

Statement

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges welcomes the publication of the Workforce Strategy consultation today.

Professor Carrie MacEwen, chair of the AoMRC, said, 'The NHS is suffering currently from chronic shortages of doctors and other health care professions which has resulted in staff being under pressure with resultant concerns about safe patient care. Current workforce issues, particularly in relation to workforce supply, are the greatest risk to the future sustainability of the NHS. It is therefore crucial to have a clear workforce strategy to address the issues of the long-term supply, recruitment and retention of staff as well how staff are best utilised and valued. This strategy, produced together by national arm's length bodies and Department of Health, is therefore welcome.

A consultation document is vital as it means that all stakeholders with direct experience and knowledge of the NHS and its workforce concerns can contribute to the strategy and it will become a fully endorsed and supported plan. The Academy and Colleges will respond to the consultation in due course with clear messages.

In terms of the medical workforce, the Academy and its member Royal Colleges have been clear about the need for additional doctors across the specialties. We are already working to adapt postgraduate training to ensure a medical workforce to meet the needs of the current and future population. This is not a one-off exercise but must be a continuous and evolving process.

It is also crucial that the workforce strategy and, even more importantly, workforce practice at local level ensures that the whole workforce is properly trained, valued and supported. We therefore welcome the commitments for work on the well-being for staff.

The proposal to look at alternatives to the use of the title 'junior doctor' which, whilst in a way symbolic, is also an important signal in recognising the worth of this group of doctors. Their input to this aspect of the consultation will be crucial as it offers a simple chance to address an ongoing discussion.

The Academy and Colleges will continue to work collaboratively with HEE and all other national stakeholders on the range of workforce issues identified in the strategy for the benefit of NHS staff and to improve patient care.'

Ends