

7 December 2021
Ms Amanda Pritchard
Chief Executive Officer,
NHS England,
Area A, 6th Floor,
Skipton House,
London Road,
London SE1 6LH

Dear Ms Pritchard,

Winter pressures, Omicron strain of Covid19 and Healthcare staff

We write following a number of concerns expressed by our members about the sustained and immense pressure on all healthcare staff working in the NHS, and particularly those who are in the frontline.

As you will be aware, the NHS has been under pressure for the last decade, but particularly so since the Covid19 pandemic infected large numbers of our population. This has resulted in record numbers of deaths in the general population as well in healthcare professionals. With rising numbers of the new variant, the inevitable increase in influenza cases, and Trusts and Primary Care having to deal with the long backlog of non-Covid cases, we are already seeing hospitals at full capacity and GPs struggling to deal with their caseloads.

In this climate then it is crucially important to get the messaging right, and to make sure that this happens sooner than later to avoid the mistakes of the past two years. We acknowledge of course that but for a highly successful vaccination programme the numbers would have been vastly more.

To this end we would respectfully suggest that at the basic minimum instructions must go out to support the following: an increase in test and trace, the availability of appropriate PPE readily available in all clinical areas, including FFP3 masks which appear to be in short supply in some areas, an emphasis again on remote working wherever that is possible, instructions on self-isolation/quarantine so that those who are not required to do so can be facilitated to return to work more speedily than has been the case, and finally risk assessments to ensure those who are vulnerable such as BAME staff do not run the risk of being exposed to the virus at their workplace.

We believe strongly that while this may not entirely allay the pressure that many, if not most doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare staff have been experiencing, it will go some way to ensuring that the risk is minimised.

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Secretary: Prof Parag Singhal

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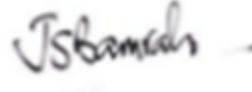
We would urge you therefore to act sooner rather than later.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Ramesh Mehta



J S Bamrah

cc: Mr Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

cc: Sir Chris Whitty, CMO, NHS England

cc: Professor Stephen Powis, Medical Director, NHS England

cc: Ms Prerana Issar, Chief People's Officer, NHS England

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