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Rt Hon Theresa May MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Home Secretary,

### **Employment of overseas healthcare professionals in the NHS**

The Chief Executive of NHS Employers, Daniel Mortimer, wrote on behalf of NHS organisations in England to your colleague the Immigration Minister on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015 regarding the current difficulties that NHS organisations are facing in relation to the employment of skilled healthcare professionals from outside the EEA.

Whilst we await a response to this letter we would like to make you aware of two immigration related issues which are hindering our ability to provide the right number of staff on our wards to deliver high quality care to our patients – the shortage occupation list and the way in which NHS applications are assessed and prioritised for restricted certificates of sponsorship.

We are seeking a pragmatic solution which enables the NHS to employ the clinical staff we have recruited from overseas to enable our teams to provide the responsive, high quality care our patients deserve and help us to address agency costs and retain the staff we have.

#### Background

As you will know, the NHS is experiencing unprecedented levels of demand and following the recommendations to increase staffing levels after the Inquiry into the dreadful events at Mid-Staffordshire we have needed to increase the numbers of clinical staff caring for patients.

The demand for trained nurses currently exceeds the available UK supply and even with the Government's helpful commitment to additional training places, a return to practice programme for nurses and a focus on retention, the gap will not be bridged for some time. This is because it takes four years to commission the extra places and train a nurse. We also know that after significant nurse recruitment from within the EEA in recent years this supply cannot now meet demand and an element of non-EEA recruitment is required.

### Shortage occupation list

Despite NHS organisations, independent healthcare providers and social care providers from around the country all experiencing difficulties in recruiting trained nursing staff over the last three years, regrettably nursing as an occupation was not included on the shortage occupation list earlier this year.

We have looked at the criteria for inclusion and know that nursing is a skilled occupation, is in national shortage and our strong view is that it is sensible to include nurses on the list as the supply from within the UK and EEA is unable to meet the volume required by the NHS.

### Points allocation process

Our second issue is grounded in the fundamental way in which certificates are allocated to employers on a monthly basis. We believe that using salary as the single metric for determining skill, priority and value places the NHS at a disadvantage when being assessed against applications from other industry and business and we would urge you to review the mechanism for allocation of certificates.

Over the last three months many of us have experienced applications rejected in large numbers. We anticipate that an additional 1000 certificates are to be requested for nurses in the next few months.

The three month delays experienced so far have a direct impact on service delivery and financial plans for these organisations and present challenges as the NHS prepares for the increased demand we see through the winter period.

### Moving forward

We welcome the important review you have commissioned from the Migration Advisory Committee around the Tier 2 route of the points based immigration system. NHS Employers is submitting written evidence on behalf of the NHS. As this is not due to report to you until December 2015 we would value anything that can be done in the interim to relieve the pressure on NHS by being able to employ the nurses who have been recruited from overseas.

We are keen to engage with you as you take forward the development and implementation of policy to ensure it can both meet the Government's commitment around migration and enable the NHS to operate efficiently.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you in more detail. NHS Employers can arrange this if you would find it useful.

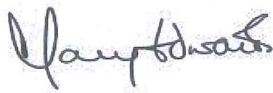
**Yours sincerely**



Daniel Mortimer  
Chief Executive  
NHS Employers



Sir Andrew Cash OBE  
Chief Executive, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust  
Chair of NHS Employers Policy Board



Mary Edwards  
Chief Executive  
Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Sir Leonard Fenwick CBE  
Chief Executive  
Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Andrew Foster  
Interim Chief Executive  
Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust



Mark Hackett  
Chief Executive  
University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust



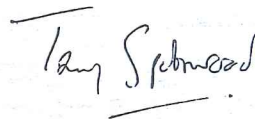
Dr Frank Harsent  
Chief Executive  
Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS  
Foundation Trust



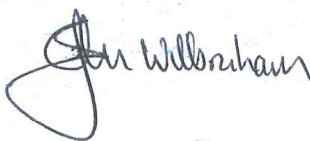
Sir Robert Naylor  
Chief Executive  
University College London Hospitals NHS  
Foundation Trust



Neil Nisbet  
Acting Chief Executive  
The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital  
NHS Trust



Tony Spotswood  
Chief Executive  
Royal Bournemouth & Christchurch Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust



John Wilbraham  
Chief Executive  
East Cheshire NHS Trust

cc. Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health  
Bob Alexander, NHS TDA  
David Bennett, Monitor  
Ian Cumming, HEE  
Simon Stevens, NHS England  
Jane Cummings, Chief Nursing Officer  
Janet Davies, Royal College of Nursing  
Christina McAnea, Unison