



Home Office

Mike Tapp MP
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Professor Victoria Tzortziou Brown
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19 March 2026

Dear Professor Brown,

Thank you for your letter of 10 February to the Home Secretary regarding the Royal College of General Practitioners' concerns about settlement routes for International Medical Graduate (IMG) GPs. I am replying as the Minister for Migration & Citizenship and I am sorry for the delay.

In a '*Fairer Pathway to Settlement*', the Government announced that the standard qualifying period will move from five years to ten years and everyone who wishes to settle in this country will need to meet requirements in relation to criminal record, English language skills, National Insurance contributions and outstanding debt (for example, to the NHS). The earned settlement model will, however, allow earlier settlement for those who meet criteria linked to contribution, integration and residence. This includes a proposed reduction for migrants been employed in a specified public service occupation for five years (minus five years). The final list of occupations which qualify for this reduction will be determined once the analysis of the consultation responses has been completed. The consultation on these reforms has now closed, and officials are carefully analysing the responses received. Once this work is complete, I will set out the Government's decisions on the proposed settlement changes.

I fully appreciate the pressures facing general practice and the concerns raised about the experience of IMG GPs as they complete their training. International doctors make a significant contribution to the NHS, and it is important that the immigration system supports them, and the practices that rely on them, as effectively as possible.

General practice doctors already benefit from the most supportive visa offer available to any similarly skilled profession. The Health and Care visa is significantly cheaper than the standard Skilled Worker route, and applicants are exempt from the Immigration Health Surcharge. In addition, doctors are not required to provide separate proof of English language ability for their visa applications, recognising the rigorous assessments already undertaken during entry to medical training.

I understand that some practices find the sponsorship process challenging, particularly in the context of wider workforce and operational pressures. At the same time, more than 100,000 employers across the UK, including many small and micro-businesses, have successfully become licensed sponsors.

This suggests that, while the process can understandably feel complex, it is navigable for employers of all sizes, and we are committed to ensuring that guidance and support are as clear and accessible as possible.

Thank you again for your letter and for sharing your thoughtful feedback. I appreciate you taking the time to set out these views.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Tapp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Tapp MP
Minister for Migration & Citizenship