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31 January 2020

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
The Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing as Presidents of a range of Royal Colleges, learned societies and professional bodies representing physicians, radiologists, diagnostic and therapeutic radiographers, medical physicists and clinical and biomedical engineers working predominantly in the NHS.

We welcome the proposal, included in the Conservative Party manifesto for the December 2019 election, for an NHS visa scheme, to be introduced after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union on January 31, 2020.

The manifesto promised 'overseas qualified doctors, nurses and allied health professionals with a job offer from the NHS, who have been trained to a recognised standard, and who have good working English, will be offered fast-track entry, reduced visa fees and dedicated support to come to the UK with their families.'

We are seeking a clarification that allied healthcare professionals within this visa scheme will include medical physicists, clinical and biomedical engineers as well as diagnostic and therapeutic radiographers.

These groups are an essential, but often hidden part of the multidisciplinary healthcare workforce. They play a vital role in ensuring the safe and efficient use of modern healthcare technology for prevention, diagnosis and treatment. A radiotherapy service, for example, could not function without these personnel, who are key to the delivery of successful clinical patient outcomes.

These roles are also shortage occupations, with vacancy rates between 5 and 11 per cent. This shortfall cannot be redressed within the next five years with the current levels of training.

Contribution to the workforce from immigration is therefore essential and we are concerned they may not be included in the manifesto pledge.

It would be of great benefit to these groups and managers hiring these personnel within the NHS if you could please confirm their eligibility for the rapid access NHS visa scheme?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Handwritten signature of Stephen A. O'Connor in black ink, underlined.

Professor Stephen A. O'Connor
President, Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine

Handwritten signature of Professor Andrew Goddard in black ink.

Professor Andrew Goddard
President, Royal College of Physicians

Handwritten signature of Jeanette Dickson in black ink.

Dr Jeanette Dickson
President, The Royal College of Radiologists

Handwritten signature of Gill Hodges in black ink.

Gill Hodges
President, The Society and College of Radiographers

Handwritten signature of J. Phillips-Hughes in black ink.

Dr Jane Phillips-Hughes
President, British Institute of Radiology

Handwritten signature of Dr Brendan Cooper in blue ink.

Dr Brendan Cooper
Academy of Healthcare Science

CC

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Jeane Freeman OBE MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, The Scottish Government

Vaughn Gething AM, Minister for Health and Social Services, The Welsh Assembly Government

Robin Swann MLA, Minister for Health, Northern Ireland

Professor Dame Sue Hill OBE PhD DSC CBIol FRSB Hon FRCP Hon FRCPath, Chief Scientific Officer for England

Professor David Crossman, Chief Scientist, Scotland

Dr Rob Orford, Chief Scientific Adviser for Health, NHS Wales

Professor Ian Young, Chief Scientific Advisor to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland Executive

Suzanne Rastrick, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer, NHS England

Jennifer Keane, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer, Northern Ireland

Carolyn McDonald, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer, Scotland

Chief Allied Health Professions Officer, Wales

Karen Steward, Chief Scientific Officer, Scotland