

# Comprehensive Spending Review

## Academy of Medical Royal Colleges submission

September / 2020

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges ([aomrc.org.uk](http://aomrc.org.uk)) is the membership organisation for all the Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in the UK. As such it speaks on standards of care and medical education across the UK. By bringing together the expertise of the medical Royal Colleges and Faculties it drives improvement in health and patient care through education, training and quality standards.

Many of our member organisations will be making their own submissions which will reflect their own perspectives.

The Academy supports continued growth in overall expenditure in NHS and social care expenditure but wishes to make a contribution on one specific issue.

### Increasing Medical Student numbers

The Academy believes there remains an absolute need to increase the number of doctors in the NHS. The UK continues to have a lower proportion of doctors in relation to population than most OECD countries (2.8 per 1000 compared to an OECD average of 3.5 per 1,000).

We recognise that increasing doctor numbers is only part of the workforce solution. New roles and ways of working amongst different clinical groups will be part of the response. However, in the view of the Academy there is still a clear requirement for an overall increase in the number of doctors.

There are two ways to increase the medical workforce – international recruitment and or increasing the supply of UK trained doctors through increasing medical student numbers.

The Academy hugely values the contribution of overseas doctors to the NHS and supports international recruitment. We continue believe there will and should be international recruitment of doctors. But for practical and philosophical reasons this will have its limits.

Therefore, there will continue to be a need for increased UK supply of doctors and so to increase medical student numbers.

The Academy welcomed the 2016 decision to increase the number of medical school places but believes that further expansion is required. This approach is supported across medical royal colleges, by Health Education England and NHS England.

Individual Colleges and other organisations have made calculations of the exact numbers of student required e.g. the [RCP statement](#) on medical students or the RCGP calls for 20% additional medical student places to boost the GP workforce in their report this year [Fit for the Future: Workforce Roadmap](#).

The Academy is not, however, identifying a specific number of places that are required in the long term. However, what we would be seeking is a commitment to long term and sustained expansion of medical school numbers and an initial extra 1500-2000 places as a minimum.



The Academy welcomes the recent investment to support the additional medical school places provided by Universities this year in responses to the revised 'A' Level outcomes. This provides a basis to build on for future years.

In terms of the Government's stated criteria to justify investment the Academy would argue investing in medical student places and hence doctors:

- Strengthens the UK's economic recovery from COVID-19 by prioritising jobs and skills. In the long-term expenditure in health should be seen as productive investment in the health and economy of the country with an absolute link between health and wealth
- Provides an opportunity for levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country and addressing inequalities with the targeting the location of medical student places and subsequent medial provision, to under-doctored areas of greatest health inequality and need
- Improves outcomes in public services
- Contributes to the UK position as a scientific centre of excellence.

Investment in additional medical students and doctors is a long-term commitment which brings long-term gains over the period of several spending review periods. But the Academy is clear that the commitment and investment is of absolute benefit to the UK and its citizens and so should be undertaken now.