



The problem of course is that much of the spending we need to curb isn't just 'spending' it's about people and their livelihoods. Yes public services are about buildings and drugs and equipment but most of what is spent is about people, like you, who the State pays to provide those services which we all value so much.

To put this in perspective, 25% of the workforce is employed in the public sector so the bill for increasing pay even by a small amount is enormous. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (the most highly respected independent organisation that analyses Government spending) reports that if we followed Labour's plan on public sector pay rises, it would cost £54 billion over the Parliament.

There are alternatives of course. We can cut public spending in other areas, like overseas aid or in schools or benefits for example, allowing more money to be available to increase wages; we could cut workforce numbers, so allowing more money to be paid to those remaining; or we could raise taxes to pay for it which, of course, would reduce the amount in those same workers' pockets either directly or indirectly. None of these is an easy option.

It is also true that the state of the wages of those in the public sector are not always as simple as they seem. For example, because of grade progression, the average nurse's wage in the NHS has risen by 3.4% a year over and above the 1% pay cap.

Finally on this issue I should explain that in the next couple of months the Government will receive the recommendations of the various independent boards that make recommendations on public sector pay. These will be looked at very carefully and the Government will do as much as it can to implement their recommendations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Heather', followed by a long horizontal line.

Mrs. Heather Wheeler
Member of Parliament for South Derbyshire