

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 0AA

08 June 2019

Dear Prime Minister,

In full awareness that you are in your final days as Prime Minister, I write on behalf of the BMA with regard to our ongoing concern that the NHS is on the cusp of a major workforce crisis. We hope that as your tenure draws to a close you will put in place measures to secure the future stability of the medical workforce and prevent patient services being adversely affected.

The impact of current pension taxation policy has been raised with you by a number of MPs during Prime Minister's Questions over recent months and you will have no doubt seen this issue growing across parliamentary debates and in the national press. Current government policy is driving doctors out of the workforce. The BMA has been working tirelessly to alert HM Treasury and wider government of the real possibility of losing large swathes of expertise from the NHS's most experienced doctors at a time when the over-stretched service needs it most. This problem is also impacting our Defence Medical Services, where unless a resolution is found it will lead to severe shortages and put at risk the ability to deploy.

The power to resolve this situation ultimately lies with the Treasury and frankly it has taken too long for the problem to be properly acknowledged. We note the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care's recent announcement of a consultation on flexibility for the NHS Pension scheme. We have previously stated in our response to the Secretary of State that the 50:50 proposal will categorically not solve the problem. This option will not only result in doctors receiving a lower pension, but also does not remove the perverse incentive for doctors to reduce the work they do for the NHS. This is particularly the case if there is no recycling of employers' pension contributions back to the employees. Although we hope to meet the Secretary of State to discuss short-term mitigating options, the true solution lies in pension taxation reform. Members of the NHS pension scheme have no control over the amount they pay into their pension and tax relief is already limited via the lifetime allowance. The annual and tapered annual allowance are not only unnecessary but are significantly damaging the ability to maintain safe, sufficient patient care and must be scrapped urgently.

To this end we hope that you will support us by calling on the Chancellor to meet with us immediately, and truly engage with us on this issue to find a definitive solution. Every delay brings forward the likelihood of a crippling workforce crisis and patient care suffering. Thank you in advance for any support you are able to offer.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Chaand Nagpaul CBE
BMA council chair

