

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

NURSES

1.

Prime Minister.

Do you want the NHS to
 remain this happy or labour
 unions?

Yes no

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at Health CG MCS
 JV
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You will have seen from today's press that the Staff Side of the Nurses' and Midwives' Whitley Council have asked to see me to seek more money for the nurses' pay negotiations this year.

I am proposing to meet them on Monday, on the strict understanding that the Government is not intending to take over the negotiations. I shall tell them firmly that the money that has been made available for pay increases in the NHS is what the Government believes the country can afford. I shall remind them that, as an exceptional measure, we have already made an extra £63 million available for the nurses' negotiations, and that in addition the Government is committed to seeking new, permanent arrangements for determining nurses' pay in the future. I shall also point out that, as I reported to you in my minute of 22 March, the number of nursing staff has increased by 34,000 between 1979 and 1981, and the Government has funded a reduction in nurses' hours from 40 to 37½ a week. I think that this last point substantially adds to our case - and of course you might also be asked about the position at Prime Ministers Questions.

Filed on
 Nat Health
 Pt 2
 Nat Health
 Service
 Manager

6½ - 7½

2½ years

24 March 1982

[Signature]

34,000 more
 nurses and midwives

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