

# 'Fat cat' pay of NHS bosses

## Quango chiefs criticised for salaries higher than the PM's as health service struggles with huge deficit

By Laura Donnelly HEALTH EDITOR

MORE than 600 NHS quango chiefs are now on six-figure salaries, with a doubling in the number earning more than the Prime Minister in just three years, new figures show.

Many of the highest earners have made repeated demands on govern-

ment to increase NHS funding as it battles against its worst financial deficit in history.

But figures uncovered by *The Daily Telegraph* show that the nine main health quangos are now employing 628 officials on salaries of at least £100,000. They include 93 taking home more than Theresa May's £149,440 salary - up from 48 at their predecessor bodies three years earlier.

Among the highest paid is the NHS deputy medical director, earning around £225,000 a year.

Dr Jonathan Fielden is currently suspended from work and banned from

contact with patients, after being arrested on suspicion of voyeurism.

The findings come as the NHS attempts to make £22 billion in savings. On Friday Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England, who earns around £195,000, told an audience: "We do need capital; we've said that from the get-go."

The previous day, Prof Sir Mike Richards, the chief inspector of hospitals paid around £240,000, said the NHS was standing on a "burning platform".

Last night, patients groups said the scale of the spending on salaries was "truly shocking".

Joyce Robins, of Patient Concern,

said the NHS was spending far too much on "spin operations and PR offensives" that diverted much-needed resources from the front line.

She added: "These figures are incredible and so depressing. So many nurses are rushed off their feet, so many patients treated in corridors and yet there are hundreds of fat cats being paid eye-watering sums, to waste money in meetings and committees."

Nursing leaders said the numbers on such high salaries could not be justified when the NHS was under such strain.

Janet Davies, chief executive of the Royal College of Nursing, said the fig-

ures were an "insult" to nursing staff who had seen pay fall 14 per cent behind the cost of living since 2010.

Many of the most expensive organisations are new structures, which were set up in 2013 following pledges to "streamline" the running of the NHS.

Public Health England (PHE) has 244 senior managers on six-figure salaries, with its best paid employee, Prof Frances Gould, earning between £235,000 and £240,000 as lead public health microbiologist for the North East.

NHS England has 187 senior officials earning at least £100,000. The highest

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