



Steve Brine MP  
Chairman Health and Social Care Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

23 January 2023

Dear Steve,

Thank you for your letter of 9 January 2024 regarding the net migration measures announced on 4 December and the assessments undertaken to measure their potential impacts. I am replying as the Minister of State for Legal Migration and the Border.

You have enquired about the analysis the Home Office has undertaken with the Department of Health and Social Care to understand the impact of gaps or shortfalls in the availability. We have already published our Legal Migration Statement on 4 December regarding estimated immigration impacts, which you discussed at the Health and Social Care Committee on 19 December 2023. With regards to further analysis, the Home Office will be preparing a full impact assessment later this year on the changes contained in the net migration package.

In your letter you have raised the Skills for Care estimate that vacancies stand at 152,000 in the adult social care sector. However, it is important to consider that since the Home Office added care workers to the Shortage Occupation List and the Health and Care Visa on 15 February 2022, over 100,000 visas have been issued to care workers, (including over 83,000 in the year ending September 2023). They have been accompanied by an estimated 125,000 dependents. This volume of people has bolstered our care workforce but has also added pressure to our infrastructure and services. This is not sustainable. The sector therefore needs to look at how it can improve retention, rather than relying on international recruitment at this level to sustain itself.

When the Government accepted the Migration Advisory Committee's (MAC) recommendation to add care workers to the Shortage Occupation List, this was intended to be a short-term help to alleviate some of the short-term difficulties posed by the pressures faced during the pandemic<sup>1</sup>. The MAC themselves have consistently held the view that immigration is not a sustainable solution to staffing shortages within the adult social care sector. The Government remains committed to supporting the sector and recognises the importance and benefit of international recruitment to ensure we have a sustainable adult social care workforce supply. Since late summer, both my department and the Department of Health and Social Care worked closely on developing this package, and the measures announced on 4 December reflect a balanced approach that the Government is taking. It will help address net migration and reports of illegitimate use of

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<sup>1</sup> [Minister Foster to Brian Bell - social care workers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

the visa route, whilst ensuring the health and care sectors are still able to recruit the valuable staff they need.

The UK continues to have an attractive offer for overseas health and care professionals. Given the strength of global labour supply, we expect people will continue to come to the UK as care workers and senior care workers. We appreciate that an individual with a family may of course be dissuaded because of these restrictions, however, someone else who does not have those family commitments will most likely be willing to apply for a job in the UK.

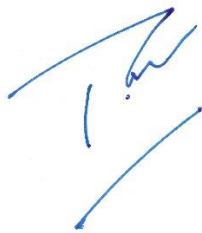
At the same time as introducing this package, we are investing at least £500 million over the next three years (2022/23 to 2024/25) to support our strategy for the social care workforce. And in the Autumn Statement in 2022 we made up to £7.5 billion available over two years to boost capacity in social care. The action we have taken means that there is more capacity in the sector this year than last. The workforce grew by 1% and the number of vacancies fell by 7%. We know retention is equally as important, which is why we are also investing almost £2 billion over two years through the Market Sustainability and Improvement Funds, which will help local councils support the workforce. We expect increasing the training of nurses, allied health professionals and nursing associates will go some way to alleviate the pressures in the adult social care sector as some of the people who train in these professions will choose to work in social care when they are qualified.

The Government will review the effectiveness of these changes once they come into effect and will make further changes should they be required.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write and I trust that this reply is helpful.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove', is positioned above the printed name and title.

**Tom Pursglove MP**  
**Minister of State for Legal Migration and the Border**