

The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
SW1H 0EU



By email

March 21 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

NHS job cuts and system changes

I'm writing to give you the views of MiP's 8,000 members working across the health service in NHS trusts, ICBs and NHS England after recent developments and make some requests.

Last week the government abolished NHS England with half of central staff set to lose their jobs. We understand that ICBs have been told to cut their costs by 50% by the end of 2025, that NHS trusts must reduce their costs further by, among other things, placing support staff into subcos and cutting corporate services staff, and that a national redundancy scheme will target non-clinical staff. There was **no engagement with the trade union representatives** of the people in the frame of these decisions, many of which our members knew about only through media reports, before they were made.

Our members are up for reform. **They are the most reform-minded members of your workforce** and they expect their union to work closely with the government. They have been supportive of the government's measures to issue fewer more strategic targets from the centre, to raise productivity and to turnaround performance on access. They look forward to further measures to tackle over-regulation and micromanagement and build local autonomy and accountability. They have also welcomed your readiness to make the case for strengthening management and to counteract the myth that there are too many managers in the NHS.

But last week's announcements, and the handling of them, have left our **members shocked, angered and confused**, especially because there is **no sense of a clear plan** and timetable to guide what happens next. This high pitch of uncertainty is damaging across a service tackling unprecedented challenges. There is an urgent need to build confidence among our members and assure them that from now on their voice will be heard in a well-led and managed process.

Partnership working is key to us getting on the right track. Earlier this week the trade unions had a candid and helpful discussion with the health minister at the national social partnership forum. We gave our view that partnership working means engaging unions and employers on key policy decisions before they are made, discussing the workforce implications of such policy and working together on specific measures to support change and improvement. We urge you to set a strong expectation of this way of working across your department and the service in the difficult times ahead and **stress to employers the importance of giving facilities to local representatives** to support largescale change.



MiP is committed to working with you and your officials to address specific challenges arising from system change, including managing the inevitable downside of change on this scale, such as the risks of losing needed managerial skills and experience and of losing focus on the government's strategic and operational priorities.

Our members are saying that an early priority for them is understanding the changed role and functions of ICBs and the new national centre and the resource to deliver them, before decisions on structures, functions and jobs are taken. **Clarity about the likely timetable for this work** would be helpful as would the government's assurance that the timetable will be slowed if that is needed to do a good job.

Finally, you spoke in media appearances about the human impact on individuals of recent decisions and paid tribute to their hard work, skill and dedication to public service. This did help to correct some perceptions, but overall we are concerned that the framing of the changes said to the public that managers and non-clinical workers are not relevant to delivering care to the public. **We want to work with the government to strengthen management capability and capacity** and that does need the public to understand that people working in the back end of the NHS, in analytical, systems, planning, corporate services, improvement and operational jobs, are essential for getting the NHS back on its feet.

I hope that these views are helpful and timely. I would welcome a meeting with you to discuss them.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Restell

Chief Executive

Managers in Partnership