Department of Health & Social Care

From Karin Smyth MP
Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care)

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Dr Stephen Harden
President
The Royal College of Radiologists
By email to: president@rcr.ac.uk

9 October 2026

Dear Dr Harden,

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 September about recruitment freezes in clinical oncology and clinical radiology.

I appreciate the College's concerns.

I hope you will understand that decisions about recruitment are a matter for individual NHS employers, who manage this at a local level to ensure they have the staff they need to deliver safe and effective care.

We are building our cancer workforce. In July, there were over 38,700 full-time equivalent staff working in the key professions of clinical oncology, gastro-enterology, medical oncology, histopathology, clinical radiology, diagnostic and therapeutic radiography. There are also more clinical radiologists and clinical oncologists than this time last year. Moreover, we will create more training places for cancer consultants in the places that need them most.

We are pleased that resident doctors have voted to accept the Government's offer on jobs, pay and conditions. Resident doctors will benefit from improved pay scales, better working conditions, and enhanced career progression opportunities.

The deal for resident doctors includes the introduction of up to 4,500 specialty training places over the next three years. Trusts will be asked to create these roles with funding partially coming from repurposing spending on medical locums, agency work and some locally employed doctor roles coming to an end.

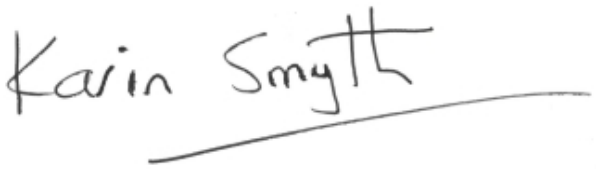
NHS England will work with trusts to ensure that the appropriate clinical supervision capacity and training infrastructure is in place to deliver these changes.

Additionally, on 10 August NHS England announced that more than 350 additional specialty training places will be available in England to start in February 2027. This goes further than the 250 places originally promised on 29 June as part of the deal. It forms part of the wider commitment to create up to 4,500 new postgraduate training places over the next three years.

The Government is committed to publishing a ten-year workforce plan to set out action to create a workforce ready to deliver the transformed service set out in the ten-year health plan. The workforce plan will ensure the NHS has the right people in the right places, with the right skills to care for patients, when they need it.

I am afraid I will be unable to commit to a meeting at this stage. I hope this reply is helpful, nonetheless.

Yours sincerely,



KARIN SMYTH