

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Sent via email

17 November 2022

Dear Chancellor,

Re: NHS long-term workforce plan

We are writing as a coalition of 100 health and care organisations in support of publishing the NHS long-term workforce plan in full – including assessments of how many staff will be needed to keep pace with demand, which we believe will enable smarter long-term investment in the workforce.

With 7.1 million people currently on NHS waiting lists in England, there can be no doubt that urgent action is required to put the NHS on a firm footing. But as you will be only too aware, workforce is the key limiting factor in bringing down waiting lists and restoring timely access to care. There are currently 132,000 full-time equivalent vacancies in the NHS, a 25% increase from quarter 4 of 2021/22, and an estimated 165,000 vacant posts in social care. On average each GP looks after 16% more patients than they did in 2015.

The NHS long-term workforce plan that the government has committed to deliver is a vital opportunity to address endemic staff shortages and increase supply. **The workforce strategy must be published in full, including numbers of how many staff will be needed to keep pace with demand, alongside a commitment to provide the necessary funding. We ask that you and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care produce a timeline for publication.**

As you will remember, our 100 organisations first came together during the passage of the Health and Care Act to call for regular, independent assessments of how many health, public health and social care staff would be needed now and in future to keep pace with demand. We welcomed your support and backing for that call as Chair of the Health and Social Care select committee. Our organisations continue to believe that projections of future demand and supply would provide the strongest foundation for strategic workforce planning and support HM Treasury to make better long-term decisions about spending on health and social care in England.

Current shortages are leading in part to additional costs to the public purse as locums and agency staff are employed to plug gaps. **£7.1bn was spent on agency and bank staff in hospitals in England in 2020/21 alone, up from £6.2bn the year before.** Strategic increases in substantive staff would reduce reliance on locums and agency staff and provide cost savings in the long-run.

Overstretched staff picking up extra workload created by vacancies are also more likely to experience stress and burnout, with significant implications for both the retention of staff and the safety, quality and continuity of care for the public.

The country faces significant challenges: an ageing population, more people unable to work due to long-term sickness or reliant on long-term care, and long-standing regional and specialty shortages. But these are challenges that we can begin to address if we act now.

Investment in the NHS and social care is critical to a healthy population which is central to economic growth – but staff shortages mean that the roughly 13% of the population in England currently on waiting lists will spend longer waiting, risking further deterioration to their health.

A well-resourced health and social care workforce is central to enabling the NHS and local authorities to make the best use of public money and providing tax-payers with timely access to high quality health and social care. **All successful organisations do workforce planning to ensure they can meet demand. The NHS and social care system should be no exception.**

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we can work together to deliver the Prime Minister's pledge to deliver a stronger NHS.

Yours sincerely

1. *Academy of Medical Royal Colleges*
2. *Action Kidney Cancer*
3. *Age UK*
4. *Alzheimer's Society*
5. *Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland*
6. *Association of British Clinical Diabetologists*
7. *Association of British Neurologists*
8. *Association of Cancer Physicians*
9. *Asthma + Lung UK*
10. *Bliss*
11. *Blood Cancer UK*
12. *Bowel Cancer UK*
13. *Brain Tumour Research*
14. *brainstrust - the brain cancer people*
15. *Breast Cancer Now*
16. *British and Irish Association of Stroke Physicians*
17. *British Association of Dermatologists*
18. *British Cardiovascular Society*
19. *British Geriatrics Society*
20. *British Heart Foundation*
21. *British Medical Association (BMA)*
22. *British Nuclear Medicine Society*
23. *British Orthopaedic Association*
24. *British Psychological Society*
25. *British Society for Haematology*
26. *British Society for Rheumatology*
27. *British Thoracic Society*
28. *Cancer Awareness for Teens & Twenties*
29. *Cancer Black Care*
30. *Cancer Care Map*
31. *Cancer Research UK*
32. *Cancer52*
33. *Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*
34. *Children with Cancer UK*
35. *Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group*
36. *CLL Support*
37. *Crohn's & Colitis UK*
38. *Diabetes UK*
39. *Eve Appeal*
40. *Faculty of Dental Surgery, Royal College of Surgeons of England*
41. *Faculty of Physician Associates*
42. *Faculty of Public Health*
43. *Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare*
44. *Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine*
45. *Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust*
46. *Health Foundation*
47. *Intensive Care Society*
48. *Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust*
49. *Leukaemia UK*
50. *Live Through This*
51. *Macmillan Cancer Support*
52. *Medical Schools Council*
53. *Mencap*
54. *Marie-Curie*
55. *Mental Health Foundation*

56. *Mesothelioma UK*
57. *Mind*
58. *Myeloma UK*
59. *National Voices*
60. *Neurological Alliance*
61. *NHS Confederation*
62. *NHS Employers*
63. *NHS Providers*
64. *Ovacome*
65. *Ovarian Cancer Action*
66. *Pancreatic Cancer Action*
67. *Pancreatic Cancer UK*
68. *Parkinson's UK*
69. *Prostate Cancer UK*
70. *Rethink Mental Illness*
71. *Royal College of Anaesthetists*
72. *Royal College of Emergency Medicine*
73. *Royal College of General Practitioners*
74. *Royal College of Midwives*
75. *Royal College of Nursing*
76. *Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*
77. *Royal College of Occupational Therapists*
78. *Royal College of Ophthalmologists*
79. *Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health*
80. *Royal College of Pathologists*
81. *Royal College of Physicians*
82. *Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow*
83. *Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh*
84. *Royal College of Psychiatrists*
85. *Royal College of Radiologists*
86. *Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists*
87. *Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh*
88. *Royal College of Surgeons of England*
89. *Sarcoma UK*
90. *Society for Acute Medicine*
91. *Solving Kids Cancer*
92. *Stroke Association*
93. *Sue Ryder*
94. *Target Ovarian Cancer*
95. *Teenage Cancer Trust*
96. *The Brain Tumour Charity*
97. *The King's Fund*
98. *UK Kidney Association*
99. *UNISON*
100. *Versus Arthritis*
101. *Walk the Walk*
102. *Young Lives vs Cancer*
103. *Young Minds*

CC. Rt. Hon. Steve Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.