To the Secretaries of State for the Home Department, Exiting the European Union and Health

Via email

29 March 2017

Dear Secretaries of State

Following the triggering of Article 50 by the Prime Minister today, we are writing to you on behalf of the Cavendish Coalition to offer our support in developing a future immigration system that supplements our sectoral domestic recruitment work and ensures that the health and social care system has the workforce needed to deliver high quality, sustainable services.

The Cavendish Coalition brings together 34 health and social care organisations working across the UK to make certain that the health and social care system is able to retain and continue attracting the staff it needs – domestically, from the Europe and globally, following the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you as part of the consultation process around the forthcoming immigration white paper this summer and very much hope that you will agree to do so.

There are a number of unique factors which relate to the social care and health workforce, which are set out in the enclosed policy statement. From our perspective, these factors shape the three priority issues that the government must address during the negotiating period:

**Permanent leave to remain for EEA nationals in the health and social care sector.** A significant proportion of the UK health and social care workforce are drawn from the EEA; in some health and social care organisations, over 20% of the workforce are EEA nationals. To provide certainty for individuals and employers providing services to our people and communities, we are calling on the Government to quickly confirm the right to permanent residence of all people from the EEA working in social care and health care across the UK. We would also highlight the need for a streamlined and inexpensive process for claiming leave to remain which does not create additional administrative burden on employers.

**Sufficient transitional arrangements for EEA nationals leave to remain.** We have indicated that in the short to medium term it is not feasible to meet current health and social care sector staffing needs through either additional domestic recruitment or training activity alone. Due to the complexity of the immigration process for non-EEA nationals, meeting social care and health staffing needs through non-EEA recruitment is similarly unfeasible from our perspective. In order to ensure a stable pipeline of staff, we are urging any ‘cut-off’ date at which EEA nationals resident in the UK would be eligible to apply for permanent leave to remain to be as late as is practicable. For the stability of workforce supply, there should also be sufficient advance notice of any ‘cut off’ date to enable health and social care employers and candidates to make preparations and informed choices.
An immigration system which supports health and social care provision. Efforts to increase domestic workforce supply are vitally important and the Cavendish Coalition is committed to increasing local opportunities for UK citizens to train and work in the health and social care sectors. Increasing domestic supply will, however, take time. Both during the negotiating period and in the years after the UK leaves the EU, providing high quality and sustainable health and social care services will depend on workers from within and outside the EEA.

We regard withdrawing from the EU as providing an opportunity for the UK to establish new systems for managing labour migration in support of the Prime Minister's commitment to make the UK a magnet for global talent. We see it as vital that such systems recognise the contribution the health and social care sector provides to the UK economy and its population, with public service value used as a key assessment of ‘skill’ as opposed to salary.

Coalition members have sector insight and expertise to offer and are keen to support your departments to safeguard the supply of health and social care workers, now and in the future. We look forward to working with your teams in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Mortimer
Chief Executive
NHS Employers

Christina McAnea
National Secretary, Healthcare
UNISON

Nadra Ahmed OBE
Chairman
National Care Association
Cavendish Coalition members

The Cavendish Coalition is made up of 34 health and social care organisations all committed to the purpose of the group, these are:

Association of Dental Groups, David Worskett, Chair
Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, Margaret Willcox, President Elect
Association of Independent Healthcare Organisations, Fiona Booth, Chief Executive
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, Professor Dame Sue Bailey DBE FRCPsych, Chair
Association for Real Change, Lisa Lenton, England Director
Association of UK University Hospitals, Peter Homa CBE, Chair
British Dental Association, Peter Ward, Chief Executive
British Medical Association, Dr Mark Porter, Council Chair
Care England, Professor Martin Green OBE, Chief Executive
Care Forum Wales, Mario Kreft, Chair
Care and Support Alliance, Vicky McDermott, Chair
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Karen Middleton CBE, Chief Executive
Mental Health Network, Rebecca Cotton, Director of Mental Health Policy
National Association of Primary Care, Dr Nav Chana, Chairman
National Care Association, Nadra Ahmed OBE, Chairman
New NHS Alliance, Merron Simpson, Chief Executive
NHS Clinical Commissioners, Julie Wood, Chief Executive
NHS Confederation, Niall Dickson, Chief Executive
NHS Employers, Daniel Mortimer, Chief Executive
NHS European Office, Elisabetta Zanon, Director
NHS Partners Network, David Hare, Chief Executive
NHS Providers, Chris Hopson, Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care, Heather Moorhead, Director
Pharmacy Voice, Elizabeth Wade, Director of Policy
Registered Nursing Home Association, Frank Ursell, Chief Executive
Royal College of Nursing, Janet Davies, Chief Executive & General Secretary
Shelford Group, Sir Michael Deegan, Chair
Skills for Care, Sharon Allen, Chief Executive
National Care Forum, Vic Rayner, Executive Director
The Royal College of Midwives, Professor Cathy Warwick CBE, Chief Executive
The Welsh NHS Confederation, Vanessa Young, Director
UNISON, Christina McAnea, Head of Health
United Kingdom Homecare Association, Bridget Warr CBE, Chief Executive
Voluntary Organisations Disability Group, Professor Rhidian Hughes, Chief Executive