

# Government considers more flexible training for healthcare professionals switching discipline

The government will consider how to better recognise the skills and experience of existing healthcare professionals who want to train in a different area of healthcare.

Newly designed courses could take into account existing qualifications, training and experience, making it easier and quicker for existing healthcare professionals such as physiotherapists or pharmacists to train as doctors.

The current training standards are set by the EU. They mean that healthcare professionals wishing to move into another area have to complete a set training course, regardless of any existing health background or qualifications.

This includes 5,500 hours of training and a minimum of 5 years to become a doctor.

Under the potential new system, a physiotherapist who has been in the job for 10 years could complete training based on their experience and qualifications, rather than fixed time-frames.

This will contribute to the government's ongoing recruitment commitment, which also includes a drive to deliver 50,000 more nurses and 6,000 more GPs by 2025.

It could also allow people from a wider range of backgrounds to train, by offering training that can fit around caring or parenting responsibilities.

Any new education and training courses will be rigorously tested to make sure the UK's high medical standards continue to be met.

The General Medical Council's Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) will help to ensure this. The MLA is a standard that all doctors who wish to practise in the UK will need to meet from 2023.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Our incredible NHS is full of highly-qualified and dedicated professionals – and I want to do everything I can to help them fulfil their ambitions and provide the best possible care for patients.

Without being bound by EU regulations, we can focus on ensuring our workforce has the necessary training which is best suited to them and their experience, without ever compromising on our high

standards of care or on patient safety. The plans we are setting out today mean that we can retrain healthcare workers and get them back to the frontline faster. This is good for patients, and good for our NHS.

Healthcare professionals across the NHS work tirelessly, day in, day out, to improve the lives of those around them and I welcome this chance to review any unnecessary barriers that can delay them from reaching their full potential in our NHS.

This is an important step in our efforts to deliver on our commitments and boost the number of staff in our NHS – backed by record funding of £33.9 billion extra a year by 2023/24.

Prerana Issar, Chief People Officer for the NHS, said:

As the NHS delivers on our Long Term Plan and continues to treat record numbers of patients, in addition to greater bed capacity and 50,000 more nurses, we need to do everything possible to keep our world-class staff in the NHS.

Cutting unnecessary red tape, while keeping and strengthening essential safety standards, will enable our committed staff to retrain for other new and exciting roles, which is better for our patients and will mean we make the most of our staff's invaluable skills and offer them rewarding and lifelong careers in the NHS.