

Speech: The NHS of the future will always put its people first

1.3 million people in the NHS.

If we were a country, we'd be the same size as Estonia. If we were a company, we'd be almost the same size as McDonald's – but a lot better for you than a Big Mac.

Since I became health secretary I've tried to meet as many staff, from as many different parts of the NHS, as possible. Admittedly, meeting 1.3 million people individually is difficult.

I've spoken to hundreds of nurses, doctors, paramedics, porters, juniors, seniors, consultants, chief executives. I've tried to listen and I've tried to listen hard.

And what's clear is that people are the most valuable asset the NHS has. How we invest in, and look after, our people will determine the future of the NHS.

And that future is so important because the NHS is the most valuable public service we have.

A strong NHS, and strong public services, are the foundations of a strong society. So Britain must continue to be a place where we invest in people because we believe in the potential of people to make things better.

It's why we appointed Prerana Issar as the first ever NHS Chief People Officer. And it's why Dido and her team have created the first ever [NHS People Plan](#).

I am extremely grateful to both of them because taking better care of our people is mission critical to the success of the NHS.

Now, I know your time is valuable. So I'm not going to waffle on. And if you saw Good Morning Britain, you'll know I've already been caught out once for too much waffle.

So I'm going to be short today. And I'm going to be direct.

I want to talk to you about 3 people. Three people who illustrate where we've come from, where we are now, and where we need to get to.

Recruitment, retention, and an NHS that puts people first.

The first person is a nurse. She, or he, doesn't live in this country – yet.

They're in the Philippines, or India, or Poland, or any other number of countries around the world.

They look to the NHS as a beacon of excellence, and of opportunity. Somewhere they can come to, to be the best nurse they can possibly be.

Somewhere they can learn new skills, earn money, and return home as a world-class nurse, or stay and build a new home and a better life here in Britain.

To that nurse I say: we welcome you, we need you, we want you to come and help us build an NHS that's fit for the future.

Because the National Health Service has always had an international workforce, from the Windrush Generation to the Warsaw Generation.

We must never forget the enormous contribution that people born beyond these shores have made to one of this nation's greatest institutions.

The People Plan spells out how we need a new Windrush Generation for the NHS. A recruitment drive to attract the brightest and best doctors, nurses, and clinical staff from overseas.

And I want to send a very clear message to those people: if you have the talent, the skills, and the determination to pack up your hopes and dreams in a suitcase and travel to the other side of the world, then the NHS will be your new home.

Our NHS could not provide its world-class service to patients without the hardworking doctors and nurses from other nations.

[Political content removed]

The second person I want to talk about is a British student.

She, or he, is 18. They're getting ready for their A-Level exams – hopefully not leaving it as late as I did.

They were born in this century. Technology has shaped every part of their lives from the way they shop, eat, travel, bank, socialise, and even find love.

They have more choice at their fingertips than previous generations would have had in a lifetime.

In fact, there's so many possibilities that it can be overwhelming. And then a parent, or a perhaps a career adviser, says: "Have you ever thought about becoming a nurse?"

And this 18-year-old thinks: "I'm good at science, I'm interested in people, caring for others would be a rewarding career."

And then they start to look into it. They start to search online for information.

And what do they see?

Story after story about shortages, about the stresses and the strains, and

only the problems.

Never or rarely hearing about the nurses who love their jobs and wouldn't choose to do anything else, despite the difficulties.

Now, I know there are genuine problems with the system.

That's why Dido has taken a long-term approach to the first ever NHS People Plan so we can create a new system that puts people first, and is fit for the future.

There are shortages. We use too many agency workers when we should have permanent staff.

The job has become more challenging as the population ages and demand grows.

Your roles are more complex and you need continuous training and new technology to keep up with the pace of change.

But I fear that by only talking about the problems, we risk creating a perception that a career in the NHS isn't for an ambitious, young, British person. Particularly when it comes to nursing.

Nursing is a first-choice career. An NHS nurse has a passport to anywhere.

In fact, it's what makes my job so difficult because we can do a lot of things to convince people to stay in the NHS, but I'm afraid we can't compete with the Australian sunshine.

So we're putting a record £33.9 billion a year into the NHS – and let's not forget three-quarters of the NHS budget goes on staff.

We're opening 5 new medical schools. We're increasing the number of clinical training places, and we're increasing the number of routes into nursing through apprenticeships and nursing associates.

But fundamental to delivering the People Plan, and tackling the nursing shortage in the NHS, is changing the perception of nursing as a career.

That way we can get the right number of people and the right type of people in the NHS: talented, ambitious, hard-working, committed to caring.

Third and finally I want to talk about someone who really helped me understand the retention challenge – what it means to you, on the frontline.

He's a senior consultant at a London hospital. And he said:

Matt, when you join the NHS, everybody knows the deal: you work hard, you do everything you can for your patients and your colleagues, you put everything into the job because at the end of it you know you're going to get a good pension, but that's under threat. I can't plan ahead. I'm afraid to take on extra sessions in case I get an unexpected tax bill, and if I was a few years older

I'd be thinking about taking early retirement.

And then he used a graphic but typically medical metaphor to describe the effect it's having on the NHS. He said:

Right now it's like a haemorrhage. If we can stop the bleeding in the first 5 or 10 minutes, we can save the patient, but if we don't, and we leave it, then we'll be resuscitating the body.

So I understand your frustration. Getting pensions right is how we stem the flow and convince our senior staff to stay in the NHS.

So I've listened to you, and I've learnt from you, and this is what we're going to do:

A new pensions deal for senior nurses, doctors and GPs so you have greater flexibility and control over your pension so you don't get hit with an unexpected tax bill.

A new pensions deal that lets you take extra shifts, go for a promotion, and ultimately rewards you for your hard work and dedication, and encourages you to stay.

We're going to work with you to change the NHS Pension Scheme so it's fair to you, fair to the taxpayer, and leads to better care for patients because that must be our goal.

These proposed reforms recognise the unique role and importance of NHS staff. We want to ensure the NHS Pension Scheme continues to be one of the best around so we can continue to attract the best people.

But these reforms must work for you, so we will launch a staff consultation across the NHS next month.

We will have these changes in place by the start of the next tax year. This will allow NHS staff and employers to start planning for the future with confidence and peace of mind.

And it will ensure the NHS is a place where everyone is looked after, and everyone is treated fairly.

Making the NHS a better place to work: that's where we need to get to. This plan is the first step.

But this journey requires us all to work together: every part of our health service heading in the same direction.

I've made it my mission to get the right technology in the NHS so we can make your lives easier, and give you back the gift of time. So you can do what you came into the job to do: caring for people.

The NHS of the future will have more tech, more robots, more AI, but it will always have people at its core.

As the march of the machines removes the jobs that can be replaced by code, so more and more as a society, we'll need more people doing the jobs no machine can ever do: the caring, the empathy, the connection.

So, we will make the NHS a more caring employer.

We will transform the culture.

The NHS of the future will always put people first.

Because a strong NHS, and strong public services, is how we build a Britain that always put people first.

That is a place we all want to get to.

That's the country we all want to live in.

So let's work together to ensure the NHS is a place where everyone feels valued, where everyone feels cared for, and where everyone can fulfil their potential.

News story: Top NHS doctors to be given more flexible pensions

High-earning senior clinicians will be able to support more patients while saving into their NHS pension without facing significant tax charges, under plans launched by the government today.

The government will consult on proposals to offer senior clinicians a new pensions option. This would allow them to build their NHS pension more gradually over their career by making steadier contributions towards their pension, without facing regular, significant tax charges.

It would mean clinicians can freely take on additional shifts to reduce waiting lists, fill rota gaps or take on further supervisory responsibilities.

A proposal known as a 50:50 option would allow clinicians to halve their pension contributions in exchange for halving the rate of pension growth.

Senior doctors have said that pension tax charges are discouraging them from taking extra work to support patients and causing them to question whether to remain in the NHS Pension Scheme.

An independent review of the GP partnership model found this issue was a factor for many GPs in deciding to retire early. 57% of GPs who retired in 2018 to 2019 took early retirement, a total of 610.

The agreement is an important part of the NHS's first ever [People Plan](#), published on 3 June 2019.

The interim plan focuses on actions to:

- recruit more staff
- make the NHS a great place to work
- support staff to deliver modern care

Retaining the NHS's highly skilled clinical workforce is an important part of delivering the ambitions for patient care set out in the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

The government will continue to examine the evidence on how this specific issue affects other public sector workforces.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

Our NHS runs on the hard work and dedication of brilliant staff who deliver world-class care for patients every day. Each and every senior consultant, nurse or GP is crucial to the future of our NHS, yet we are losing too many of our most experienced people early because of frustrations over pensions.

We have listened to the concerns of hardworking staff across the country and are determined to find a solution that better supports our senior clinicians so we can continue to attract and keep the best people.

The reforms we are setting out today will give clinicians greater flexibility to manage their pensions, have more control over their future, and offer a deal that's fair to doctors, taxpayers, and the patients they care for.

[Press release: Jail for pair of serial Home Counties fly-tippers](#)

Third man gets suspended sentence and night curfew following waste crime convictions.



Abbey Road in Barking, one of several locations targeted by the brazen trio before the law caught up with them

A trio of waste criminals have been given prison sentences and told to pay back nearly a quarter of a million pounds after fly-tipping a court heard was “on a commercial scale.”

The men, from east London or Essex, were convicted of dumping hundreds of tonnes of waste at several locations across Barking, Havering, Hertfordshire and Essex between 2012 and 2014.

Sites used by the group included a yard in Waltham Cross owned by Network Rail.

Investigators from the Environment Agency first discovered the men had broken into a yard in Choats Road in Barking in October 2012. CCTV showed William Jones, Glenn Harper and Sean Collard dumping a mix of household waste, wood and textiles from a lorry with false number plates. There was so much waste on board, it was spilling out onto the ground.

Once more captured on CCTV, the gang struck the following month at a printing works at Thurrock in Essex. Over several nights, they used an articulated lorry to tip 640 tonnes of aggregate – stones, rubble, earth, clay and chalk – at the site in Oliver Road, costing the landowners more than £120,000 to clear.

At New Year 2013, Jones rented a yard from Network Rail a stone’s throw from the M25, at Waltham Cross in Hertfordshire. Environment Agency officers later found the site in Bryanstone Road was filled with rotting waste. This highly-organised criminality saw the waste wrapped in bales of black plastic.

There has never been any suggestion Network Rail knew anything about the criminal activity on their land.

It would be almost a year before the gang struck again and back in Barking. In October 2013, Environment Agency investigators pursued a lorry driven by Collard between addresses either side of the A13. He was seen dumping more aggregate at a building site in Abbey Road, soon joined by Jones and Harper in a Citroen van.

The criminals were arrested by Essex Police back on the A13, at the Environment Agency’s request. Collard told police he was just test-driving

the lorry.

The final act in the gang's 18-month spree of dumping waste illegally took place with a series of visits to a former landfill site at Rainham in Essex in May 2014. The men were identified by Environment Agency officers at the facility, using a lorry to move concrete blocks designed to prevent access. Collard was seen dumping mixed waste there on multiple occasions.

Emma Viner, area enforcement manager for the Environment Agency, said:

Jones, Harper and Collard had no concern for the cost to the landowners or taxpayers, less still, the harm dumping hundreds of tonnes of waste would have on the environment. This highly-organised operation broke the law on a commercial scale, but that same law caught up with them in the end.

The prison sentences laid down in court by the judge show crime does not pay, also proven by more than £200,000 recovered from the men in a proceeds of crime order or court costs.

Sitting at Snaresbrook Crown court on 22 May 2019, Judge Patricia Lees said the trio's criminal behaviour was motivated by money, with a financial cost to landowners, residents and the public purse, as well as causing environmental damage. She sentenced Jones, 39, of Jack Clow Road, Stratford, to 13 months in prison, ordering him to pay back £80,000 in proceeds of crime inside 12 weeks, or have his jail term extended by 18 months.

Harper, 33, of Arterial Road, Wickford, Essex, was given a custodial sentence of 12 months, and has to pay back £146,755 within 12 weeks, or face an additional 24 months in prison.

The court may increase the proceeds of crime orders against Jones and Harper, as they benefitted financially by more than £700,000.

Collard, 53, of New Road, Rainham, was sentenced to 8 months in prison, suspended for 2 years, 200 hours of unpaid work and a curfew between 7.30pm and 5.30am, in force for 12 weeks. The Environment Agency was awarded costs against Collard of £10,000.

Jones, Harper and Collard pleaded guilty to a combination of counts of breaching environmental law.

[Press release: Expert Group launched](#)

with £4.6 million investment in EdTech

One of Britain's most successful Paralympians led a discussion on the use of technology in the classroom, and its potential to boost accessibility and inclusion, at the first meeting of a new group of experts set up to look at how to help schools use it effectively.

Today's first meeting of the EdTech Leadership Group builds on the announcement from the innovation foundation Nesta, which has also launched a call-out to EdTech companies today as part of the EdTech Innovation Fund. This is the first step of their £4.6 million funding programme to stimulate industry innovation and support the development of EdTech products.

The programme, part-funded from the Government's £10 million investment in the EdTech Strategy, will build the evidence base to ensure that technology meets the needs of teachers, lecturers, pupils and students. The partnership aims to test and scale EdTech products, both new and existing, that could have a substantial impact to help save teachers time and improve pupil outcomes.

Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation Chris Skidmore, said:

Technology can be one of the single most important elements in any school, college or university and act as a catalyst for those who learn and those who teach.

Today's first meeting of the EdTech Leadership Group has brought together experts in education, technology and research. Baron Holmes is an outstanding person to lead the group and I am sure that his passion, experience and ability will help us maintain the momentum of the EdTech Strategy.

In partnership with Nesta, we are investing £4.6million in helping the sector make the most of those opportunities and I would like EdTech companies to step forward with bold, innovative proposals that will make a real difference to the lives of students and teachers.

Baron Holmes, Chair of the EdTech Leadership Group, said:

I am passionate about the potential of technology; how it can potentially significantly help our educators, improve learning and foster accessibility and inclusion.

I am truly proud to be chairing this EdTech Leadership Group. It represents a great opportunity to work together to ensure every student and our entire education system can access the benefits

that technology can bring.

The EdTech Leadership Group, chaired by Baron Chris Holmes MBE, co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Assistive Technology, met today (3 June) to consider how it can get industry, government and the education sector to work together more effectively. It aims to set this out in a formal pact by the end of 2019.

The group has been established to help deliver the Department for Education's EdTech Strategy, which aims to boost the use of technology in education, providing expert advice and support on initiatives such as 'demonstrator schools and colleges' to showcase best practice and provide training for teachers, lecturers and school leaders.

As part of a day of progress on the EdTech Strategy, Nesta also announced the first phase of their work to help deliver the "EdTech Challenges".

Up to 20 Edtech organisations will receive up to £100,000 to improve, evaluate and grow the reach of digital tools across four of the ten challenge areas announced in the EdTech Strategy:

- Formative assessment
- Essay marking
- Parental engagement
- Timetabling

Joysy John, Director of Education, Nesta said:

Nesta has a long history of supporting technology in education through investments, research and policy.

By working in partnership with the Department for Education we hope to have a greater impact on the education system and the EdTech sector. We aim to improve teaching and learning, bring more efficiencies to schools and colleges, save teacher time, and ultimately improve student outcomes.

The EdTech Strategy – backed by £10 million – aims to transform the use of technology in education to support innovation and raise the bar in schools, colleges and universities across England.

EdTech exports are worth an estimated £170 million to the UK economy, and the strategy will deliver on the Government's ambition for tech firms to work with the education sector and create innovative solutions to 10 key education challenges, including:

- Reduce teachers' marking workload – using technology to cut the time teachers spend preparing and marking homework.
- Boost training opportunities for teachers – looking at how technology can make training more accessible and tailored to individual needs of

teachers.

- Identify how anti-cheating software can be improved – setting out more detail on how the Government can help to tackle the problem of essay mills, particularly in universities.
- Promote the use of innovative tech to level the playing field for people with special educational needs and disabilities – identifying the technology that best suits individual needs.

[News story: Minister visits Bristol business incubator to discuss immigration](#)

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes today (Monday 3 June) visited a business hub in Bristol to hear from tech companies, social innovators and academics on plans for the new skills-based immigration system.

The minister visited Engine Shed – which plays host to SETsquared Partnership, a globally-recognised business incubator – before sitting down with local industry leaders and entrepreneurs to discuss how the new immigration system will benefit companies based across the South West.

The visit was part of a year-long engagement programme across the UK on the future immigration system. The Home Office has already held more than 90 events and met with over 1,300 stakeholders this year.

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

We are committed to designing a new immigration system that is streamlined, digital and prioritises the skills people can bring to the UK, rather than where they come from.

I'm determined to ensure that the new system supports small businesses and entrepreneurs – like those I met in Bristol – which is why we are engaging with groups across the UK.

The new system will allow us to take control of our borders while ensuring that the UK has access to the talent we need to remain a global business leader.

The government's proposals will:

- remove the annual cap on the number of visas issued for skilled workers. This will ensure that businesses who need overseas talent will not face

unnecessary barriers

- abolish outdated schemes such as the resident labour market test for high-skilled workers and widen the skills threshold to include people with qualifications equivalent of A levels
- extend the time that international students, who come to the UK to study, can stay post-study to find employment. The time period for undergraduates and postgraduates will be extended to six months, while those who have completed a PhD will be able to stay for a year

There will also be a new route for workers from low-risk countries at any skill level for a temporary period. This 12-month visa will provide access to the labour market, but no access to benefits. It is designed to support businesses in adjusting to the new immigration system but ensure they have the incentive to train young people in the future.

The new immigration and borders system will be implemented in a phased approach from 2021 and full details are available in the government's [White Paper](#).

The government recently announced new Start-up and Innovator visas to enhance the UK's visa offer to leading international talent.

The Start-up visa route is open to those starting a business for the first time in the UK, while the Innovator visa route is for more experienced business people who have funds to invest in their business.