate by £3.29 to allow for lower agency costs. This reduction is partially offset by an uplift in the remainder of the rate by 1.7% to reflect overall nursing wage pressures.

These rates are based on the best evidence currently available to the Department of Health on the costs of providing nursing care in the sector.

The Department of Health plans to consult on the introduction of a regional rate of NHS-funded nursing care ahead of future rate change announcements.

Methodology

The headline agency cost reduction calculated by Mazars (on page 4 of their report) has been uprated based on a 1% uplift. The Department of Health has decided that for the non-agency component of the rate, a 1.7% uplift for overall changes in staffing costs should be applied for a full year (this approach is based on recommendations from the Mazars 2016 review).

The Department of Health has therefore taken the agency rate on page 15 of the most recent Mazars report and applied a consistent 1.7% methodology for 6 months of the year. This is because the agency data runs to September 2016 (see page 35 of report). This ensures the uprate methodology for both the agency and non-agency component of the rate is on a consistent basis, and uprated to April 2017 for overall estimated changes in staffing costs.

The higher rate of NHS-funded nursing care will be reduced to £213.32 per week, the same percentage decrease as applied to the standard weekly rate (this is only relevant for those people who were already on the higher rate in 2007 when the single band was introduced).

John McDonnell response to the Government's u-turn on £2 billion NICs rise in the Budget

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor,

responding to the Government's u-turn on its £2 billion NICs rise in the Budget

last week, said:

"This

is a humiliating reversal for the Chancellor forced upon him by Labour's opposition. His authority is now shredded after just one Budget, and he tore up

a manifesto commitment to do it.

"We

welcome the Government's decision to finally listen to Labour's calls made in Jeremy Corbyn's Budget response along with those of business groups like the Federation of Small Businesses to not go ahead with an unfair £2bn tax rise on

low and middle earners. But they should never have been placed in this position

to start with, and now we face yet another Tory Budget only a year on with a blackhole in the billions. In 2015, we had the tax credit shambles. In 2016, we

had Personal Independence Payments reversal. Now in 2017 we have the u-turn on

National Insurance Contributions.

"There will be millions of working people who are now breathing a sigh of relief, but it is the Chancellor who should be holding his breath as this episode throws up urgent questions that he and the Cabinet must now answer.

"Did the

Prime Minister or the rest of the Cabinet, who must have seen the Budget in advance and known this measure was to be implemented, raise their concerns with

the Chancellor before he announced it, worrying millions of families? It was in

the weekend papers before the Budget so they can't say they were unaware it was

to happen.

"This is also the second year we have had a Tory Budget with a black hole in it

worth billions. This is not acceptable. What will he do to fill the shortfall

in a Budget he delivered less than a week ago without pursuing unfair tax increases or further cuts to public services? As the Budget will still see working people £1,400 worse off under the Government.

"On the day the Brexit Secretary has admitted that he hasn't looked into the costs of the Prime Minister's negotiating strategy, this is yet more proof that there is disarray at the top of a government clearly making things up as they go along.

"We need answers from the Chancellor and accountability at the top of government. In no workplace would such practices be allowed to continue, and it should not be allowed from those responsible for the public finances. Labour's new roundtable on self-employment will bring together business organisations, trade unions and self-employed groups to lay out a serious and realistic strategy to provide a fair deal for the self-employed at a time of major labour market changes. We are proud to be the party of working people, small businesses, and the self-employed."

[Grounds for indyref2 have 'collapsed'](#)

15 Mar 2017



The Scottish Conservatives have said the justification for a second referendum on independence has "collapsed" following SNP admissions it has dumped plans for immediate EU membership.

In reports today, SNP sources confirmed that an independent Scotland would no longer seek to apply to become a member of EU after a vote for separation.

This is despite the fact that Nicola Sturgeon has used the decision to leave the European Union as a reason for holding another divisive referendum on independence – and has consistently said her plan is to apply for EU membership.

It comes as new polls today reveal that support for independence has fallen.

The same poll shows that only 35 per cent of people want the SNP to spend the next two years diverting attention away from the day job and on another referendum campaign.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“Nicola Sturgeon’s grounds for a referendum have simply given way beneath her.

“We are told an immediate referendum campaign is necessary because we are leaving the European Union.

“Yet the SNP is u-turning on immediate EU membership and saying Scotland wouldn’t seek to become a member.

“If European Union membership is the reason for a referendum, what is the point of holding one if the plan isn’t go back in?

“Nicola Sturgeon’s reckless referendum plan has collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions.

“As even the SNP acknowledges, the UK union is by far Scotland’s most important market place and partner.

“Independence would wreck that union. It is time for the SNP to stop the games, and get back to the day job it has ignored for the last 10 years.”

It was reported today that the SNP no longer wants to immediately reapply for EU membership in the event of independence:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/15/nicola-sturgeon-abandons-bid-remain-eu-poll-shows-record-level/>

The Government is recklessly talking up the idea of crashing out of the EU with no deal – Keir Starmer

Keir

Starmer MP, Labour’s Shadow Brexit Secretary, responding to David Davis’ admission that the Government has not carried out an assessment of the economic impact of leaving the EU without a deal, said:

“The Government is recklessly talking up the idea of crashing out of the EU with no deal. They have repeated the mantra that ‘no deal is better than a bad deal’.

“But

we now know they have made no assessment of the economic impact of the Prime Minister failing to secure a deal.

“What’s

clear, from the CBI and others, is that there is no result that would be worse

for the British economy than leaving with no deal; no deal would be the worst possible deal. The Government should rule out this dangerous and counter-productive threat before Article 50 is triggered.”

Ministers urgently need to come up with credible and comprehensive strategy to minimise prevalence of lung diseases – Sharon Hodgson

Sharon

Hodgson MP, Labour’s Shadow Minister for Public Health, reacting to the British Lung Foundation’s report into the economic cost of lung disease in the UK, said:

“Lung

disease is a major health issue here in our country. The British Lung Foundation’s eye-opening report today is an important step in highlighting the

staggering and rising cost of this illness. There is not only a financial toll

for our society but for the NHS as well. It is so important that we do all we can to address the various lung-related illnesses and diseases that people face

and make inroads into improving respiratory health.

“Ministers

urgently need to come up with a credible and comprehensive strategy to minimise

the prevalence of lung diseases in our country, and also to reduce the costs of

this illness on our society and our already stretched NHS.

“The cost of lung disease in the UK is getting

worse by the year and this enormous human and financial impact just can’t be allowed to continue. The Government must be much more proactive in raising awareness among the public and investing in preventative health measures

which
can head off the risks of lung disease in years to come.”