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We are writing to every employer in the NHS to urge you and your Board to look favourably on requests from doctors for absence to undertake national work of benefit to healthcare systems across the UK.

The government and statutory agencies such as NICE, the Committee on Human Medicines and the General Medical Council, as well as professional organisations such as the Royal Colleges, all rely heavily on senior members of the profession for their expertise and experience in a whole variety of roles. The part time work they undertake alongside their clinical duties contributes a great deal to the quality of patient care, medical education and the effective running of the health service.

We understand that in the current climate there is considerable pressure on local resources and that you will need to take account of that and ensure that contractual commitments are applied appropriately. However, we hope you will regard such activity by your senior clinical staff as an investment in the system and a reflection of the high standards in your organisation. The experience gained by the individual will also often be of direct benefit to the unit in which they work.

Of course, a large number of NHS organisations already support this activity, and we are keen to see that continue, but if there is more encouragement you can give, we believe that would bring significant benefit. We would be grateful if you could bring this to the attention of the members of your Board.

If you have any comments or questions please contact Joanna Szreder via jszreder@gmc-uk.org who will pass them on to us.

Yours sincerely

Sir Harry Burns
Chief Medical
Officer Scottish
Government

Dame Sally Davies
Chief Medical
Officer UK
Government

Dr Tony Jewell
Chief Medical
Officer Welsh
Assembly
Government

Sir Bruce Keogh
Medical
Director
National
Health Service
(England)

Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical
Officer
Department
of Health and
Social Services
(Northern
Ireland)

Sir Peter Rubin
Chairman
General
Medical Council