

The voice of frontline doctors

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Dear Rt Hon. Mr Sunak and Rt Hon. Ms Truss,

We write to you as one of you will imminently be our next Prime Minister with an NHS issue that needs immediate action. We are concerned about a ludicrous situation where we have doctors ready to start work in the NHS but not able to because of delays in red tape/bureaucracy.

It will not have escaped your attention that the NHS is currently plagued by record breaking waits that are being experienced by patients whether on a planned care waiting list, in Emergency departments up and down the country or for community services.

To address this as soon as possible, the NHS must address the large number of staff vacancies, including the 12000 shortfalls in doctors. To obtain the staff needed we must have an effective way of allowing Internationally trained doctors to be employed.

Yet, many doctors who were due to start work in August 2022, have not been able to due to excessive prolonged delays in:

- issuing of Certificates of Sponsorships
- processing of visas
- issuing of Biometric Residence Permits.

The issue has even reached the point where doctors have been sent to immigration detention due to these delays. This is unprecedented and unacceptable.

We know that over 5000 applications were made to Health Education England for Certificates of Sponsorship but this will underestimate the scale of this issue as many Internationally recruited doctors will be employed directly by their Hospital Trusts and will not be included in this figure.

We write to ask that these delays be addressed as a matter of the highest priority or patient safety will be compromised due to worsened short staffing. This is on top of the prolonged suffering experienced by each of these individuals waiting for their visas to start work.

Staffing recruitment and retention must be of the highest priority to address the problems the NHS faces for the next several years.

The simple solution to all these issues would have been to grant Indefinite Leave to Remain to all NHS staff, care workers and dependents who have worked through the pandemic. Unfortunately, a bill for this has been repeatedly kicked into the long grass over the last 2 years. We would urge your support in this matter.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Co-Chairs – Dr Ellen Welch and Dr Matt Kneale – DAUK

President - Dr Ramesh Mehta – BAPIO

National Secretary - Mr Amit Sinha - BIDA

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