



**Department
of Health &
Social Care**

*Rt. Hon. Victoria Atkins MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

020 7210 4850

Steve Brine MP.

Chair, Health and Social Care Select Committee

House of Commons

[By email]

25 April 2024

Dear Steve,

**NHS ENGLAND'S LETTER TO THE SYSTEM SETTING OUT MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE
WORKING LIVES OF DOCTORS**

I am pleased to inform you that NHS England, with the support of the Department, has today published a letter to the system setting out a range of important measures the health service will take to improve choice and flexibility, reduce the burden of training and address common frustrations doctors face in their working lives.

Since becoming Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and hearing the concerns of frontline doctors about their working conditions, this has been a priority for me. That is why, working closely with Amanda Pritchard, I ensured the Planning Guidance for 24/25 includes a focus on wellbeing and working conditions, and I am grateful for the help of NHS England that means today we can take another important step that I hope will make a real difference to their working lives.

In response to concerns raised about the difficulties doctors face planning their lives because of the uncertainty around work schedules, this letter to the system instructs employers to ensure they provide work schedules 8 weeks in advance as required by the contract, and to improve rota management by exploring the opportunities technology offers to move towards greater self-rostering. NHS England will monitor employer compliance to make sure this important issue is addressed.

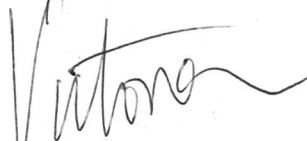
Doctors have also told me about their irritation with HR issues, such as duplicative inductions and pay errors that, as well as causing personal distress, can take some of their valuable time away from clinical duties. Employers will be required, as a minimum, to ensure they pay specific attention to payroll accuracy and develop Service Level Agreements to ensure payroll errors are handled swiftly, which includes implementing a board governance framework for monitoring and reporting payroll errors.

As well as saving clinical time by streamlining HR processes, the letter sets out important measures on training to reduce the burdens unique to doctors by, amongst other things, protecting training time, addressing the unique issues caused by rotations like duplicative onboarding processes and adopting the NHS Digital Staff Passport at the earliest opportunity.

It is important this work has a lasting impact, which is why NHS England will be looking at the longer-term actions it can take to improve working lives for doctors by working with partners to consider

how to improve the experience of rotations in postgraduate training and exploring the rollout of lead employer models.

Every Trust Board will now take responsibility for this agenda. The causes are complex and historic, but this review marks the start of a renewed effort to improve the working lives of doctors and make the NHS a great place to work for everyone.

Yours ever,


RT. HON. VICTORIA ATKINS MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE