

[Calls for inquiry into failure to pay trainee GPs their salaries – Jonathan Ashworth MP](#)

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, has written to Jeremy Hunt requesting an "urgent update" concerning the failure of Capita to pay hundreds of trainee GPs their salaries.

Jonathan Ashworth said:

"I'm sure you would agree that trainee GPs seeking charitable support to feed their families, and being unable to cover their mortgages is an entirely unacceptable situation which requires urgent rectification."

"I'm sure that as a Secretary of State who places patient safety at the heart of your vision for our National Health Service you will be taking these warnings very seriously indeed."

The letter from Labour's Shadow Health Secretary calls on the Government to:

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Pay the affected trainees directly until the situation is resolved so that they are not forced to seek help from charities.

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Undertake a thorough investigation into how these sustained failings were allowed to take place under the watch of the Department of Health, and why this service was outsourced in the first place.

Ends

Notes to editors:

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Full text of the letter:

Dear
Jeremy,

I am

writing to ask for an urgent update concerning the failure of the private firm Capita to pay hundreds of trainee GPs their salaries.

On 30 October, Dr Richard Vautrey, Chair of the General Practitioners Committee, wrote a letter to NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens outlining a number of significant issues with Primary Care Services England (PCSE). The service is commissioned by NHS England and has been provided by Capita since it was awarded the contract in June 2015.

Failings include missing records, administrative errors preventing GPs from working and missing payments. Some GP practices have not received their training grants and have been forced to either cover the shortfall from wider budgets, which are already under unprecedented strain, or leave trainees without payment.

One trainee GP has told *The Guardian* newspaper that she was not paid for two consecutive months by Capita, forcing her to post on a private message board asking: "Anyone know of how I access hardship funds (quickly) to feed children/pay nursery/mortgage (quickly)?"

I'm sure you would agree that trainee GPs seeking charitable support to feed their families, and being unable to cover their mortgages is an entirely unacceptable situation which requires urgent rectification.

Many GPs have also reported problems with management of the performers list, with significant delays in updating lists leaving them unable to work- sometimes for months at a time.

Additionally, the BMA has warned that significant delays and faulty processes in both registration and patient removals is "affecting patient care" and "causing problems for patients with incorrect vaccination and screening calls/recalls."

I'm sure that as a Secretary of State who places patient safety at the heart of your vision for our National Health Service you will be taking these warnings very seriously indeed.

Clearly PCSE services remain far below the high standards rightly expected by the public. Instead of delivering high quality care, Capita's failings are placing

GP services and staff under needless additional pressure with significant ramifications for patient safety.

Therefore,
in the first instance whilst this deeply unfortunate situation continues,
will
you instruct your Department to pay these trainees directly so that they are not forced to seek help from charities?

Moreover,
will you agree to undertake a thorough investigation into how these sustained failings were allowed to take place under the watch of your Department? The public will rightly want to understand why this service was outsourced in the first place and how it became yet another example of botched privatisation.

Finally,
the BMA estimates that hundreds of trainees have been affected, although NHS England has been unable to confirm an exact number. Will you therefore investigate exactly how many GP trainees have been affected by these sustained
and extremely serious failings?

New
systems for cervical screening and GP payments and pensions that are also contracted out to Capita are due to go live next July. However, the BMA has declared it has "no confidence" in Capita's ability to deliver these services.

These
failings must never be allowed to be repeated. I look forward to receiving your
assurances that the matter is being dealt with swiftly and with the severity it
requires.

Yours
sincerely,

**Jonathan
Ashworth MP**
Shadow Secretary
of State for Health