April 2020



Thank you for contacting me about the #ProtectNHSWorkers campaign.

NHS staff, care workers and other medical professionals are on the frontline in the fight against coronavirus, and I am in awe of their dedication, skill and professionalism.

Let me assure you that ministers are doing everything they can to ensure NHS and care staff have the equipment and resources they need to get our country through this crisis.

The Government is working around the clock to get frontline NHS and care workers the equipment they need to do their jobs safely and continue saving lives. While there is huge demand for equipment at this time, the Government is buying millions more and working with British manufacturers and our international allies to secure months more of supplies. More than a billion items of PPE have been delivered since the start of the outbreak and the Government has also appointed Paul Deighton, who was the Chief Executive of the London 2012 Olympics, to lead on our domestic efforts to increase the supply of PPE.

I can also assure you that all NHS staff who need a test for coronavirus are now able to receive one. The Government is also testing the families of NHS workers, as well as other critical public-sector workers, including those who work for the police and fire services. It has put a five-point strategy in place to dramatically increase the number of tests, with the aim of reaching 100,000 a day by the end of April.

The Government will continue to do all it can to work to ensure our NHS staff are protected and supported as they carry out their lifesaving work. On issues such as sick pay, we have made Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) available for people with Covid-19 symptoms available from day one of their illness (it was available after four days previously) and ensured stronger welfare support for people who might not be eligible for SSP. The Chief Executive of NHS England has already written to senior NHS leaders to make clear that staff should be offered NHS-reimbursed hotel accommodation so they can continue to work if they are affected by PHE’s 14day household isolation policy.

This outbreak reminds us of the huge debt of gratitude we all owe the brilliant NHS and care staff working in this country and I can assure that the Government will continue to ensure they are supported.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**