



British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin

25 January 2021

By email:

Dr. Navina Evans,
Chief Executive Officer,
Health Education England
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Blenheim House
Duncombe Street
Leeds LS1 4PL

Mr. Danny Mortimer,
Chief Executive Officer,
NHS Employers
2 Brewery Wharf
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Leeds LS10 1JR

Dear Navina and Danny,

Covid-19 Vaccinations for migrant healthcare workers without NHS numbers

We understand that Covid vaccinations will only be administered to those with NHS numbers, which has raised concerns amongst some medical trainees who have been in contact with us.

It seems that international medical graduates (IMGs) who are not registered with a General Practitioner do not have an NHS number and therefore they will either experience a delay in accessing the Covid-19 vaccination, or not be eligible at all. IMGs tend to register with a GP when they require medical assistance and junior doctors who are in the first few years of working life, possibly because of the rotating nature of their jobs, are those identified as a group who do not have an NHS number. When they do require a GP, the process of registration usually takes about 24-48 hours to get an NHS number.

The national NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme, led by NHS England and NHS Improvement, works with the Personal Demographics Service (PDS), the national electronic database of NHS patient details, so that it can identify and validate a user's NHS number.

To avoid delay of access to this group of mobile doctors who move between hospitals during the initial years; greater awareness of the need and how to access to NHS numbers is needed through various networks, hospital/GMC inductions and at vaccination hubs/booking systems.

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This is needed to protect IMGs on the frontline who are contributing to health care delivery across the NHS when the workforce is stretched.

And while we have been made aware of the situation with IMGs, we think it is quite possible that newly recruited nurses and other migrant frontline workers might also suffer the same hurdles.

And so, what might be necessary is to remind new entrants to the NHS workforce that registration with GPs is now essential on arrival, coupled with ensuring our general practitioner colleagues are made aware of this issue to help streamline their registration.

Your support with this would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Ramesh Mehta
President

JS Bamrah
Chairman

Cc: Mr. Charlie Massey, CEO/Registrar, General Medical Council
Cc: Sir. Simon Stephens, CEO, NHS England
Cc: Ms. Ruth May, CNO, NHS England.

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