

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



By email

4 June 2026

Dear James,

First, I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and wish you every success.

As you may know, Managers in Partnership (MiP) is the trade union organisation exclusively representing NHS managers and leaders. Our 10,000 members work in senior jobs in the NHS and across the healthcare system. MiP is part of both UNISON and the FDA and we play an active part in the national NHS Staff Side.

Our members support reform and share the ambitions of the 10 Year Health Plan. Managers want the same things as patients and the public: shorter waiting lists, better access to services and safer, more innovative care. They have always stood ready to work with government to turn things around. Indeed, it is managers who have organised the recent improvements to productivity and waiting times.

But reform on this scale can only succeed if the NHS has the management capacity and capability to deliver it. Right now, that already limited capacity is being hollowed out further.

Last year the Government decided to cut tens of thousands of NHS managers and support staff in NHS trusts, ICBs and NHS England. It did so without planning, consulting trade unions or respectful communication with staff whose jobs were on the line. There was no clear vision other than making a cut. Over 15 months this approach has led to avoidable harm and chaos for our members and the services they work hard to manage and improve. Even now, costly redundancies and structural changes are underway while key questions about functions are still being worked out, and the system is already plugging gaps with management consultancy and new hires.

As a result, our members' confidence in the Government has been greatly damaged. We are also more and more concerned about the well-being of our members. They face prolonged uncertainty, loss of livelihood and, for those who remain, rapid rises in responsibilities and workloads that are unsafe and unsustainable.

Diversity in management is also suffering, and I shall forward to you a letter to your predecessor from our Black Members Network. All of this adds up to a deeply concerning situation for a small but critical group of NHS workers.

As you settle into your post, I hope you take early opportunities to show that you and your department value NHS management and are willing to rebuild the trust lost over the past year. We urge you to ensure a coherent set of plans for the system exist, giving clarity about functions, before further changes are made and more staff leave. Without this, more staff confidence will be lost and the damage caused by the intended loss of capacity, experience and organisational memory will be exacerbated, creating even more risks for service stability, operational effectiveness and patient safety.



Finally, the Health Bill before Parliament brings much needed focus to the system changes. However, the reality is that thousands of NHS staff have already lost their jobs before Parliament has scrutinised or approved the reforms.

The problems of the last year have arisen because a major shakeup was not assessed, planned or implemented with proper care. The Bill could be strengthened to make future NHS reform deliverable, operationally sound and protects patient care. MiP hopes the Government will amend the bill to place duties on ministers - before making structural changes - to plan management capability, assess the impact of proposals, and consult trade unions and communicate reform clearly with staff affected.

A bill strengthened in this way would help to rebuild confidence and trust among our members.

I would welcome a meeting with you and your officials to discuss these points in more detail. Please do not hesitate to contact me at J.Restell@miphealth.org.uk to arrange a meeting in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Restell
Chief Executive
Managers in Partnership