

**Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP**

Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

9 June 2020

Dear Prime Minister

As the representatives of almost a million frontline health and care staff who have worked above and beyond during this pandemic, we are writing to ask that your Government ensures that the very welcome exemption for international staff from the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) is inclusive and equal.

This pandemic has brought to the fore the value of our international key workers. Your announcement to remove this fee was the right decision and is a positive first step in recognising how critical their skills are and the vital contribution they make to patient care in the UK.

It is now important that we focus our attention on getting the details right so that all international staff, their families and dependents benefit from the exemption.

On behalf of the workforce we represent, we are asking your Government to publicly:

- confirm that all health and care workers will be exempt from the charge on a permanent basis. This includes those employed in the NHS, independent settings and the social care sector;
- confirm that the spouses and dependants of health and care workers will also be exempt from the charge; and
- confirm that health and care staff that have paid the charge in advance will be appropriately refunded. We expect Government to introduce a reasonable and fair mechanism to refund those who have paid the charge in advance, from the date the exemption applies.

Our international health and care staff on which we depend must continue to be valued. Around 12% of the overall healthcare workforce in the UK is from overseas. At a time when our healthcare system is precariously understaffed, ensuring the exemption truly benefits healthcare staff, their families and dependents is vital to making the UK an attractive place to recruit and retain international staff. We hope that this exemption is just the beginning of a bolder and more ambitious approach from Government to reforming immigration policies which impact on our health and care staff, just at the time when we need them the most.

Yours sincerely,



**Dame Donna Kinnair**  
Chief Executive and  
General Secretary,  
Royal College of  
Nursing



**Professor Andrew  
Goddard**  
RCP President



**Dr Chaand  
Nagpaul CBE**  
BMA Council Chair



**Dave Prentis**  
General Secretary,  
UNISON