

21 May 2021

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Secretary of State for Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development
Office
King Charles Street
Whitehall
SW1A

Dear Foreign Secretary

We write to express our concern that the UK Partnerships for Health Systems (UKPHS) Programme for 2020-2024 has been cancelled.

As you may be aware the programme was due to deliver training to healthcare professionals and directly benefit patients in low and middle income countries. In addition the health partnerships model, for which the UK is internationally recognised, brings proven, direct benefits to the NHS and is, we believe, an excellent example of UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) being used in the country's national interest.

UK health partnerships have strengthened the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, not only across Africa and Asia but also here in the UK and have been of great value during times of political instability, as currently recognised by your department, in Myanmar. We can think of no better use of UK ODA monies than the support of this proven model which drives progress in global health by building health workforce capacity overseas and bringing new skills and knowledge back to the NHS.

The cuts to the UKPHS are a major setback for women and child health and will hamper the UK's commitment to delivering the UN Sustainable Development Goals to ensure health and wellbeing for all by 2030.

We recognise that FCD0 financial support for the UKPHS programme was scheduled to be £30million over four years and ask you to recognise that this would have been matched by the voluntary contribution of UK NHS staff giving freely of their time and expertise, working with partners in healthcare systems overseas. The Medical Royal Colleges are aware of the benefits of this voluntary work, not only overseas, but also to the NHS, here in the UK.

As leaders of the medical profession, representing all medical disciplines, we urge you to look again at this decision and reconsider support for UK health partnerships particularly at this time of global pandemic.

Yours sincerely



Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard PhD FRCGP
Chair, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges