



Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

23rd October 2024

Dear Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown,

Congratulations on your appointment as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee. We are writing to you as leaders of organisations working in healthcare to encourage you to reopen the previous committee's inquiry into the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (LTWP).

Earlier this year, the Committee initiated an inquiry into NHS England's modelling for the LTWP, following the National Audit Office's (NAO) [report](#) on the modelling behind the LTWP. The NAO raised several key issues, including:

- **Optimistic assumptions:** Several assumptions within the LTWP may be unrealistic. For example, the plan assumes a doubling of medical school places by 2031-32, a rise of 200,000 nursing staff and a reduction in international recruitment by the mid-2030s. The NAO expressed concern that these targets may not be realistic without considering potential capacity constraints or the risks associated with a rapid reduction of international recruitment.
- **Transparency and uncertainty:** The NAO also noted the LTWP did not adequately communicate the uncertainty around key assumptions, such as staff retention, workforce productivity, capacity, and demand for services. For example, the NAO pointed out a key issue with NHS England's retention modelling and how it accounts for uncertainty. By 2036-37, there could be a 3% difference between the best and worst outcomes, which means the NHS could end up with 73,000 more or fewer staff.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** The report also urged NHSE to engage more effectively with clinicians and Royal Colleges on how they will deliver the LTWP.

During the inquiry, written evidence submissions reflected significant concerns and recommendations regarding certain aspects of the LTWP. However, the general election halted this process, and the inquiry was closed before it was concluded. We are therefore calling on the Committee to re-open its inquiry into the LTWP.

With the new Government committing to regular reviews of NHS workforce planning, it would be helpful to have the committee provide clear findings and recommendations ahead of the next iteration of the LTWP due in the summer of 2025, as well as feeding into the forthcoming 10-Year Health Plan. This would allow for possible improvements to be integrated into the future iteration and ultimately ensure that the NHS has the workforce it needs to make sure patients receive the care they deserve.

We hope that the Committee will consider reopening the inquiry and continuing its oversight of the Government's development and delivery of this plan.

Sincerely,

Professor Kamila Hawthorne
Chair of Council
Royal College of General Practitioners

Dr Claire Shannon
President
Royal College of Anaesthetists

Dr Trudi Seneviratne OBE
Registrar
Royal College of Psychiatrists

Katharine Jenner
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Professor Joanne Reeve
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Dr Annabelle Machin
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