

Media Coverage on the Health Worker Shortfall – 2019

Over the last twelve months THET has been working to produce our most recent discussion paper, *From Competition to Collaboration: Ethical Leadership in an Era of Health Worker Mobility* in which we make the case that greater collaboration and less competition between nations is ultimately the answer to achieving health workforce sustainability in an increasingly mobile world.

In recent months, it has been fantastic to see key themes that are explored in the discussion paper examined in national press, examples of which are highlighted below. Many of these publications have informed the development of *From Competition to Collaboration*, however, we go further.

It is vital to recognise that the current health worker shortfall is a global challenge, most acutely felt in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in Africa and Asia where shortages are chronic and severe. In our paper, we offer a range of recommendations to help map the UK's role in shaping the global health workforce of the future to guarantee mutual benefit for the UK and LMICs.

The Telegraph

[NHS breaking recruitment rules with one in four new doctors coming from 'banned' developing countries](#)

- The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for International Development identifies 97 countries which “should not be actively recruited from” because they are in receipt of aid, and often suffering from shortages of medics.
- The Telegraph has uncovered evidence that the health service is targeting medics from such countries despite strict rules which are supposed to protect the poorest parts of the world.

[Number of foreign nurses coming to UK from beyond Europe has more than doubled in a year](#)

- Following amendments to language test requirements, the number of nurses coming from beyond Europe has risen by 126 per cent between March 2018 and March of this year.
- Royal College of Nursing chief executive Dame Donna Kinnair said it was “inappropriate” to rely on a steady stream of nurses from beyond the EU.

The BMJ

[The NHS workforce plan is an off-the-scale fantasy](#)

- The current NHS workforce plan is wholly unequal to the scale of the problem that is facing practically every NHS organisation. Hospitals and providers of mental health and community health services are reporting a shortage of more than 100,000 full time equivalent staff, and one in eight nurse posts are vacant.
- The latest data from the Nursing and Midwifery Council's register show that more UK and EU nurses are leaving the register than are joining.

[The upside of trade in health services](#)

- Trade in health services is already affecting health systems in high, middle, and low income countries. Yet it has been given limited considerations in policy debates, including, for example, in the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

- Despite the limited data on the effect of trade, there has been much comment on the negative effects such trade will have, especially on low and middle income countries. However, there is evidence that trade in health services can have positive effects on health systems, especially on movement of patients and health workers.

[Allow more overseas doctors to work in NHS, immigration committee advises](#)

- All doctors should be added to the UK's shortage occupation list – the official list of jobs without enough UK resident workers to fill the vacancies – the Migration Advisory Committee has recommended.
- If a post is on the shortage occupation list the employer can bypass the usual requirement to carry out a resident labour market test when employing a doctor from outside the European Economic Area and Switzerland. The applicant is also exempt from the requirement to earn a minimum of £35,000 (€39,700; \$44,200) to be eligible for a visa.

The Guardian

[Plan to hire thousands of foreign nurses for NHS is axed](#)

- The government's long-awaited plan to tackle shortages included the ambition of recruiting 5,000 nurses a year until 2024 to help relieve short-term pressure. However, it is understood that while the latest version talks about the need for a significant increase in nurses from overseas, the specific figure has been removed.

Health Service Journal

[UK short of almost every type of health and care professional, review concludes](#)

- An independent government advisory body has recommended all medical roles should be added to the shortage occupation list, in its first full review of the list since 2013.
- Previously only consultants in clinical radiology, emergency medicine and old age psychiatry, certain emergency medicine trainees and core trainees in psychiatry were on the list, but the Migration Advisory Committee has recommended all medical practitioners be added.
- It recognised that migration was not a "sole or long-term solution" for medical workforce shortages but that it could "alleviate some difficulties."

[The NHS must 'grab hold' of international recruitment](#)

- The NHS must take a firmer grip of recruitment efforts in overseas countries, and make sure that trusts and health systems cooperate and adopt best practice, if targets are to be met, according to Health Education England's director of global engagement Ged Byrne.
- Professor Byrne said, for certain staff groups in specific countries, the "apparent conversion rate" between those expressing a desire to work in the UK and those who arrived here was "less than 4 per cent."
- Professor Byrne stressed the nature of migration has changed over the years. He said people in emerging economies no longer want to emigrate into the UK permanently but instead use it as a "learning platform."
- Professor Byrne also tackled the issue of 'brain-draining' when it comes to international recruitment and said HEE "will do nothing where we cannot demonstrate benefit with any partner country we have."
- He stressed HEE would "significantly increase overseas recruitment on an ethical and mutually beneficial basis over the next year or two".

BBC News

[Can the NHS get all the doctors and nurses it needs?](#)

- The Interim NHS People Plan drawn up with Julian Hartley, chief executive of Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, and other experienced NHS leaders, is an interim publication. In the autumn there will be another report after public spending plans for the next few years have been set out by the Treasury.
- International recruitment of nurses and doctors will be boosted "significantly" with better co-ordination of moves to find overseas staff by individual hospitals and other trusts.

Nursing Times

[Matt Hancock says NHS needs 'new Windrush Generation'](#)

- Hancock: "The people plan spells out how we need a new Windrush Generation for the NHS," he said.
- "A recruitment drive to attract the brightest and best doctors, nurses, and clinical staff from overseas." "Nursing is a first-choice career," he said. "An NHS nurse has a passport to anywhere."
- The aim is to grow the nurse workforce by more than 40,000 by 2024 – about the same number the NHS is currently short of.

Pulse

[Hancock pledges freedom of movement for medics from all countries](#)

- Mr Hancock pledged to lift immigration restrictions for all qualified doctors and nurses from all around the world if he became the next Prime Minister, in a speech made this morning at an East London hospital.
- Mr Hancock said: 'Our NHS could not provide its world-class service to patients without the hardworking doctors and nurses from other nations. That's why I believe, after Brexit, we need to see the free movement of medics – doctors and nurses – from all around the world.'
- 'Wherever you're from, if you're qualified, speak English and have a job offer, I want you to have an unrestricted right to work for our NHS and live in our country. We have the best health service in the world - and if I become prime minister, I will make sure it has access to the very best talent in the world.'