The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

15 June 2018

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to you in advance of any announcement to be made with regard to a ‘long-term funding settlement’ for the NHS, with a plea to you that the Government makes a meaningful commitment to invest the amount required by the NHS.

It was refreshing to note the Prime Minister’s recent concession that the NHS does indeed require a substantial increase in funding to place it on a more sustainable financial footing; it is what all stakeholders across the NHS and the medical profession have been united in calling for. The NHS simply cannot go on as it is currently being forced to do. Funding has not kept up with volume of patients or the reality of the complexity of patient conditions. Subsequently, patient outcomes and experiences are slipping.

Last winter demonstrated the unrelenting pressures on our health services, across primary and secondary care, and our patients are bearing the brunt of these pressures with waiting times and delays reaching historic highs. Unfortunately, this situation is not restricted to a seasonal surge; these pressures and their human cost is now commonplace across our NHS all year round and clearly demonstrates the need for a significant funding increase.

The BMA has identified that as a percentage of GDP, the UK’s spend on health and social care languishes significantly behind other leading European nations. We have called for the Government to raise funding, not beyond the spend of these nations, but in line with the average of these countries. Matching this funding would equate to a similar total to that which is proposed through a 4% increase which has been called for by the NHS itself, service providers, think tanks and royal colleges. An immediate real terms increase of at least 4% to the England NHS annual budget, will help to bring the UK much closer to the average health spend of leading EU countries over the coming five years - helping us, within the profession, to deliver the standard of care our patients require.

The NHS and our patients cannot afford for the Government to miss this vital opportunity and I urge you to allocate a settlement which will truly support the NHS to keep on providing world class care now and in the longer term.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Chaand Nagpaul CBE
BMA council chair