

Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
HM Treasury
Unit 1
Horse Guards Rd
Westminster
London SW1A 2HQ

15 November 2017

Dear Chancellor

The financial challenges now facing the NHS and social care are unprecedented. Clinicians are increasingly caught between conflicting pressure of delivering the high-quality care that they are trained to provide, and the reality of an overstretched financial settlement available for health services.

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) represents 34,000 hospital doctors and physician associates, the majority of whom are based in the UK. They, among the many health and care professionals, work tirelessly to ensure that the NHS's finite resources are used effectively and efficiently to deliver the best possible care. The NHS will work to further improve efficiencies and productivity in the delivery of care; however, the government must be realistic about the level of sustained investment that is required to maintain the quality of our health and care services in the face of increasing patient need.

In this budget, we urge you to provide the resources to ensure that health and care professionals can provide the right care, in safely and properly staffed services with capacity to meet patient need. Without sufficient investment in the NHS, social care and public health interventions, patients are at risk of avoidable harm, and the future sustainability of the NHS is under threat.

Last year the RCP outlined that the NHS was underfunded, underdoctored and overstretched. This is still true. RCP data from April 2017 demonstrate the pressures the system is under, with hospitals operating at full – and over – capacity through last winter. 78% of our members believe that patient need (and therefore demand for their service) increased over the past year, and yet 84% had experienced staffing shortages across their team, which made it harder to deal with rising need. These staff shortages are likely to be exacerbated by seasonal influenza.

This is having a direct effect on the delivery of patient care. A recent RCP survey outlined that 60% of junior doctors believe that poor availability of out-of-hospital care – such as primary care and social care – is having a serious or extremely serious impact on patient safety. Additionally, 58% of junior doctors have told us that a lack of hospital beds is putting patients at risk.

NHS staff are currently doing a fantastic job in a challenging environment to minimise the direct impact that system pressures are having on patients. However, the system is reaching breaking point, staff are demoralised and the NHS workforce's priceless goodwill is being relentlessly and unsustainably drawn upon.

As we approach the 70th anniversary of the NHS – one of our nation's proudest achievements – we urge you to give health and social care the resources that they desperately need.

Yours sincerely



Professor Jane Dacre
President, Royal College of Physicians of London

Dr Andrew Goddard
The Registrar, Royal College of Physicians of London

Professor Margaret Johnson
The Academic Vice President, Royal College of Physicians of London

Dr Gareth Llewelyn
The Vice President for Wales, Royal College of Physicians of London

Professor Chuka Nwokolo
The Treasurer, Royal College of Physicians of London

Professor David Oliver
The Clinical Vice President, Royal College of Physicians of London

Dr Emma Vaux
The Senior Censor and Education and Training Vice President, Royal College of Physicians of London

Dr Eileen Burns
President, British Geriatrics Society

Dr Sarah Clarke
President, British Cardiovascular Society

Dr Lisa Davies
Chair, British Thoracic Society

Dr Nick Scriven
President, Society for Acute Medicine

Dr Peter Lanyon
President, British Society for Rheumatology

Professor Martin Lombard
President, British Society of Gastroenterology

Professor John Wilding
Representative, Society for Endocrinology

Professor John Middleton
President, Faculty of Public Health

Professor Alan Boyd
President, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Medicine

Professor Carol Seymour
President, Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine

Dr Aisling Carroll
Representative of the New Consultants Committee

Dr Carol Postlethwaite
Chair, Trainees Committee

Dr Waleed Arshad
Representative of the Staff and Associate Specialists Steering Group

Dr Robin Lachmann
Trustee Councillor

Dr David Nicholl
Trustee Councillor

Dr Adrian Jennings
Censor and Elected Councillor

Dr Robert Wright
Censor

Dr Nick Levell
President, British Association of Dermatologists

Professor Mary Reilly
President, Association of British Neurologists

Professor Donal O'Donoghue
President, The Renal Association

Dr Carl Waldmann
Dean, Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine

Ms Jeannie Watkins
President, Faculty of Physician Associates

Dr Anne de Bono
President elect, Faculty of Occupational Medicine

Dr Chee-Seng Yee
Representative of the New Consultants Committee

Dr Orod Osanlou
Deputy Chair, Trainees Committee

Dr John Firth
Trustee Councillor

Dr Andrew Macleod
Trustee Councillor

Dr Andy Douds
Censor

Professor Kevin Harris
Censor

Dr Aine Burns
Elected Councillor

Professor Sue Carr
Elected Councillor

Dr Adrian Jennings
Elected Councillor

Dr Pippa Medcalf
Elected Councillor

Dr Tanzeem Raza
Elected Councillor

Professor Raymond Tallis
Elected Councillor

Professor Ashley Woodcock
Elected Councillor

Dr John Dean
England, Regional Adviser

Dr Michael Trimble
Northern Ireland, Regional Adviser

Professor Ali Jawad
Director of International Office

Dr Mark Temple
Future Hospital Programme Officer

Dr John Dean
Elected Councillor

Professor Namita Kumar
Elected Councillor

Dr Roby Rakhit
Elected Councillor

Dr Michael Rose
Elected Councillor

Professor Simon Taylor-Robinson
Elected Councillor

Dr Tun Aung
England, Regional Adviser

Dr Andrew Freedman
Wales, Regional Adviser

Dr John Dean
Clinical Director for Quality Improvement Programme

Professor Frank Joseph
Future Hospital Programme Officer