

Letter from the British Medical Association (BMA) and Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)

To GP Returners,

We are pleased and incredibly grateful that thousands of you have offered to return to the workforce to help your colleagues in some way during the current COVID-19 crisis.

The sheer numbers of you wanting to get involved have overwhelmed current systems and processes, and we know that many of you are currently waiting for the next steps, some time after your relicensing. We are working with NHSE/I and government to try and speed up the process as much as possible, and on additional guidance which is currently being finalised.

The pandemic is of course going to be ‘a marathon not a sprint’, so please don’t be disheartened by the delays. The need for your input is not going to go away, and we would encourage you to persevere.

During this period there is also potentially a large amount of non-COVID-19 related health needs that may go unmet. General practice will need and value help managing this as well as covering the backlog of staff leave which will need to be taken in order for all healthcare workers to recover and address any psychological issues.

Together we have to look to the future, as well as addressing current problems. This crisis has shown how important it is to have a flexible workforce – where we minimise the barriers to doctors, of all ages and experience, being retained in the profession to contribute in a variety of ways to patient care. We need to examine and overcome barriers that have led to doctors leaving, despite, as we now know, their willingness to work in some circumstances. We will be welcoming your insights on this over the coming weeks and months.

The RCGP is producing guidance for returners, including directing you to useful links and information: <https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=10554>. There is also a range of resources both that may be useful for you on your return, available for members and non-members, on its COVID-19 web pages: [www.rcgp.org.uk/covid-19.aspx](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/covid-19.aspx)

The BMA has also produced guidance for returners: [www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/practical-guidance/covid-19-retired-doctors-returning-to-work](http://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/practical-guidance/covid-19-retired-doctors-returning-to-work) and has opened up its wellbeing services to provide support for non-members, and to doctor’s families: [www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/your-wellbeing#wellbeing-support-services](http://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/your-wellbeing#wellbeing-support-services).

In addition, NHS Practitioner Health [www.practitionerhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.practitionerhealth.nhs.uk) has extended its services to include all of the medical, including recently returned doctors.

Thank you once again for stepping forwards at this time. We want to assure you that even if you are not yet working, your commitment is appreciated, and your contributions will be invaluable.