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THE PRIME MINISTER

12 February 2018

Dear Dr Nagpal

Thank you and your co-signatories for your letter of 20 December 2017, on behalf of the British Medical Association and other doctors, nursing staff and midwives in the UK, about Working Time Regulations (WTR). I apologise for the delay in responding.

Protecting and enhancing the rights people have at work is a key priority for the Government, as I have always made clear. The UK has a long-standing record of ensuring that workers' rights are protected. This includes employment and equality rights and protections for health and safety at work.

I agree that the WTR provide important protections for people working for the NHS and other employers. They are one of many examples of where our domestic legislation exceeds EU required levels of employment protections; workers are entitled to 5.6 weeks of annual leave in the UK, compared with the 4-week entitlement under the EU Working Time Directive.

Once the UK has left the EU, we will ensure that EU-derived employment rights will continue to be available in domestic law. Furthermore, the Government recently published draft statutory instruments to illustrate how the proposed amendments will ensure the legal framework that provides for employment rights – including the WTR – continues to operate effectively after exiting the EU.

In future, it will be for Parliament and, where appropriate, the devolved legislatures to decide on employment law, with Parliament and the electorate continuing to hold the Government to account. This Government has committed not to roll back workers' rights and to ensure that we keep pace with the changing labour market.

The UK has always been committed to protecting and extending workers' rights, and this will continue after we leave the EU.

Thank you, once again, for writing.

Your sincerely

R. Dy.

Dr Chaand Nagpaul