

Dear The Rt Hon Victoria Atkins MP, The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP,

cc. The Rt Hon Andrew Stephenson CBE MP, The Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP,

We write to you as a coalition of higher education mission groups and educators to call for a **ministerial cross-government health education taskforce**.

We are fully supportive of NHS England's Long-Term Workforce Plan, and its aim to train significantly more doctors, nurses and midwives, GPs, dentists, and allied health professionals. We commend the significant progress that has been made by the government in meeting the target of 50,000 additional registered nurses in England, and the work NHS England have done to engage with the education sector.

However, with the latest UCAS data showing a drop in applications for medicine, nursing and midwifery courses there is considerably more to do to realise the ambitious long-term goals of the plan, and to secure the workforce required to meet the needs of a growing, ageing population. The training and education of healthcare professionals requires careful planning to overcome barriers such as capacity constraints on medical schools, limited number of educators, and availability of clinical placements.

The Covid-19 pandemic showed how universities can work with the NHS, business, Government and other partners to respond quickly to national health challenges and we believe a similar unified effort is needed to secure the long-term clinical-skills pipeline. Moreover, it will require a joined-up approach from *within* government.

That is why we are jointly calling for a ministerial cross-government health education taskforce to coordinate delivery of the Long-Term Workforce Plan.

The taskforce would bring together representatives from the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social Care to meet alongside representatives from NHS England, health regulators, local government and higher education providers.

The taskforce could, for instance, effectively co-ordinate activity to bolster student recruitment, work to find ways of increasing the capacity of clinical placements and medical school places, and develop strategies for the recruitment and retention of staff. Additionally, our universities could help realise the Long-Term Plan's ambitious targets for healthcare degree apprenticeships, and to tackle the low funding and high regulatory burden associated with delivering them.

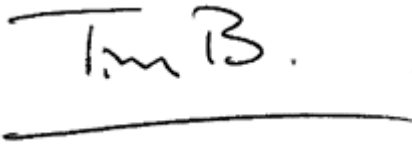
A taskforce of all stakeholders allows us to take a holistic view of the barriers to training expansion. Without coordination we risk the long-term sustainability of changes made and adding undue pressure on the NHS.

We would be delighted to meet with you both, along with your ministerial colleagues, to discuss these matters further, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Keegan', written over a light blue circular stamp.

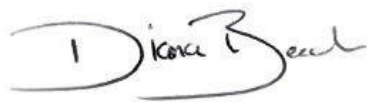
Vanessa Wilson, University Alliance, CEO

Handwritten signature of Tim B. in black ink, consisting of the letters 'T', 'm', and 'B.' in a cursive style, with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr Tim Bradshaw, Russell Group, Chief Executive

Handwritten signature of R. Hewitt in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Rachel Hewitt, MillionPlus, Chief Executive

Handwritten signature of Diana Beech in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Dr Diana Beech, London Higher, Chief Executive

Handwritten signature of Gordon McKenzie in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Gordon McKenzie, GuildHE, CEO

Handwritten signature of Ed Hughes in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Ed Hughes, Council of Deans of Health, CEO