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Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
Department for Health & Social Care  
39 Victoria St,  
London SW1H 0EU

4<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Dear Steve,

Congratulations on the publication of the NHS long term workforce plan. This is a major achievement and we warmly welcome the ambition and scope of the plan which you have secured funding to support. In particular we welcome the stated desire to double the number of medical training places and to deliver significantly more doctors and nurses to our health system.

We are concerned however with the statement on page 5 of the report that the first new medical training places will only be available from September 2025 and write to urge you to consider bringing forward an allocation of funded places for the new medical schools which have been approved by the GMC since 2020. In particular as Worcestershire MPs we would urge you to consider the benefits of providing funded places to the three Counties Medical School in Worcester at the first available opportunity.

As you know from our previous correspondence this school is receiving its first students this year and thanks to the generosity of local trusts and charities it will be training 20 domestic students alongside 28 international students as part of its first intake. However we face the very real possibility for next year's intake of the school being unable to offer places to local students and we feel that this would be a waste of potential if no places are to be allocated before September 2025. The state of the art facilities are up and running, the school is fully staffed and a partnership with the established Swansea medical school is in place.

The Medical School is designed to be able to scale up rapidly to meet the significant demand that has been identified in local health trusts and would be able to welcome as many as 150 trainee doctors to train in the academic year starting in 2024. Placements for all of these have been identified in local trusts across Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Dudley and there is strong demand, currently unfulfilled in both the acute and primary care sectors. The medical school is already designed to provide a four-year course for graduate entry students and therefore already meets the requirement that you have set for rapid delivery and efficiency.

The fact that an allocation of funded places have not taken place since 2016 is a matter of great concern and it has already led to some delays with the approval of the Three Counties Medical School with its financial viability having been one of the main

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concerns of the GMC in earlier evaluations, but now that the school is fully approved and we have a long term plan which is clear on the ambition to scale up training places, it surely makes sense to use the available facilities to deliver them in an area of high need.

We would ask you to consider the potential to add up to 16 additional places for the upcoming academic year, starting in September which would mean that the majority of places would be for local students who are more likely to stay in the NHS. The University has confirmed it has more than enough applicants and placements to fill these slots. Even if this is not possible we would urge you to commission an allocation of places well ahead of the next academic year. Even if there are not new places across the UK system as a whole, available for September 2024, we would ask that the Department and the NHS consider a competitive allocation of some of the existing places for next year so that newer medical schools such as the Three Counties, Brunel and Chester can participate.

The fact that there was no allocation of places in 2020, 2021 or 2022 has placed these schools at a competitive disadvantage and whilst the circumstances of the pandemic provide a rationale for delay, they do not justify a six year gap. The Medical Schools Council has previously proposed that more places be allocated and their proposals explicitly recommend "New medical schools should be placed in areas based on the availability of clinical placements and the needs of local populations within geographical areas." The Three Counties Medical School clearly meets these criteria.

We fully support the ambition and scope of the long-term plan which you have rightly placed your Department behind, but we know that there is a real need for more GPs, more junior doctors and the retention benefits that a scaled up fully functioning medical school can bring right now. We would be happy to meet with you, your officials, your junior ministers or anyone else you recommend in order to move this forward.

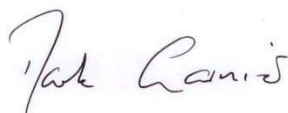
Yours sincerely,



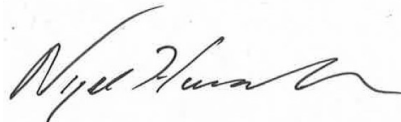
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Harriett Baldwin, MP for West Worcestershire



Mark Garnier, MP for Wyre Forest



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The Rt Hon Sajid Javid, MP for Bromsgrove