Labour promises a pay rise for ‘undervalued’ nurses

By Stephanie Jones-Berry @NurseNewsSteph

The Labour Party has pledged a pay rise for ‘undervalued, overworked and underpaid’ nurses and other NHS workers if it wins the general election.

The party has made three key pledges to NHS staff:

» Scrapping the cap on NHS pay.
» Reinstating the NHS student bursary.
» Legislating on safe staffing levels.

Shadow health secretary Jonathan Ashworth told last week’s Unison health conference: ‘Our NHS staff are the very pride of Britain. Yet they are ignored, insulted, undervalued, overworked and underpaid by this Tory government. Not anymore. Enough is enough.

‘A Labour government will scrap the pay cap and give our NHS workers the pay they deserve. We’ll invest in their education and training – we’ll bring back bursaries, which the Tories scrapped.

He added: ‘We are thousands short on the numbers of nurses, midwives, GPs and paramedics that we need. The next Labour government will legislate to ensure safe staffing levels in England’s NHS.’

Labour’s NHS commitments were welcomed by health unions. RCN general secretary Janet Davies said the college had long campaigned to scrap the 1% pay cap and that nurses’ pay packets had been cut by 14% in real terms.

She said: ‘It is a political choice to increase investment in health and social care and we call on all political parties to go further and commit to the long-term funding that patients and services need.’

Royal College of Midwives policy, employment relations and communications director Jon Skewes said they were ‘welcome commitments’ from Labour: ‘They recognise the commitment on the part of our hard-working midwives and government will legislate to ensure safe staffing levels in England’s NHS.’

A trauma nurse coordinator who cared for people injured in the Westminster terror attack is running a marathon to support her colleagues.

Emily Ashworth will raise money for Imperial College Healthcare Charity when she runs the marathon in Prague, Czech Republic, on 7 May.

Following the London attack, Ms Ashworth used her role at St Mary’s Hospital in Paddington to ensure the injured had the right support to continue their recovery after discharge. She said: ‘It was a privilege to be part of the team. It inspired me to do this marathon to support our work.’

Read more: rcni.com/prague-marathon
other NHS staff to deliver the safest and best possible care.’
Liberal Democrat health spokesperson Norman Lamb commented: ‘Labour has already spent this money ten times over.
‘The Liberal Democrats will be honest with the British people about the bold solutions needed to tackle the NHS and care crisis.
‘We have been clear that we will raise taxes to pay for the NHS and social care.’

‘Difficult decision’
Health secretary Jeremy Hunt told BBC Radio 4’s Today Programme that NHS staff ‘are working harder than they have ever worked before – we have said that the biggest priority for NHS staff is to get more staff on the wards’.
He said: ‘When I arrived as health secretary we had seen a decline in nurse numbers on the wards and we are up by nearly 12,000 now.’
He added that cutting the bursary for undergraduate nursing students in England from August this year was a ‘difficult decision’, but said the changes mean more nurses will be trained in the future.
‘The reason we have taken that very difficult decision is precisely because we want to train more nurses and, as a result of that policy change, we can train record numbers in the next few years.’
He said a good Brexit outcome was critical for future health and social care funding and that details would be set out in the Conservatives’ election manifesto.

A nurse-turned-novelist has become a Sunday Times top 10 bestselling author.
Mental health nurse Ali Land, pictured, had agents and publishers vying for her novel Good Me Bad Me before she had finished writing it. Ms Land signed a deal with Penguin in the UK, which published the book in January, before the rights were sold in 23 territories.
The story, a thriller told from the perspective of Milly, a teenage girl whose mother is a serial killer, was inspired by real-life conversation.
‘It was not a real story, but it was a real talk I’d had with a teenage girl,’ said Ms Land, who spent ten years nursing children and young people in the UK and Australia. ‘Her self-harming was escalating. She was convinced that no matter what she did, she would turn into her mother. Although her mum wasn’t a serial killer, she had been involved in the serious harm of young children. The girl described clearly her insides were black, and she would always be bad.
‘I remember feeling so haunted by that and the burden she had to carry,’ Ms Land said. ‘I started thinking: imagine having a criminal mum and thinking you would be like that, no matter what you did – and so the character of Milly was born.’
Ms Land added that since publication of her book, she has had the opportunity to talk about mental health issues in public.
‘It’s so powerful – I’m not working in a clinical sense, but I still feel like I am working as a nurse and I don’t ever want to lose that.’