Dear Home Secretary,

The Doctors’ Association UK notes with great trepidation and concern the potential for an abrupt reversal of the exemption placed on foreign doctors from tier 2 caps, inferred from your letter to the Migration Advisory Committee, reported on 11th October 2018. We launched our ‘Scrap the Cap’ campaign in May of 2018 prior to your intervention on this issue in June involving a petition collating some 7300 signatures, and letters to the Prime Minister and Home Office.

In our previous correspondence to your department, we outlined the negative impact of some 100,000 vacancies in frontline services across the health service due to short staffing. With almost 10,000 empty slots on medical rotas in both primary and secondary care, we felt it imperative to convey the strength of concern within the profession regarding the destructive effect of such visa caps on our work and the extent to which we are reliant on our non-EU colleagues.

We also highlighted personal stories of such doctors who had been adversely affected by the caps in their professional and personal lives. Many had already been established in the country over a period of years, having committed themselves in the long term to working in our health service and to serving patients. The significant disruption to their lives and those of their families cannot be understated.

The Doctors’ Association UK was thus understandably delighted by the news of the exemption of doctors and nurses from tier 2 visa caps in June 2018, as were health professionals across the country, as it clearly showed willingness on part of the government to recognize the severity of the situation and act to rectify the situation. This reprieve and the positivity generated by it, alongside the practical implementation of the policy change was gratefully welcomed by those on the frontlines. We felt we had been listened to.

Hence, we now write to establish the rationale behind a retrospective qualification to the exemption that could clearly take the health service backwards, and to strongly urge that the progress that has been achieved is not in vain.
For the safety of our patients and the welfare of our non EU colleagues and their families, we ask you to strongly consider not reversing the exemption of doctors and nurses from tier 2 visa caps.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Neil Tiwari MBBS, MRCEM
Editor, The Doctors’ Association UK