

13 May 2025

Dear Colleagues,

**Update to previous communication: Appropriate release of medical colleagues for the purposes for carrying out work for the wider health system**

In May 2022 [we wrote to you](#) encouraging you and your Board to look favourably on requests from doctors seeking support to undertake national or regional work for the wider benefit of the public and of health services across England and the devolved administrations.

As per the letter from May 2022, this request was specifically related to work:

- which is undertaken on behalf of regulators, colleges and other professional bodies, and national NHS/HSC functions – although increasingly this may also be relevant to supporting health systems and/or regions, and;
- which is relevant to the quality and safety of patient care, to medical education and training (through devising curriculum, national training recruitment and the smooth running of examinations), and to the planning, delivery and independent assurance of both local and national health services.

Together we write to you again to reiterate that this national or regional activity by your clinical staff should also be regarded as a necessity to support training and improve patient care. We acknowledge that current financial constraints are challenging however it is critical that doctors receive employer support for this work for their own development as well as contributing to health system improvement and better care for patients.

Direct benefits may also accrue to organisations which support these activities through:

- the increased skills and experience, including clinical and strategic leadership, gained by individuals
- improved retention of individuals who are able to pursue their development and to demonstrate their personal pursuit of innovation and higher professional standards for their own appraisal and revalidation, beyond the opportunities that an individual organisation is able to provide
- improved recruitment, with many doctors likely to be more attracted to employers who will support career development through the flexible use of supporting professional activities (SPA) allowances.



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**General  
Medical  
Council**

Thank you for your continued support for the medical profession.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Sir Stephen Powis**  
NHS National Medical Director

**Professor Sir Chris Whitty**  
Chief Medical Officer for England

**Professor Dame Carrie MacEwen**  
General Medical Council Chair

**Dr Jeanette Dickson**  
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges  
Chair

**Professor Sir Michael McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland

**Professor Sir Gregor Smith**  
Chief Medical Officer for Scotland

**Professor Isabel Oliver**  
Chief Medical Officer for Wales