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**Rt Hon Priti Patel MP**

Home Secretary  
2 Marsham Street  
Westminster  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January

Dear Home Secretary,

We are writing to you as organisations representing settled migrant doctors including British citizens, to urge the Home Office to remove the restrictive adult dependency rule of the Immigration Act.

We are deeply concerned that this rule is having an adverse impact on the lives and mental wellbeing of our members with elderly dependent parents living abroad.

Under the current immigration rules introduced in 2012 (and as set out in Appendix FM), British citizens with elderly parents are only allowed to have their dependent parents join them if they can prove that they require a level of long-term personal care that they are unable to get in their home country, either due to cost or availability.

As set out in the 2016 Home office review (of the adult dependent relative rules), prior to the rule change in 2012, around 2,325 applications were made a year to bring adult dependents over to the UK, a relatively small number (approximately 0.0069 % of total immigration to the UK and 0.011% of all non-EU immigration). This had fallen to just 162 applications in 2016. This dramatic drop in numbers of individuals even trying to bring their adult dependents into the country clearly demonstrated that this has become near impossible.

The impact of the rules has been to permanently separate elderly parents from their UK - settled children, and this has had a considerable impact on the mental health of our members, with many reporting increased stress and anxiety over the welfare of their parents, and their care. A survey of nearly one thousand doctors carried out in August 2020 by the Association of Pakistani Physicians of Northern Europe (APPNE) and the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO) found that over 90% of the respondents reported feelings of anxiety, stress and helplessness due to this issue. What is more worrying is that 8 out of 10 have thought of relocating due to the inflexibility of these rules and only 1 out of 10 respondents felt that they had adequate support from their employer over trips abroad, necessitated by their parent's illness or emergencies.

Not only is this extremely challenging for consultants, GPs and experienced doctors who already have busy and stressful lives, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it means they are

often forced to take leave, and even make multiple journeys, at a time when our NHS needs their dedication and experience more than ever. The situation has even left some doctors feeling that their right to a family life is being disregarded and has led to a feeling of despair and a risk of burnout.

There is no statistical evidence to suggest that the cost of lifting these restrictions for doctors on the NHS would be a burden to the taxpayer. Perversely, the potential loss to the NHS if these doctors, (many of whom the UK has spent money on training) feel they are forced out of the country due to their inability to care for their elderly parents in the UK, would likely be far greater.

Now the Brexit transition has come to an end, this restriction will also apply to EEA nationals who had previously enjoyed greater flexibility (through EU free movement law) with regards to moving their elderly parents abroad. Therefore, the restrictive nature of the current rules could also deter doctors from considering progressing their career in the UK, in favour of our European neighbours.


We urge you to change the current rules and make it possible for the elderly parents of doctors working in the UK to be granted indefinite leave to remain and join their families in the UK. This has been achieved in the approach adopted by other countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada. This will give doctors working on the frontline the reassurance they need to stay working for the NHS whilst fulfilling their personal caring responsibilities to their elderly parents.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



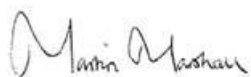
**Dr Chaand Nagpaul CBE**  
BMA council chair



**Dr Ramesh Mehta OBE**  
President, British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin



**Dr Amir Burney**  
President, Association of Pakistani Physicians of Northern Europe



**Professor Martin Marshall CBE**  
Chair of Council, Royal College of General Practitioners



**Mr Bernie Chang, FRCOphth, FRCSEd(Ophth)**  
President, Royal College of Ophthalmology



**Dr Adrian James**  
President, Royal College of Psychiatrists



**Dr Edward Morris**  
President, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists