

BMA House
Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9JP
T 020 7383 6593
E lmiller@bma.org.uk

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

13 July 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Re. Granting international doctors currently in the UK automatic Indefinite Leave to Remain

As Chair of the trade union and professional body representing doctors and medical students in the UK, I am writing to urge you to take action to recognise the huge contribution international doctors have made to our country during the COVID-19 pandemic by granting them and their dependents automatic Indefinite Leave to Remain.

I very much welcome the support you have shown for overseas healthcare professionals by personally intervening to ensure that they are exempt from the unfair Immigration Health Surcharge. We now need to see this policy implemented quickly and refunds given to our members who have had to pay the surcharge since the announcement was made on 21 May.

As you have acknowledged, our NHS relies on the contribution of international staff. Around 29% of doctors working in NHS hospitals, and 12% of the overall healthcare workers in the UK, are from overseas.¹ They deliver key public services, conduct vital medical research, and contribute to the overall economy. At a time when skilled international doctors are placing themselves at personal risk every day to protect patients and the public – and most tragically, in some cases dying on the frontline – it is vital that we recognise their immense contribution to our communities.

To truly reflect the sacrifice they are making, I am calling on you to go further by granting all international doctors currently working in the UK on Tier 1 and Tier 2 visas, and their dependents, automatic Indefinite Leave to Remain free of charge. These doctors, already on route to settlement in the UK, deserve to be rewarded for their service during the COVID-19 pandemic by removing the financial and bureaucratic barriers to applying for residency – which currently sit at £2,389 for the main applicant. It would be a strong statement of your personal gratitude for the heroism they have shown as our country faces its biggest crisis since the second world war.

¹ ONS (Aug 2019) [International migration and the healthcare workforce](#)



The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how much we depend upon our international healthcare workforce. As the NHS celebrates its 72nd birthday this month, I urge you to send a clear signal to our international doctors that they are a celebrated and integral part of our healthcare system.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chaand Nagpaul'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and a horizontal line under the name.

Dr Chaand Nagpaul CBE
BMA council chair

CC: Future Borders and Immigration Minister Kevin Foster MP